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Middle School Teachers' Beliefs About How They Communicate Caring and Students' Perceptions of Their Teachers' Caring Behaviors

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MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT HOW THEY

COMMUNICATE CARING AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF

THEIR TEACHERS' CARING BEHAVIORS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was three-fold: to examine the behaviors middle school teachers use and believe communicate caring and students' perceptions of their caring behaviors; to determine if a discrepancy exists between the two; and to identify the nature of any discrepancies. Participants included 16 eighth grade teachers and 184 eighth grade students. Data were collected through the use of a teacher questionnaire and an anonymous student writing assignment. Teacher and student responses were grouped into emerging themes of caring. The methodology used in this study to analyze the results included calculating and comparing the percentage of teacher and student respondents in each theme of caring, computing the deviation scores between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in each theme, and using the mean of the absolute value of the deviation scores for each theme and teacher to identify discrepancies. Point bi-serial correlations were computed to determine the relationship between teacher beliefs and student perceptions. Students' negative comments were also considered. In addition, the two middle school teachers demonstrating the greatest discrepancy between their beliefs and their students' perceptions about their caring behavior, along with the two teachers who had the least amount of discrepancy between the two variables were more closely examined to assist in identifying the nature of any discrepancies. Findings indicated that some discrepancy exists between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors in several of the 16 themes of caring that emerged in the present study. The themes of caring that demonstrate the greatest discrepancies are discussed at length.

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Dedicated to:

Mr. John Schwoebel

An educational leader who communicates caring in perceivable ways.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

"Obviously, the very best teachers are those who are guided by both head and heart; they know their craft well and care deeply about those in their keep. Good teaching requires both" (Cole, p. 33, 2003).

Research informs us that effective teachers are experts in their content area, organize and manage the classroom environment in a way that promotes learning, implement instruction in a manner that actively engages students, and carefully monitor student progress (Cotton, 1995; Stronge, 2002). Effective teachers also establish positive relationships with students and communicate that they care about them as individuals and about their success (Cotton, 1995; Stronge, 2002; Wubbels, Levy, &Brekelmans, 1997).

In a study that examines award-winning teachers, Agne, Greenwood, and Miller (1994) identified teacher beliefs that correlate with teacher effectiveness and student success. They found that award-winning teachers are more humanistic in their approach and create a classroom atmosphere that is characterized by active interaction and communication, close personal relationships with students, mutual respect, and flexibility of rules. Agne et al. (1994) characterize these teachers as "caring."

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines caring as exhibiting concern and empathy for others, as well as providing needed assistance or watchful supervision. Caring is, "…an active expression of will, action consistent with an intention" (Delattre, 1993, p.38). Both definitions imply that for caring to be

meaningful, it must be more than sentiment. It must be demonstrated. Hayes, Ryan, and Zseller (1994) explain that caring is demonstrated by observable actions.

The literature on effective teaching describes observable teacher behaviors that communicate care. They include: paying attention to student interests, problems, and accomplishments in social interactions, both in and out of the classroom; encouraging student effort and focusing on the positive aspects of students' answers, products and behaviors; communicating interest both verbally and nonverbally, encouraging students' sense of responsibility and self-reliance; and sharing anecdotes from their own experience as appropriate to build rapport with students (Cotton, 1995). Availability, trustworthiness, holding high expectations for students, helpfulness and being honest are also perceived by students as desirable characteristics of significant adults, such as teachers (Galbo, 1992). All of these behaviors embody the definition of caring.

Communicating care to students is one of the essential components of teacher caring. Tevan and McCroskey (1997) suggest that if a teacher cares deeply about students, but is unable to communicate that caring, "…he or she might as well not care at all" (p. 1). For caring to be of consequence, it must also be perceived (Hayes et al., 1994). Tevan and McCroskey (1997) use the term "perceived caring" to describe the perception of teacher caring on the part of students. The focus of this study is on one aspect of effective teaching: how middle school teachers believe they communicate care, and how it is perceived by students.

Perceived teacher caring is critical, especially at the middle school level where students are experiencing intense biological, psychological, and interpersonal change. In

his book <u>Affirming Middle Grades Education</u> (1999), Carl Walley provides a list of developmental characteristics describing transescents. Young adolescents are sometimes referred to as transescents because their age level crosses the boundaries of childhood and adolescence. The onset of abstract reasoning, a sense of idealism, and moral concern for justice typify middle school students. According to Manning and Butcher (2001), these young people are between two stages of development as described by Erikson: Industry vs. Inferiority and Identity vs. Role Confusion. Their self-concept is being molded and the view of self tends to shift toward seeing themselves as capable individuals or inadequate.

Walley (1999) states that preadolescents also have a need for self-definition and a desire to make sense of the world. They have increased empathy and role-taking ability, increased interest in interaction with the opposite sex, and increased risk-taking behavior. Peer influence plays a more dominant role in determining behavior. These characteristics are similar to those detailed in the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's (1989) report entitled, *Report of the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents* and in *Turning Points 2000*, a publication of The National Middle School Association.

As middle school students struggle toward developing a sense of self, they often look outside their own life experience: "They look for role models and heroes and try to integrate these ideals into their own value systems" (Manning & Butcher, 2001, p. 35). During this developmental period, young adolescents are exploring their personal identity and come to depend more heavily than before on friendships and other non-kin relationships (Galbo, 1992). Because they have an increased connection with extra-

familial figures during this period of development, students are more likely to turn to teachers and friends with school and emotional concerns than family members (Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994).

According to Goodenow (1993b), the need for middle school students, ". . . to belong and to have a legitimate and valued membership in a setting may take precedence over virtually all other concerns" (p. 88). She defines belonging as the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment. Middle school teachers, by virtue of the time they spend with young adolescents and the opportunity they have to interact with them, are in a position to establish caring relationships with students. When middle school students perceive that their teachers care, it is most likely they will feel valued and part of the classroom and school community.

In addition to teacher caring meeting the aforementioned needs, it is positively correlated with additional factors that influence students' success in school. Parish and Parish (cited in Teven, 2001) found that students who perceived that their teachers cared about them had better attendance. Numerous other studies indicate that when students perceive their teachers to be warm, caring, and supportive, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated, feel more competent, and have higher self-esteem (Goodenow, 1993a, 1993b; Grolnick, 1989; Hayes et al.,1994). Additionally, research shows that students are more willing to engage in learning when they perceive that the teacher cares if they learn the subject matter and cares about them as individuals (Cothran & Ennis, 2000).

Niebuhr and Niebuhr (1999) also found a positive correlation between teacher-student relationships and academic achievement. In this study, 241 ninth grade students were administered a questionnaire about student-teacher relationships. Student responses from this questionnaire were correlated with the students' grade point average. Findings suggest that student-teacher relationships are particularly important in influencing academic achievement because students work harder when teachers allow students to know and like them.

In addition to perceived teacher caring contributing to students' success in school, teachers who model caring in their behaviors assist students in becoming more caring people. Tierno (in Rusnak, 1998) states that after studying exemplary schools, findings indicate that knowledge alone does not breed success and that teachers are more than conveyors of knowledge. "For this reason, teachers need to consider the extent to which their own classroom behaviors – words, deeds, and the consistency between the two – represent undeniably powerful models that can contribute to the positive development of character within their students (Tierno in Rusnak, 1998, p 58)."

In summary, teacher caring is an important attribute of effective teachers and a necessary component of their pedagogy. When it is perceived by students, particularly at the middle school level, it contributes to young adolescents' feelings of self-worth and belonging. In addition, teacher caring is positively correlated with student attendance, motivation, engagement, and achievement. Teachers who model caring also provide a means for students to learn how to become more caring people.

In view of the significance of teacher caring, it is important to determine if teachers' beliefs about how they communicate caring are aligned with the behavior students perceive as caring. Bosworth (1995) explains that considering what adolescents see as caring behavior may, "… provide educators with a clearer understanding of approaches to enhance caring" (p. 686). Middle school students are in a position to offer valuable information about how they perceive teacher caring because they come in daily contact with teachers. They are more likely to accurately observe teachers' caring behaviors than teacher colleagues, supervisors, or building administrators who observe and interact with teachers less frequently.

Middle school students have the ability to identify teacher behaviors that communicate care (Adler, 2002; Bosworth, 1995; Hayes et al., 1994). Alder (2002) examined how caring relationships are created and maintained between middle school teachers and their students. Student-identified teacher caring behaviors in Alder's study included teachers getting to know the student and his/her parents, and taking the time to talk with and listen to him/her. Students also stated that caring teachers display good classroom management skills, hold high expectations for students, and make learning fun and interesting.

Coles (1986) explains that it is important to remember that middle school students often base value judgments on what serves the common good or what satisfies particular emotional feelings or psychological needs rather than what may seem to be clear evidence from an adult point-of-view. Research confirms that student perceptions often differ from the perceptions of adults (Walley, 1999).

An example of how adult and student perceptions may differ can be found in two different studies that examined middle school students' value systems. In these studies students were asked to identify what issues concerned them most and what values they held in highest regard (Wiles & Bondi, 1993; Zern, 1991). Adults, including teachers, were asked to predict student responses. Interestingly, adult responses did not match student responses. Their perceptions of student values and concerns were different than those of the young people who were participants. These findings have important implications for the present study as they indicate that it is possible for a discrepancy to exist between adult perceptions and those of students.

In their research on learner–centered principles and practice*s,* Weinberger and McCombs (2003) discovered two areas of need in today's school cultures. One area focuses on sharing power and control with learners. Another area, and one that is central to this study, has to do with building positive relations and meaningful connections. Through the use of student surveys and teacher self-assessments, they found that teachers can improve instructional practices by being attentive to student perceptions and creating positive climates and relationships. They state, "…teacher perceptions of instructional practices are not as significantly related to student motivation and achievement as student perceptions of their teacher's instructional practices" (Weinberger & McCombs, 2002, p.120).

The current study hypothesizes that there may be a discrepancy between how teachers believe they communicate care to students and how students actually perceive teacher caring. If middle school teachers believe they communicate care to their students

when students do not perceive their behavior as caring, they are unlikely to see the need to change their behavior. According to Clark and Peterson (1986), teachers' belief systems influence teachers' perceptions, plans, and actions. Pajares (1992) seems to concur with Clark and Peterson when he states, "Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom… " (p. 307). It is believed, then, that in order for teachers to change their caring behaviors, they must first be persuaded that their belief about how they communicate caring is different than what is perceived by students.

Teacher beliefs are difficult to change. In an extensive review of the literature, Pajares (1992) explains that teacher beliefs are well established by the time students majoring in education get to college. Further explanation reveals that unlike students in other fields who may need to redefine their understanding and beliefs according to their new work environment, education students are already insiders. They have experienced the environment of teachers and schools for years. These experiences contribute to their beliefs being well established.

Fenstermacher (1979) explains that in order for teachers to change their practice, relevant evidence must in some way be related to their existing beliefs. He argues that significant and positive change will occur only when available knowledge is presented for teachers to use to inform their actions. By determining if a discrepancy exists between how teachers believe they communicate caring and how students perceive teacher caring behaviors, evidence may be provided that influences teacher beliefs about how they communicate care to students, potentially resulting in enhanced teacher caring behaviors.

Wubbels et al. (1997) state, "Good teachers know how they are being perceived by students. Their views of the way they are communicating in class match those of their students" (p. 85). The purpose of this study is to determine if a discrepancy exists between middle school teachers' beliefs about how they communicate care to students, how students perceive that care, and the nature of the possible discrepancy. By aligning teacher beliefs with their actions, middle school students will be more likely to perceive that their teachers care and have greater success in school.

Summary

Research demonstrates that teacher caring is an important component of effective teaching. For caring to be of consequence, it must be communicated by the teachers and perceived by their students. Perceived caring is particularly important at the middle school level where students have an increased need to feel valued and have a sense of belonging. In addition, teacher caring is positively correlated with a number of other factors that influence students' success in school, such as improved attendance, increased motivation and higher levels of achievement.

Middle school students are in a position to offer valuable information about how they perceive teacher caring. Their perception may differ from how teachers believe they communicate care to students. Teacher beliefs influence their practice and are difficult to change. By providing evidence that a discrepancy exists, teacher beliefs about how they communicate care may be influenced, resulting in a change in the way they communicate care to students.

The Purpose of the Study

Perceived teacher caring is influential in the school success of young adolescents. If middle school teachers believe they communicate care to students, but students do not perceive that their teachers care, the impact upon student success may be negative. The purpose of this study is three-fold: to examine the behaviors middle school teachers use and believe communicate caring and students' perceptions of their caring behaviors; to determine if a discrepancy exists between the two; and to identify the nature of any discrepancies. By determining if a discrepancy exists and how that discrepancy might manifest itself, a need to change teachers' beliefs about how they communicate care to students may be identified resulting in enhanced teacher caring behaviors.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do middle school teachers believe they communicate caring to their students?

2. What teacher behaviors do middle school students perceive as caring?

3. Is there a discrepancy between the caring behaviors identified by teachers and those perceived by students?

4. If a discrepancy exists, what is the nature of the discrepancy?

Definition of Terms

Beliefs

A proposition or statement of relation among things accepted as true (Eisenhart, et al., 1988)

Belonging

The extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment (Goodenow, 1993a).

Caring

An active expression of will, action consistent with intention (Delattre, 1993).

Expectancy

Students expectations for success (Goodenow, 1993a).

Effective Teachers

Teachers who cause significant student learning (Stronge, 2002).

Locus of Control

The degree to which people believe their own behaviors to be the determiner of events affecting their lives as opposed to fate, luck or powerful others (Agne et al., 1994).

Middle School Students

Young adolescents between the ages of 10 and 15 years old (Manning. & Butcher, 2001).

Perceived Caring

The perception of teacher caring on the part of students (Tevan & McCroskey, 1995).

Pupil-Control Ideology

Concern with order and control in the classroom (Agne et al., 1994).

Teacher Efficacy

One's belief in her/his own capability to perform a given behavior in a specific situation (Bandura, 1977).

Transescents

Middle school youngsters (Eichhorn, 1968)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction to the Literature Review

As previously noted, teacher caring is an important component of effective teaching. Middle school teachers who communicate care in a manner in which students are able to perceive it, help young adolescents to feel valued and part of the classroom and school community. Perceived teacher caring is also positively correlated with student attendance, motivation, engagement, and achievement. This study postulates that a discrepancy may exist between how teachers believe they communicate caring to students and how students perceive teacher caring. By examining teacher beliefs and student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors, determining if a discrepancy exists, and identifying the nature of the discrepancy, evidence may be provided that would change how teachers believe they communicate caring to students, resulting in enhanced caring behaviors.

This literature review considers the importance of perceived teacher caring and the role it plays in students' success in school. Numerous studies are examined to provide evidence that supports the need for teachers, particularly at the middle level, to communicate caring in a way that is perceived by students. Findings from studies demonstrating the ability of middle school students to identify teacher caring behaviors and the need to listen to student voices about perceived teacher caring are provided. The influence of teacher beliefs on their behavior and the inconsistencies between teacher beliefs and practice are also discussed in order to establish the possibility that teacher

behaviors do not always reflect their beliefs. Related literature about the difficulty in changing teacher beliefs is also presented.

The rationale for this study is based on evidence from several areas of research. Evidence that caring is an important component of effective teaching has already been presented in Chapter I of this study. A second area of research that is examined more thoroughly in this chapter is that perceived caring influences a number of factors that impact students' success in school.

The notion that middle school students are able to identify teacher behaviors that allow them to perceive teacher caring is considered in order to establish that students can identify teacher behaviors that communicate caring. This is important to the current study because student feedback about teacher caring behaviors is instrumental in the methodology used to determine if a discrepancy exists between how teachers believe they communicate care and how students actually perceive that care.

Finally, this literature review considers teacher beliefs and how they influence teacher behavior. This is necessary to determine if a discrepancy exists between how teachers believe they communicate caring to students and the actual behaviors students may perceive as caring.

The Relationship between Perceived Caring and Student Outcomes

Does perceived caring impact students' success in school?

For teacher caring to be influential, it must be perceived by students. Perceived caring affects a number of factors that impact students' success in school. It is particularly important at the middle school level because of the need of young

adolescents to feel a sense of self-worth and belonging. Perry (1996) provides a rationale for caring in schools based on students' sense of community and belonging. She explains that a sense of belonging is characterized by caring, respect, involvement, and the perception that each person makes significant and valued contributions, and is associated with positive student outcomes. According to Osterman (2000) in an extensive review of the literature on the importance of belonging: "How students feel about school and their coursework is in large measure determined by the quality of the relationship they have with their teachers in specific classes" (p. 30).

In a study by Goodenow (1993a) three factors of belonging are identified: positive relationships with classmates, teacher support, and general sense of belonging. Goodenow examines the influence of these factors on student expectations for success (expectancy) and their value of academic subjects, as well as effort and achievement. Eighty-seven students participated (a subset of the participants) in a portion of the study where effort and achievement (as determined by grades) were the dependent variables. Of the three factors associated with belonging, teacher support was most highly correlated with effort and grade. Peer support had no significant effect. Teacher support was also positively correlated with expectancy and value, while peer support showed no significant effect.

In a study of 241 ninth grade students (Niebuhr, 1999), adolescents were asked to provide demographic information and responses to perceptual measures for each of the study variables using a questionnaire administered to the entire group. Study variables included student-teacher relationships and peer relationships related to academic

achievement and were examined for differences that might exist due to gender, race, or family environment. After analyzing the data that were collected, the authors concluded that student-teacher relationships were positively correlated with academic achievement, as measured by grade point average.

Wentzel (1997, 1998) conducted studies that focused on the relationship between teacher caring and three measures of motivation, including academic effort. Participants in Wentzel's studies included 248 sixth-grade students from a sixth through eighth grade middle school in a suburban, middle class, predominantly white community. She found that perceived teacher caring was significantly correlated with academic effort. She also found that while family support contributed to variance in school interest and engagement, perceived teacher support made the strongest contribution. Ryan et al. (1994) also found a strong positive relation between students who felt more secure with their teachers and student engagement.

As evidenced in the studies cited above, it is possible to assume that perceived teacher caring plays an important role in the factors that affect students' success in school. As demonstrated, various findings indicate that perceived teacher caring contributes to students' self-worth, sense of membership in the classroom and school community, motivation, effort, and achievement.

Are students able to identify teacher behaviors that they perceive as caring?

The present study assumes that for teacher caring to be influential, it must be communicated to students in a manner in which it can be perceived. The first study in support of this claim considers undergraduate students' responses about perceived teacher

caring (Teven, 2001). Although the participants in this study are not young adolescents, the findings demonstrate that students are able to identify particular teacher behaviors that communicate care.

Teven's study (2001) was conducted for the purpose of identifying specific teacher characteristics or behavior patterns that communicate caring to students and misbehaviors that disrupt students' perceptions of caring. Participants included 249 undergraduate students who voluntarily and anonymously completed a questionnaire about teachers they had as instructors in a previous class. The participants were also asked to complete a 10-item instrument that measured nonverbal immediacy, a 20-item measure of socio-communicative style (SCS), and a 10-item verbal aggressiveness scale (VA). The instruments used had alpha reliabilities of between .80 and .88 and had good face validity. Bipolar scales that contained a seven point continuum for response were utilized. Simple correlations were computed between scores for perceived caring and those for teacher SCS, VA, and nonverbal immediacy. A multiple correlation analysis was conducted to determine to what extent each of the variables predicted student perceptions of teacher caring.

Findings demonstrated that students are able to identify teacher behaviors that they perceive as caring and that teacher immediacy, assertiveness, and responsiveness have significant, positive relationships with teachers' communicated care. Verbal aggressiveness has a significant negative relationship with students' perceptions of teacher caring. Teven (2001) suggests that teachers can benefit from knowing the types of behaviors that determine that perception.

Alder (2002) used interviews and focus groups to examine how caring relationships are created and maintained between middle school students and their teachers from predominately African American schools. Teacher behaviors that students in this study perceived as caring included a teacher's willingness to: answer questions, help with academic problems, control disruptive behaviors, contact parents, talk with students individually, and discuss personal problems students were having at home or at school. Students also said that caring teachers displayed good classroom management skills, held high expectations for students, and made learning fun and interesting.

In the work of Hayes et al. (1994), open-ended written responses from 208 sixth grade students from one urban and two suburban middle schools were used in an attempt to provide insight into middle school students' perceptions of teacher caring. Participants were asked to think of two teachers who were memorable for their caring and to describe what the teacher did that showed that the teacher cared. These open-ended responses were read and coded by two researchers.

When analyzing the results of the study, researchers first categorized teacher caring behaviors identified by students and then listed the categories of behaviors from the highest to lowest frequency according to student responses. The behaviors identified by students that exemplified teacher caring, beginning with the most frequent responses, were that a caring teacher: responded to the individual, helped with academic work, encouraged success and positive feelings, provided fun and humor, provided good subject content, counseled the student, was interested in all students or was fair, avoided harshness, listened, and managed the class well.

As a final example of students' ability to perceive teacher caring, Bosworth's work (1995) that focuses on exploring the indicators of caring in young adolescents is examined. In this study, a team of people spent one year in an urban and suburban middle school interviewing more than 100 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Findings relevant to this present study indicate that students were able to articulate the characteristics of caring teachers. Bosworth categorized student responses into three groups. The most frequently identified characteristic of caring teachers had to do with classroom practices. The second most frequently mentioned category had to do with non-classroom activities such as after-school help and guidance. The final category included responses about teachers' personal characteristics.

In reviewing the preceding studies, it is apparent that middle school students are able to identify teacher behaviors that they perceive as caring. In addition, many of the behaviors they identified parallel aspects of effective teaching research mentioned in Chapter I of this study.

<div align="center">Teacher Beliefs</div>

Do teachers' beliefs influence their behavior?

The purpose of the current study is to examine whether or not a discrepancy exists between how teachers *believe* they communicate caring to students versus how students *perceive* teacher caring. To understand teachers' perceptions, it is necessary to consider the influence of teacher beliefs on their behavior, particularly their caring behavior. In this portion of the literature review, the term "beliefs" is discussed. Subsequently, several studies are introduced to demonstrate the influence of teacher's beliefs on their behaviors.

Educational literature suggests that understanding the influence of teacher beliefs is a difficult task as researchers struggle to agree on an operationalized definition of "beliefs." Pajares (1992), in a review of the literature on teacher beliefs aptly entitled *Teacher Beliefs and Educational Research: Cleaning Up a Messy Construct*, discusses the difficulty in defining "belief" as a construct and explains the need for researchers to agree on the meaning and conceptualization of it. He suggests that educational beliefs are in danger of becoming what Nespor (1987) calls an entangled domain. She explains,

> The concept of entangled domain has to do with instances or examples or entities which can be identified by some criteria as belonging to a given domain, but which at the same time do not all share some important sets of criteria and do not fall into relationships of dominance and subsumption with each other. Thematic features overlap only partially and incompletely across domains (Nespor, 1987, p. 325).

In an attempt to clarify the meaning of "belief," Pajares expresses the need to distinguish between belief and knowledge and explains that knowledge is based on objective fact, while beliefs are based on evaluation and judgment. Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, Cuthbert (1988) define belief as a proposition or statement of relation among things accepted as true. They claim that this definition is commonly used by educational philosophers and anthropologists who have operationalized it and developed methodological tools to investigate it. Supported by the findings of Eisenhart et al., this is the definition of "belief" used in the present study.

Supplementary, Kagan (1992) argues that most of a teacher's professional knowledge can be regarded as belief, claiming that knowledge is considered a belief that has been affirmed as true on the basis of objective proof or consensus of opinion. In an

attempt to categorize teachers' knowledge (or beliefs), Kagan described three areas in which they may be situated: (a) content, as it is related to the academic material to be taught; (b) context, as it is related to specific groups of students; and (c) person, as it is embedded within the teacher's unique belief system. For the purpose of providing a brief review of how teacher beliefs influence their practice, the three areas Kagan identified are used in the present study to categorize findings from some of the existing literature.

In a search for studies that exemplify the impact of teacher beliefs on their behavior, over 800 examples were found. Many of these studies are related to teacher beliefs about their practice in particular content areas. A possible reason for the apparent emphasis on content related beliefs may be explained by a statement made by Kagan (1992). "In sum, researchers have found that a teacher's beliefs usually reflect the actual nature of the instruction the teacher provides to students" (p. 73). Her statement can be substantiated in numerous studies that examine teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning in particular subject areas.

An example of this type of research project is found in a study by Stipek, Givvin, Salmon, and MacGyvers (2001). In this study, the authors examined teacher beliefs and practices related to traditional and inquiry-oriented mathematics instruction. To collect the necessary data, the authors surveyed and videotaped 21 fourth through sixth grade teachers. They found that teachers who held traditional beliefs about teaching mathematics emphasized performance and speed. Teachers who believed in a more inquiry-oriented approach were more concerned with learning and understanding.

The work of Richardson, Anders, Tidewell, and Lloyd (1991) also exemplifies how teacher beliefs influence their practice. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between teachers' beliefs about the teaching of reading comprehension and their classroom practices. Participants included 39 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade teachers who were interviewed, observed, and a subset who were videotaped. Interview questions were designed to elicit teacher responses about teachers' beliefs about reading comprehension and how children learn to read in general and to gather participants' more private beliefs about these topics. Researchers found that there was a relatively strong relationship between teachers' stated beliefs and their practices.

In another study, Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter, and Loef (1989) found that teachers who believed that students constructed their own understanding of solving problems used more word problems when teaching. They also spent more time developing students' counting strategies than teachers who did not. These studies exemplify how teachers' content related beliefs influence their practice.

Numerous studies exist that examine context beliefs or teacher beliefs related to specific groups of students, Kagan's second category of teacher knowledge or beliefs. These studies provide further evidence indicating that teacher beliefs influence their behavior. This research suggests that teachers may behave differently towards students depending on their beliefs or assumptions about them.

As an example, Bamburg (1994) found that some teachers engage in more affirming nonverbal behavior with students whom they believe have higher ability than "slow" students. Li (1999), in a study examining teachers' beliefs about male and female

students' mathematical ability, found that many teachers believe that math is a subject considered to be a male domain. These teachers had higher expectations and more positive attitudes toward male students. Carrington (1999) claims that teacher beliefs and attitudes about inclusion affect how services are implemented for special education students. Research also shows that teacher beliefs about race and the socioeconomic levels of parents influence teacher expectations and how teachers interact with students (Eisenhart et al., 1988).

Kagan's third category of teacher knowledge (or beliefs) is "person" or the knowledge embedded within the teacher's unique belief system, and includes subconstructs of teacher beliefs such as teacher self-efficacy, locus of control, and pupil-control ideology. This category seems most closely related to the influence of teachers' beliefs on how they communicate caring to students because these beliefs are not content related, although they may be influenced by context.

A study by Agne et al. (1994) considers the relationship between teacher belief systems and effectiveness and examines teacher efficacy, a subconstruct of beliefs. Teacher efficacy is a concept that fits into *person,* the third of Kagan's categories. Teacher efficacy is defined by Bandura (in Agne et al., 1994) as one's belief about his or her capability to perform a given behavior in a specific situation. The authors quote Bandura and Schunk (1981) when explaining how self-efficacy beliefs influence behavior. ". . . Self-efficacy beliefs affect people's choice of activities, how much effort they expend, and how long they will persist in the face of difficulties" (p. 142). Ashton and Webb (1986) focused on teacher self-efficacy and found that, "Teachers with a high

sense of efficacy were more likely than their low-efficacy counterparts to define low-achieving students as reachable, teachable, and worthy of teacher attention and effort" (p. 72).

Agne et al. (1994) also examined pupil control ideologies, explaining that pupil control ideology is associated with teacher beliefs about the need for order and control in the classroom. In this study 92 in-service teachers were matched to 88 educators who had been awarded "Teacher of the Year" from state and national contests. In-service teachers were matched to award winning teachers according to the state, the type of school and enrollment, and the subject and grade level in which they taught.

Each participant received a packet containing, among other items, the Teacher Belief Questionnaire. This questionnaire was comprised of four parts: The Teacher Efficacy Scale, the Teacher Locus of Control Scale, the Pupil Control Ideology Form, and the Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers. Participants also received a demographic questionnaire to collect data on teachers' gender, years of teaching, grade level taught, and highest degree earned. These demographic variables were chosen because of their relationship to four types of teacher beliefs that have been highly correlated with student achievement: teacher efficacy, locus of control, pupil control ideology, and teacher stress.

The data for this study were collected and analyzed using a logistic multiple regression procedure. Significance was demonstrated for two main effects of teacher beliefs and demographics: pupil-control ideology and highest degree earned. Findings suggest that Teachers of the Year were significantly more humanistic in their beliefs regarding pupil-control orientation than in-service teachers and held a greater number of

degrees at the master's level or higher than in-service teachers. Because of significant confounding due to the interrelatedness of the four teacher belief constructs, the authors of this study further reduced the model used for analysis to control for overlapping.

Of particular importance to the present study is that when Teachers of the Year are compared with in-service teachers, they are significantly more humanistic in their pupil-control beliefs. Characteristic of these beliefs are trust, acceptance, friendship, respect, self-discipline, democratic climate, flexibility, student self-determination, and non-punitive, non-moralistic attitudes. According to the authors, these ". . . define a teacher belief system whose fundamental orientation may be characterized as caring" (p. 149).

In a related study by Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel (1976) that investigated teachers' beliefs about learning priorities, researchers identified four teacher orientations: laissez-fair, open education, conventional methods, and traditional education that reflected teachers' beliefs about the importance of stressing content related materials or meeting students' emotional needs. These orientations ranged from an intensive emphasis on grade-level facts and skills to a primary emphasis on wider developmental goals. Findings suggest that teacher orientations about students' emotional needs and feelings ranged from teachers believing that these student needs were relatively unimportant to the belief that these feelings were essential to the learning process. These beliefs impact teacher behavior and practice because they influence the emphasis placed on the cognitive and affective domains.

In a review of the existing literature, no studies were found that related specifically to teacher beliefs in regard to communicating caring to students. However, numerous sources indicate that teachers believe that caring is an important component of effective teaching (Brooks, 1999; Perry, 1996; Perry and Rog, 1992; Stronge, 2002). As an example, in a study conducted by Perry & Rog (1992) of 182 pre-service and student teachers and 35 experienced teachers, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire requesting that they list characteristics or behaviors that they believed made teachers effective. Caring was mentioned more often than any other variable.

The studies mentioned in the preceding paragraphs provide evidence that teacher beliefs do influence their behaviors in the classroom and support Clark and Peterson's (1986) statement that, ". . . a teacher's cognitive and other behaviors are guided by and make sense in relation to a personally held system of beliefs, values, and principles" (p. 287). This claim has significant implications for the present study because it suggests that teachers who believe they communicate caring to students should reflect caring in their behavior.

Do inconsistencies exist between teachers' beliefs and their behavior?

 From the research cited above, it is evident that teacher beliefs influence their practice. However, research also indicates that teacher behaviors are not always consistent with their beliefs. In a paper that discusses the effects of teachers' beliefs and values on inclusive education, Carrington (1999) explains that a teacher's educational platform exists at two different levels: their espoused theory (what teachers say they

assume, believe, and intend) and their theory in use (the assumptions, beliefs, and intents inferred from their behavior).

Vlachou (1997) uses the term teacher context when referring to teachers' espoused theory. Teacher context represents idealism or what teachers would like to do. He renames "theory in use" as educational context, or what actually happens in the classroom. Both can be influenced by the school culture and other factors.

Fang (1996) suggests that the complexities of classroom life may limit a teacher's ability to provide instruction that is aligned with their theoretical beliefs. This finding is a result of a review of teacher beliefs and practices, consisting of more than ten studies dealing with literacy and teacher beliefs about teaching and learning. From this review, Fang found mixed results. A number of the studies she examined suggest that teachers have implicit theories about teaching reading and teach according to their theoretical beliefs. Other studies she examined demonstrate that teacher beliefs are reflected in their plans, but not in lesson implementation.

Garrahy (2001), in a study of three third grade teachers' gender related beliefs and behaviors, compared the teachers' gender beliefs with what actually occurred in their classrooms. Data sources included classroom observations, formal interviews, informal conversations with teachers, classroom materials, and informal interactions with students. Teachers were observed for one half day per week over a four month period. The teachers in this study believed that they had equal interaction with both boys and girls, even though their actions did not support their espoused beliefs.

Duffy (1977) found similar inconsistencies in a study of teacher beliefs regarding the teaching of reading. In the first phase of his study, 350 teachers were asked to complete a survey based on six categories of contrasting approaches to teaching reading. Participants were asked to respond to 6 propositional statements for each of the 6 categories by indicating which statement within a range of five was "most like me" to "least like me". Thirty-seven of the 350 teachers were found to have the strongest conceptions of teaching reading.

These 37 teachers were asked to complete the *Kelly Role Repertory Test* to further define their beliefs about teaching reading. Eight teachers who seemed to have the purest beliefs about how reading is taught were then selected and observed on ten different occasions while teaching reading in their classrooms. Of the eight, four teachers consistently used practices that were aligned with their beliefs, two incorporated practices not considered within the beliefs they espoused, and the remaining two teachers demonstrated practices that were not reflective of their beliefs. In this study, inconsistencies between teacher beliefs and practices were noted in half of this small sample of teachers.

In another study that investigated the effects of teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs and instructional practices in preschool and first grade classrooms, the authors found that teachers are more likely to say they have beliefs that are consistent with developmentally appropriate practices than to indicate they use behavior that is consistent with these beliefs (Jones & Gullo, 1999). Teachers involved in this study that included 293 children in 13 first grade classrooms were asked to complete a scale

designed to measure the degree to which their instructional practices and beliefs reflected the tenets of developmentally appropriate practice. By comparing the results of the teacher beliefs and practices instrument to the standards advocated by the National Education of Young Children (NAEYC), it was determined which first grade students in the study had been taught by teachers who had developmentally appropriate beliefs in the areas of language arts and mathematics. Student membership in each of these areas varied, indicating a difference between teachers' developmentally appropriate beliefs and the developmentally appropriate practices they used. This finding suggests that teachers' stated beliefs are not always reflected in their practice.

Ernest (1989), when considering the beliefs of mathematics teachers, suggests that there are three reasons why teachers' beliefs do not always match their practice. One reason relates to the depth of teachers' beliefs and how they integrate their beliefs with pedagogical knowledge. The second reason why teachers' beliefs do not always match their behavior is that teachers are not always aware of their beliefs in conjunction with their teaching practice. As a result, they fail to reconcile any conflict between the two. Finally, the constraints of school context such as the influence of administrators, colleagues, or the curriculum inhibit teachers who may wish to teach in a manner that is more closely aligned with their beliefs.

From an examination of the literature, it appears that teachers' espoused theory and their theory in use may be inconsistent. This literature supports the hypothesis of this study that although teachers may believe they communicate caring to students, their behavior may not be reflective of that belief. As a result students may not perceive a

teacher's behavior as caring, creating a discrepancy between how teachers believe they communicate care and how caring is perceived by students.

Are teacher beliefs difficult to change?

If a discrepancy exists between how teachers believe they communicate caring and how students perceive teacher caring, then there may be a need for teachers to enhance or alter their beliefs about how they communicate care. Teacher beliefs are difficult to change (Brown, Cooney & Jones, 1990; Pajares, 1992). They are usually not affected by professional reading or research (Hall & Loucks, 1982). Most teachers seem to obtain their ideas or beliefs about teaching from their own practice or the practice of colleagues (Zahorik, 1987). Posner, Strike, Hewson, and Gertzog (1982) claim that for teachers to change their practice, a conceptual change is necessary.

Tillema (1997) conducted a study of conceptual change to determine the differential effects of beliefs on performance improvement with student teachers. He claims that there must be an impasse, a discrepancy with available knowledge, before people are concerned about changing existing beliefs. He states that three conditions must be met for a change in beliefs to occur. The new information provided must: offer a better explanation and make things more understandable (intelligence); offer efficient solutions to problems and be consistent with knowledge in other domains (plausible); and hold the promise to create new possibilities (fruitful).

Tillema (1997) presents a four-stage model that incorporates the conditions he has outlined. In the first stage, a person's beliefs must be made explicit. Secondly opportunities need to be provided to determine how the new knowledge presented relates

to existing beliefs. Thirdly, the new information must be perceived to meet the three conditions of intelligence, plausibility, and fruitfulness. Finally, the new information presented must be made to fit the existing belief structure by revising or reconstructing it. These stages are very similar to those suggested by Postner et al., (1982).

In Tillema's (1997) study, the participants were 63 second-year student teachers. The model summarized in the preceding paragraph was delivered as part of their course work. To measure student teachers' beliefs in relation to their performance, students were asked to give two lessons, one prior to taking the course and one after participating in the course. The performance measurement used contained a diagnostic checklist administered before and after the course for each of the lessons presented. Inter-rater reliability was used on a sample of the lessons to test the reliability of the checklist. A teaching-belief test measured the student teachers' orientation toward a more direct-instruction perspective or a more pupil-initiated perspective.

Findings from this study indicate that student teachers' beliefs were challenged, but not significantly changed. Their performance between the two lessons was changed, but this study suggests that the change in behavior was superficial because students' beliefs were not altered. The author suggests that a more prolonged and intense exposure of programs aimed at changing beliefs may solve this problem.

Stipek et al.'s study (2001) on teacher beliefs and practices related to mathematics which has been cited previously, suggests that teacher reflection on classroom experiences has been shown to be effective in changing teacher beliefs. This finding is supported by findings in other studies reviewed by the authors demonstrating that when

teachers observe student responses to their attempts to change their practice, teachers have the opportunity to reflect on previously established beliefs.

In Stipek et al.'s study (2001), student behavior provided evidence that caused teachers to reflect on and reconcile their pre-existing beliefs with their behavior, resulting in a change in their practice. According to Fenstermacher (1979), relevant evidence is necessary before teacher beliefs change. This finding is supported by Tillema's (1997) claim that beliefs change only when new information is perceived by the teacher to meet the three conditions of intelligence, plausibility, and fruitfulness.

In a study that examines the research on the relevance of teacher beliefs to educational reform initiatives, Eisenhart et al. (1988) reviewed literature on teacher belief systems from the 1960s through the 1980s. From the literature reviewed, they identified eleven beliefs about the activities of teaching that seemed to be shared by most of the teachers represented in the data they considered. They categorized these beliefs into 3 domains: high responsibility, expertise, and control; problematic responsibility, expertise, and control; and low responsibility, expertise, and control.

From their review, they found that teachers viewed instructional activities that were directly related to helping students learn as their main responsibility. These activities are what teachers believe they do best and what they want to be able to control. Activities unrelated to direct instruction of students such as the development of new materials and administration of student records were judged negatively by teachers who felt these tasks should be assigned to other personnel.

In the hope of providing corroborating evidence that would support the findings from the literature review they had conducted, Eisenhart et al. (1988) then conducted a pilot study of their own. They used the "Heuristic Elicitation Methodology" to elicit a full range of responses from four diverse student teachers in their senior year to gather data on their attitudes about teaching. The data collected were based on tape recorded interviews and were used to construct two belief matrices. Each matrix contained the same list of activities, but with a different list of attitudes. Each of the two matrices was used as an instrument to elicit information from each half of a sample of 52 student teachers. Each of these student teachers were asked to complete the matrix by responding "yes" or "no" to the question, "In your teaching, does (this attitude) characterize your experience in/with this activity?" Individual responses were aggregated and coefficients of distributional similarity were calculated.

Data from Eisenhart et al.'s (1998) study suggest that teachers have a positive orientation towards change that allows them to maintain responsibility, exercise control, and create a classroom atmosphere where they can identify student progress. Changes that reduce a teachers' prerogative in the classroom are not as likely to be accepted. Findings from this study imply that some teacher beliefs remain stable over time and do not change in relation to experience, location, or level taught. These findings indicate that change involving behaviors that teachers can control and for which they hold responsibility is more accepted by teachers. They also indicate that when teachers can identify student progress related to a change in their behavior or practice, relevant evidence is provided that challenges their existing beliefs.

The purpose of this study was to examine how middle school teachers believe they communicate care and how their behaviors are perceived by students, to determine if a discrepancy exists between the two, and to identify how any discrepancies manifest themselves. By gathering student responses about how teacher caring is perceived, teachers may be provided with evidence that challenges their beliefs. By confronting teacher beliefs about how they communicate care to students, their beliefs may be altered, resulting in enhanced teacher caring behaviors.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This literature review suggests that perceived teacher caring plays an important role in students' success in school. Various findings indicate that perceived teacher caring contributes to students' self-worth, sense of membership in the classroom and school community, motivation, effort, and achievement. Research indicates that middle school students are able to identify teacher behaviors that they perceive as caring. Although no specific studies were found examining teacher beliefs about how they communicate caring to students, evidence was found to support the notion that teachers believe that caring is an important component of effective teaching.

For the purpose of this study, belief is defined as: "A proposition or statement of relation among things accepted as true" (Eisenhart et al., 1988, p. 53). Although researchers cannot agree on the definition of "belief," there seems to be a consensus in the literature that teacher beliefs do influence teacher behavior. Evidence supporting this claim has been presented in three categories of teacher knowledge or beliefs: content,

context, and person. Teacher beliefs about efficacy and pupil control ideology, in particular, may influence teacher beliefs about how they communicate caring to students.

Research also indicates that teacher beliefs are not always consistent with their behavior. Several reasons for this inconsistency have been presented to demonstrate that teachers' espoused theory or beliefs are not always aligned with their theory in use, supporting the hypothesis of this present study that a discrepancy may exist between how teachers believe they communicate caring to students and the behavior students perceive as caring.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was three-fold: to examine the behaviors middle school teachers use and believe communicate caring and students' perceptions of their caring behaviors; to determine if a discrepancy exists between the two; and to identify the nature of any discrepancies. By identifying any discrepancies and determining the nature of them, teachers may be provided with the evidence needed to change their beliefs about how they communicate care to students and in turn alter or enhance their caring behavior.

Context of the Study and Participants

The data used in the present study were collected as part of a professional development activity in a suburban middle school containing grades 6-8. This school has been recognized as an exemplary middle school and has received The National Blue Ribbon Award, The Don Eichhorn Award, given to outstanding middle schools in Pennsylvania, and other awards of distinction. Approximately 90% of its students score at the proficient or advanced levels on state assessments in reading and math. The district where this school is located is one of the largest in the region and had an approximate enrollment of 8,223 students during the 2003-2004 school year.

The median household income of families in the school community, as of 2002, was $72,715, with about two percent of the district's students classified as low income. The proportion of adult residents with at least a bachelor's degree at that time was estimated at 63.5%. Approximately ninety-five percent of the students were Caucasian

with Asian/ Pacific Islanders being the largest minority group. The district's special education enrollment, excluding students identified as gifted, was approximately 10% of the total enrollment (Standard & Poors School Evaluation Services, 2002).

According to Standard & Poors School Evaluation Services (2002), the average teacher's salary in the district was $63,918, significantly higher than most of Pennsylvania's public school teachers. Almost half of the teaching staff had at least twenty years of teaching experience. The district's proportion of teachers with a master's degree was about 56%.

For several years the faculty of a middle school in this district participated in a Building Improvement Plan (BIP) called "Connectivity." One of the goals of this plan was to assist in improving the achievement of at risk students by increasing their "connectivity" or sense of belonging in the classroom and the school community. In the fall of 2004, as an extension of this BIP and to increase teacher awareness of their own and others' caring behaviors, faculty members were asked to identify ways in which they believed they communicated care to students. Fifty-eight middle school teachers and staff members ranging in age, gender, years of experience, grade level and subject areas participated.

In conjunction with this professional development activity, and to provide teachers with information about teacher behaviors that students perceived as caring, two hundred forty-four 8th grade students were asked about the kinds of teacher behaviors that they perceived as caring. Eighth grade students, ranging in age from 13 years old to 15 years old, were chosen as opposed to sixth or seventh grade students because they had

more experience with middle level teachers than their younger classmates and would, hopefully, have a wider range of responses.

The 8th grade students participating in this activity wrote comments about 28 eighth grade and special area teachers. Of the 28 teachers identified, 16 had responses from 8 or more students. These 16 teachers, ten females and six males, were chosen as the participants in this study. The subject areas they taught were varied and the length of the participants' teaching careers ranged from five to 30 years. One hundred eighty-four eighth grade students provided anonymous comments about the behaviors of these particular teachers. Permission to use this data in the present study was obtained from the building principal.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

Data from teacher participants were collected through the use of a one-item questionnaire. This instrument asked faculty members to list behaviors that they used and believed communicated care to students (See Appendix A). To collect data about student perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors, eighth graders were asked to complete a brief, anonymous writing assignment about a randomly assigned subject area teacher (See Appendix B). The writing prompt asked them to think about the ways a particular teacher showed them that he/she cared about the student as a person and his/her success in school and to list at least three ways that the teacher demonstrated care. Students were told that if they felt the teacher did not demonstrate caring about them or their success in school, they could explain why. Students were also asked to describe a specific time when this

teacher demonstrated caring about them or did not, and to describe what this teacher said or did.

Procedures

Data on teacher beliefs about behaviors they use and believe communicate caring to students were collected during a faculty meeting in September, 2003, using the previously described one-item questionnaire. The purpose of this activity was to increase teacher awareness about how they believed they communicate care to students. During that meeting, the Assistant Principal distributed the questionnaire after first explaining that the activity was an extension of the "Connectivity" Building Improvement Plan. Teachers were asked to take a few minutes to complete the form. The data from the questionnaire were then grouped by grade level and electronically mailed to the faculty and staff for their information. For the purpose of this study, only the responses of the 16 eighth grade teacher participants have been used.

To inform teachers about the behaviors students perceived as caring, a student writing assignment was given to 8th grade students during the first five to ten minutes of their science classes in March. The Assistant Principal passed out the assignment (Appendix B) in each classroom and told students that their teachers had been asked to identify ways they believe they communicate caring to students. Students were then asked to identify ways teachers showed them that they cared about them as individuals and about their success at school. Students were told that research shows there is a connection between school success and teacher caring, that the assignment was anonymous, and that their honest responses would be appreciated. The Assistant

Principal then directed groups of students to write about a randomly selected subject area teacher, e.g. your 8th grade English teacher. The general results of this activity were shared at the May faculty meeting.

Teacher and student responses from these activities comprise the data that are used in the current study to determine if a discrepancy exists between the behaviors middle school teachers believe they use to communicate caring to students and the teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring. These responses were also used to describe the nature of any discrepancy that was identified.

Data Analysis

To facilitate the comparison of student and teacher responses, student comments were first grouped into categories or themes of caring according to similarities by the author of the present study. Hayes and others cited Fowler (1988) when explaining the rationale for using this methodology. According to Fowler,

> When respondents are asked to answer questions in their own words, the range of answers will not be fully predictable ahead of time. For such open-response questions, code development is an interactive process whereby the researcher identifies categories that emerge from the answers, as well as imposing order on the answers that are obtained. The idea is to create categories that group answers that are analytically similar and to differentiate between answers that are different . . . One criterion for a good code is that it must unambiguously assign each answer to one and only one code number. The other criterion is that it puts answers in analytically meaningful categories (p.129).

After the students' comments were categorized, titles were then provided to each emerging group and prototypical responses were listed for each theme of caring by the author of this study. Two readers were asked to review the themes and prototypical responses used to describe them. One of the readers is a school psychologist and the other

is a middle school teacher who was not a participant in the present study. Categorized responses were compared and discussed among the researcher and readers. Some revisions to the themes' titles and the student comments used as descriptors were made. Consensus was reached among the three. The themes of caring, with prototypical responses, that emerged in the current study may be seen in Table 1.

To confirm the reliability of the themes of caring behaviors that emerged, three readers including a middle school teacher, a school psychologist, and an administrator were then asked to categorize 75 random student comments using the prototypical responses in each theme as a guide. The three readers agreed on the categorization of 92% of the random comments. All student responses were then placed into caring themes by the author of the present study (See Appendix C). Student responses that did not fit into any of them because they were negative were placed in a separate category entitled "Other."

A random sample of about twenty-five percent of the total teacher responses were categorized by the same three readers using a similar process. There was an index of agreement of 100% among the three readers for teacher responses. All teacher responses were then placed into themes of caring by the author of the present study (See Appendix D).

Table 1

Themes of Caring and Prototypical Responses

Themes of Caring	Prototypical Responses
1 Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being	The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them; greets students; smiles; is interested in knowing students; cares about their well-being; is nice; respectful.
2 Provides extra time when needed	The teacher provides adequate time to complete class work and homework; extra time for review and testing when needed; and is flexible with dead-lines for make-up work and late work.
3 Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging	The teacher rewards excellence with words of praise, stickers, a pat on the back, candy, etc., and is encouraging.
4 Sets and maintains positive expectations	The teacher communicates high expectations to students; prepares students for the future and expects students to do homework and care about their grades.
5 Is authentic	The teacher shares stories about his/her family, likes and dislikes; and is open and honest with students.
6 Is interested in student activities	The teacher incorporates things that occur outside of the classroom into class discussions when appropriate; asks students about their personal interests/activities/family; and spends extra time with student activities.
7 Helps students to develop responsibility and independence	The teacher reminds students that they are responsible for themselves and to others; uses appropriate discipline; and promotes good citizenship.

Table 1

Themes of Caring and Prototypical Responses (cont.)

Themes of Caring	Prototypical Responses
8 Is available to students	The teacher communicates that he/she is available to students outside of class time for assistance.
9 Uses humor with students	The teacher demonstrates a sense of humor when interacting with student.
10 Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning	The teacher is dedicated; prepared and organized; interesting; teaches with enthusiasm and fun; and maintains a student-owned atmosphere.
11 Uses active communication skills	The teacher uses active listening, makes eye contact with students, asks for student opinions, etc.
12 Communicates with parents	The teacher sends home interims, calls or e-mails parents.
13 Is fair	The teacher treats all students with equity.
14 Explains concepts and checks for understanding	The teacher provides explanations, answers questions, and checks for understanding.
15 Provides academic assistance	The teacher provides needed instructional materials; re-teaches concepts when needed; reminds students about assignments; helps with class work and homework; and provides accommodations.
16 Provides opportunities for extra credit	The teacher provides opportunities for extra credit.

The data, after being categorized into caring themes, were analyzed according to the research questions asked in Chapter I., beginning with the first question.

Question #1

How do middle school teachers believe they communicate caring to their students? The 16 eighth grade teacher participants in this study contributed 110 total responses when answering the question, "What behaviors do you use that you believe communicate care to students?" Responses were first listed according to each individual teacher. If teacher responses included more than one behavior, each behavior was listed as a separate response. Next, the responses were clustered into the categories or themes of caring that emerged using the previously described procedure (Appendix D). A percentage of the number of teachers responding in each theme was calculated. A frequency chart of the behaviors that teachers believe they use to communicate caring to students was then created.

Question #2

What teacher behaviors do middle school students perceive as caring? One hundred eighty–four eighth grade students provided 491 responses to the following prompts: "Think about the ways this teacher shows you that he/she cares about you as a person and your success at school. List at least three ways," and "Describe a specific time when this teacher demonstrated that he/she cared about you or did not. What did this teacher say or do?" These responses were first listed according to teacher and then categorized into themes of caring using the previously described method (Appendix C). An additional category entitled "Other" was created for responses that were negative and

did not fit into the categories which emerged. These responses may be seen in Appendix E. A percentage of the number of students responding in each of the themes of caring, with the exception of the category "Other" was calculated. A frequency chart was then created to reflect the type and frequency of teacher behaviors students perceive as caring.

Question # 3

> *Is there a discrepancy between the caring behaviors identified by teachers and those perceived by students?* A comparison of the students' responses with the teachers' responses was made to identify any broad similarities or differences between the percentage of teachers and students who had responses placed in each theme of caring.

Point biserial correlations were also computed for each theme in order to examine the relationship between teacher beliefs about their caring behaviors and student perceptions of the behaviors their teachers use to communicate care. To facilitate the computation of these correlations, teachers who listed a behavior that was grouped in a particular theme of caring were assigned a '1' for yes in that theme. If they did not identify a behavior that was placed in that particular theme, they were assigned a "0" for no. Because there were 8 or more student respondents for each teacher, the mean of student respondents in each theme of caring for each teacher was calculated. The students' mean scores and their respective teacher's coded response of '1' or '0' in each theme of caring were used to calculate these point bi-serial correlations between the behaviors teachers say they use and believe communicate caring to students with the teacher behaviors students perceive as caring. The desired level of significance in the resulting correlations was an alpha level of .05.

To further quantify the results, deviation scores between the caring behaviors identified by individual teachers and those perceived by their respective students in each theme of caring were calculated by subtracting the percentage of student responses in each theme from the teacher's response of '1' or '0'. The mean of the absolute values of these scores was computed for each theme of caring to determine the degree of discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in each theme. Deviation scores closer to '0' indicate agreement between the teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and the teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring. The further away a deviation score is from 0, the greater the discrepancy.

Question #4

If a discrepancy exists, what is the nature of the discrepancy? The same data that were used to determine if any discrepancies existed between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and those teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring were also used to identify the nature of any discrepancies. Further examination of the nature of any discrepancies was facilitated by considering the means of the absolute value of the deviation scores for individual teachers. Deviations close to '0' indicate agreement between the behaviors that each teacher believes he/she uses to communicate caring to students and the teacher behaviors that their respective students perceive as caring. The larger the deviation score, the greater the discrepancy between the individual teacher's beliefs and his/her respective students' perceptions.

A closer look at the deviation scores of a sample of individual teachers was also completed to more carefully investigate the nature of any discrepancies. For each of these

teachers, the deviation scores in each category of caring was examined. Positive deviations mean the teacher had a behavior placed in a particular category of caring, but the student did not, while a negative deviation score indicates the reverse: the student perceived a teacher behavior that was grouped in a particular theme of caring, but the teacher did not. The deviation scores of all of the teacher participants may be seen in Appendix F. The two teachers with the lowest deviation scores, indicating the least discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions, along with the two teachers with the highest deviation scores, indicating the greatest discrepancy between the two variables were chosen for further examination. Negative comments written by students were also used to inform the nature of any discrepancies. These comments were organized by teacher in each caring theme and may be seen in Appendix E.

In summary, the themes of caring behaviors that emerged in this study were a result of grouping together similar teacher behaviors that were identified by students. Behaviors that the teacher participants in this study believe communicate care were also placed in the caring themes that emerged. To determine the frequency of respondents in each category of caring, the percentage of students and teachers in this study who had behaviors placed in each concept group was calculated. These percentages were then ranked. Point biserial correlations between the variables of teacher beliefs about behaviors they use to communicate caring and students' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors were also used to determine if there were any discrepancies between the variables in each category of caring.

Deviation scores were calculated between teacher beliefs and student perceptions to quantify the data. The mean of the absolute value of these deviation scores was computed for each teacher and each theme of caring to determine any discrepancies. The two teachers with the least discrepant mean deviation scores and the two teachers with the greatest discrepant deviation scores were used to more closely identify the nature of any discrepancies. Negative comments written by students were also used to inform the nature of any discrepancies.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To determine if there was a discrepancy between the behaviors middle level teachers believe they use to communicate caring to their students and how students perceive their teachers' caring behaviors, 16 eighth grade teachers were selected from among a total of 58 faculty members who provided confidential responses to a one-item questionnaire administered during a faculty meeting. The questionnaire asked, "What behaviors do you use that you believe communicate care to students?" A total of 110 teacher responses were collected from the identified teachers.

In conjunction with this professional development activity, and to provide teachers with information about teacher behaviors that students perceived as caring, 249 eighth grade students were asked about the kinds of teacher behaviors that they perceived as caring. Sixteen of the teachers had eight or more responses written about them and were chosen as participants in this study. One hundred eighty-four eighth graders provided 491 anonymous responses about these teachers. Results from the analysis of this data were organized according to the questions posed in Chapter I of this study, beginning with the first question.

Question #1

How do middle school teachers believe they communicate caring to their students? To identify how middle school teachers believe they communicate caring to students, the behaviors that teachers listed were placed into themes of caring (Appendix D) using the method described in Chapter III of this study. Then the percentage of

teachers who listed behaviors that were grouped in each theme was calculated. A

frequency chart was created to display the number and percentage of teachers who

responded in each category from the highest frequency to the lowest frequency. These

data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

The Number and Percentage of Teacher Participants Who Had Behaviors Grouped in Each

Theme of Caring

Caring Theme Number and Name	Number of Teacher Participants	% of Teacher Participants
1 Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being	12	75%
3 Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging	7	44%
4 Sets and maintains positive expectations for students	7	44%
6 Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom	7	44%
8 Is available to students	6	38%
5 Is authentic	5	31%
9 Uses humor with students	5	31%
10 Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning	4	25%
12 Communicates with parents	3	19%
15 Provides academic assistance	3	19%
7 Helps students develop responsibility and independence	2	13%
11 Uses active communication with students	2	13%
13 Is fair	1	<1%
14 Explains concepts and checks for understanding	1	<1%
16 Provides opportunities for extra credit	1	<1%
2 Provides extra time when needed	0	0

N=16

According to the data presented in Table 2, three-fourths of the teacher participants believe they use behaviors grouped in Theme 1, *Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being* to communicate caring. Slightly less than half of the teachers identified behaviors they believe they use to communicate caring that were grouped in Theme 3, *Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging*, Theme 4, *Sets and maintains positive expectations for students*, and Theme 6 , *Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom*. The third largest number of teachers listed caring behaviors that fit into Theme 8, *Is available to students*. Seven other themes of caring contained between 13% and 31% of the respondents. The remaining four themes contained less than 1% of the participants, with no teachers reporting behaviors they use and believe communicate caring in Theme 2, *Provides extra time when needed*.

Question # 2

 What teacher behaviors do middle school students perceive as caring? One hundred eighty-four students provided 491 anonymous responses to the prompt, "Think about the ways this teacher shows you that he/she cares about you as a person and your success at school. List at least three ways," and "Describe a specific time when this teacher demonstrated that he/she cared about you or did not. What did this teacher say or do?" Student responses were first listed by teacher, and then categorized into themes of caring (Appendix C) using the method described in Chapter III of the current study. The number and percentage of student respondents who identified teacher behaviors in each category is displayed in a frequency chart labeled Table 3.

Table 3

The Number and Percentage of Student Respondents Who Had Behaviors Grouped in Each Theme of Caring

Caring Theme Number and Name	Number of Student Respondents	% of Student Respondents
15 Provides academic assistance	87	47%
14 Explains concepts and checks for understanding	60	33%
1 Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being	53	29%
4 Sets and maintains positive expectations for students	37	20%
10 Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning	28	15%
3 Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging	27	15%
2 Provides extra time when needed	22	12%
8 Is available to students	18	10%
7 Helps students develop responsibility and independence	14	8%
11 Uses active communication with students	13	7%
9 Uses humor with students	12	7%
13 Is fair	11	6%
16 Provides opportunities for extra credit	9	5%
5 Is authentic	9	5%
6 Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom	9	5%
12 Communicates with parents	7	4%

N = 184

As noted in the data presented in Table 3, almost half of the students perceived teacher behaviors that were grouped in Theme 15, *Provides academic assistance* as behaviors that expressed caring. One third of the student respondents identified teacher behaviors that they perceived as caring in Theme 14, *Explains concepts and checks for understanding*. Theme 1, *Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being*, contained the third largest number of student respondents. Between 10% and 20% of the students identified behaviors that fit into five themes of caring. Less than 10% of the students perceived teachers' caring behaviors that fit into the remaining eight themes.

Question # 3

Is there a discrepancy between the caring behaviors identified by teachers and those perceived by students? Three methods were used to determine if a discrepancy exists between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and the teacher behaviors students perceive as caring. First, the percentages of teacher and student respondents in each theme were compared. These data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Number and Percentage of Student and Teacher Respondents Who Had Behaviors

Grouped in Each Theme of Caring

	Students		Teachers	
Caring Theme Number and Name	Number	%	Number	%
1 Is respectful, courteous . . .	53	29%	12	75%
2 Provides extra time when needed	22	12%	0	0
3 Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging	27	15%	7	44%
4 Sets and maintains positive expectations for students	37	20%	7	44%
5 Is authentic	9	5%	5	31%
6 Is interested in the student in activities outside . . .	9	5%	7	44%
7 Helps students develop responsibility . . .	14	8%	2	13%
8 Is available to students	18	10%	6	38%
9 Uses humor with students	12	7%	5	31%
10 Communicates a positive attitude . . .	28	15%	4	25%
11 Uses active communication with students	13	7%	2	13%
12 Communicates with parents	7	4%	3	19%
13 Is fair	11	6%	1	<1%
14 Explains concepts and checks for understanding	60	33%	1	<1%
15 Provides academic assistance	87	47%	3	19%
16 Provides opportunities for extra credit	9	5%	1	<1%

Note. Total number of students = 184.   Total number of teachers = 16

By comparing the percentage of student and teacher respondents in each theme of caring in Table 4, some discrepancies were observed. The largest discrepancy appears in Theme 1, *Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being*. In that theme, 75% of the teachers identified behaviors they believe they use to demonstrate caring to students, while only 29% of the students identified teacher behaviors they perceive as caring. The second largest discrepancy between the number of teacher and student respondents is in Theme 6, *Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom*. Thirty-nine percent more teachers than students had behaviors grouped in this theme of caring. Theme 3, *Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging*, is where the third largest discrepancy in the percent of teacher and student responses occurs. Twenty-nine percent more teachers had behaviors grouped in this theme than students. In these three themes of caring, teachers believe they use behaviors that communicate caring to students much more frequently than students perceive them. This difference indicates that teachers view behaviors they believe communicate caring differently than students perceive their teachers' caring behaviors

Themes of caring that have discrepancies of between 24% and 28% are Theme 8, *Is available to students*, Theme 15, *Provides academic assistance*, Theme 14, *Explains concepts and checks for understanding*, Theme 5, *Is authentic*, Theme 9, *Uses humor with students*, and Theme 4, *Sets and maintains positive expectations for students*. In four of these six themes of caring, teachers once again believe they use behaviors that communicate caring to students more often than students perceive their teachers'

behaviors as caring. In themes 14 and 15, more students identify teacher behaviors they perceive as caring then their teachers believe they use.

Themes of caring with between a 10% and 20% discrepancy are Theme 10, *Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning*, Theme 2, *Provides extra time when needed*, and Theme 12, *Communicates with parents*. Two of the remaining themes of caring have discrepancies of less than 10%. They are Theme 7, *Helps students develop responsibility and independence* and Theme 11, *Uses active communication with students.* In all but one of these themes of caring, teachers believe they use behaviors to communicate caring to students more frequently than these behaviors are perceived by students. Twelve percent more students than teachers perceive teacher behaviors that have to do with providing extra time when needed as caring. Interestingly, no teachers identified any behaviors grouped in this theme as behaviors they believe that communicate caring to students.

In summary, in 11 of the 16 themes of caring, more teachers believe they use behaviors that communicate caring to students than are perceived by students. Students perceive teacher behaviors that communicate caring more than teachers believe they use behaviors grouped in three themes of caring (*Provides extra time when needed, Provides academic assistance*, and *Explains concepts and checks for understanding*). Only two themes show little or no discrepancy between the behaviors teacher teachers believe they use to demonstrate caring and behaviors students perceive as caring. They are Theme 13, *Is fair* and Theme 16, *Provides opportunities for extra credit*. However, very few teachers or students had behaviors grouped in these themes.

The second method used to examine discrepancies between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors was to compute point biserial correlations for each category of caring. To facilitate the computation of a correlation coefficient, teachers who listed a behavior that was grouped in a particular theme of caring were assigned a '1' for yes in that theme. If they did not identify a behavior that was placed in that particular theme, they were assigned a "0" for no. Because there were 8 or more student respondents for each teacher, the mean of student respondents in each theme of caring for each teacher was calculated. The students' mean scores and their respective teacher's coded response of '1' or '0' in each theme of caring were used to calculate point biserial correlations between the behaviors teachers say they use and believe communicate caring to students with the teacher behaviors students perceive as caring. The desired level of significance in the resulting correlations was an alpha level of .05. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Point Biserial Correlations Between Teacher and Student Respondents Who Had

Behaviors Grouped in Each Theme of Caring

Theme of Caring Number and Name	Correlation	p
1 Is respectful, courteous . . .	-.239	.391
2 Provides extra time when needed	a	a
3 Uses positive reinforcement . . .	.040	.883
4 Sets and maintains positive expectations	-.471	.065
5 Is authentic	-.150	.578
6 Is interested in the student in activities outside . . .	.157	.561
7 Helps students develop responsibility . . .	-.112	.681
8 Is available to students	.423	.102
9 Uses humor with students	.069	.800
10 Communicates a positive attitude . . .	-.052	.849
11 Uses active communication with students	-.106	.697
12 Communicates with parents	.645**	.007
13 Is fair	.022	.936
14 Explains concepts and checks for understanding	.453	.078
15 Provides academic assistance	.237	.377
16 Provides opportunities for extra credit	.561*	.024

a Cannot be computed because one of the variables is constant (There were 0 teacher
    respondents in this category.)
 * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When examining the relationship between each variable, only two themes of caring demonstrate significant correlations between teacher beliefs about behaviors they use and believe communicate caring to students and teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring. In these analyses, a significant positive relationship would indicate agreement between teachers and students, whereas a significant negative relationship would indicate a discrepancy. Results indicate two significant positive correlations. The first is for the category having to do with providing opportunities for extra credit and the second is for communicating with parents. There were no other correlations between the two sets of variables that demonstrated a significant relationship. This may be because the range of the correlations was restricted due to the size of the sample used in this study.

The third method utilized to examine discrepancies between teacher beliefs and student perceptions of their teachers caring behaviors was to calculate a deviation score between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in each category of caring. These scores were derived by subtracting the percentage of student responses in each theme of caring from their respective teacher's coded response of '1 - yes' or '0 - no'. The mean of the absolute value of these scores was computed in each category to determine the degree of discrepancy between the variables in each theme of caring. Deviation scores closer to '0' indicate agreement between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and the teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring. The further away a deviation score is from 0, the greater the discrepancy. These results may be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

Mean Deviation Scores Based on the Absolute Value Between Teacher Beliefs and Student Perceptions in Each Theme of Caring

Theme Number and Name	Deviation Score
1　Is respectful, courteous . . .	.643
2　Provides extra time when needed	.040
3　Uses positive reinforcement . . .	.449
4　Sets and maintains positive expectations	.546
5　Is authentic	.338
6　Is interested in the student in activities outside . . .	.433
7　Helps students develop responsibility . . .	.175
8　Is available to students	.019
9　Uses humor with students	.345
10　Communicates a positive attitude . . .	.300
11　Uses active communication with students	.199
12　Communicates with parents	.190
13　Is fair	.111
14　Explains concepts and checks for understanding	.328
15　Provides academic assistance	.459
16　Provides opportunities for extra credit	.082

When examining the results of the deviation scores between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in each theme of caring, it is important to remember that the scores are based on the absolute value of the deviations. The scores farthest away from zero indicate the largest discrepancies. Two themes of caring demonstrate deviation scores that are higher than .50. They are Caring Theme 1, *Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being* and Caring Theme 4, *Sets and maintains positive expectations.* Caring Theme 15, *Provides academic assistance* has the third largest deviation score, followed by Caring Theme 3, *Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging.*

A visual inspection of the results of the deviation scores found in Table 6 compared to the differences in the percentages of teachers and students who had behaviors grouped in each theme of caring found in Table 4 reveals similarities. Both sets of results demonstrate that the greatest discrepancy between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors have to do with teachers being respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well being. Other themes of caring that demonstrate the most discrepancy in both tables are, *Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging, Is interested in student activities outside of the classroom*, and *Provides academic assistance.* Themes of caring in both tables that indicate the least amount of discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions are *Provides extra time for extra credit, Is fair, and Helps students develop responsibility and independence.*

Question 4

If a discrepancy exists, what is the nature of the discrepancy? The data used to determine if any discrepancies exist between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and those teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring were also used to identify the nature of any discrepancies. Further examination of the nature of any discrepancies was facilitated by considering the means of the absolute value of the deviation scores for individual teachers.

These data are different from that used to identify discrepancies between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in each theme of caring because they consider discrepancies that exist between individual teachers and their respective students rather than between all student and teacher respondents in each theme of caring. Deviations close to '0' indicate agreement between the behaviors that each teacher believes he/she uses to communicate caring to students and the teacher behaviors that their respective students perceive as caring. The larger the deviation score, the greater the discrepancy between the individual teacher's beliefs and his/her respective students' perceptions. The mean deviation scores between individual teachers and their own students are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Mean Deviation Scores Based on the Absolute Value Between Individual Teacher Beliefs and Their Students' Perceptions Organized by Teacher

Teacher Number	Deviation Score
1	.313
2	.366
3	.418
4	.198
5	.416
6	.244
7	.325
8	.375
9	.235
10	.225
11	.333
12	.339
13	.332
14	.338
15	.192
16	.376

Using the data from Table 7, four of the teacher participants were chosen to more closely investigate the nature of any discrepancies. Two of these teachers have the lowest deviation scores when considering the means of the absolute value, indicating the least discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions. They are Teacher #4 and Teacher #15. The two teachers with the highest deviation scores are Teacher #3 and #5. The deviation scores of these two teachers indicate that they have the greatest discrepancy between their beliefs about the behaviors they use and believe communicate caring and their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors. Of additional interest, and perhaps a subject for future research, is the fact that the two teachers with the least discrepancy between their beliefs and their students' perceptions were male and the two teachers with the greatest discrepancies between the variables were female.

A closer examination of the direction of the deviation scores of these individual teachers in each theme of caring allowed this researcher to identify whether the existing discrepancy was due to the beliefs of the individual teacher or the perception of their students. When interpreting the results, positive deviations mean the teacher had a behavior placed in a particular category of caring, but the student did not, while a negative deviation score indicates the reverse: the student perceived a teacher behavior that was grouped in a particular theme of caring, but the teacher did not. Deviation scores in each category of caring for these four teachers may be seen in Table 8. The nature of the discrepancies that are identified in each category for each teacher are discussed in Chapter V. The deviation scores of all of the teacher participants may be seen in Appendix F.

Table 8

Deviation Scores for the Four Identified Teachers Organized by Themes of Caring

Theme of Caring	Teacher #			
	4	15	3	5
1 Is respectful, courteous . . .	-0.25	0.67	0.86	0.83
2 Provides extra time when needed	0	-0.17	0	-0.17
3 Uses positive reinforcement . . .	0	0	1	1
4 Sets and maintains positive expectations	0.83	-0.08	-0.29	0.92
5 Is authentic	0	-0.08	1	0.92
6 Is interested in the student in activities outside . . .	-0.08	1	-.07	0.92
7 Helps students develop responsibility . . .	0	0	-.07	-0.08
8 Is available to students	-0.08	-0.08	0	0.50
9 Uses humor with students	-0.17	0	1	-0.08
10 Communicates a positive attitude . . .	0.83	-0.08	0.05	-0.08
11 Uses active communication with students	-0.08	0	1	-0.08
12 Communicates with parents	0	0	-0.07	-0.17
13 Is fair	0	-0.08	-0.14	-0.25
14 Explains concepts and checks for understanding	-0.42	-0.33	-0.36	-0.33
15 Provides academic assistance	-0.42	0.42	-0.64	-.33
16 Provides opportunities for extra credit	0	-0.08	-0.14	0

When considering student responses in the present study, it is interesting to note that 29 students or approximately 15% of them had one or more negative comments about 14 of the 16 teacher participants. This finding suggests that although most students were able to identify some teacher behaviors that they perceived as caring for each of the teacher participants, several students did not perceive the same teachers as caring. Examples of negative responses include, "She can be rude to some students," "I think she expects too much of 8th graders," "Most of the time our class is rushed to finish things so questions or comments have to be eliminated," and "He doesn't want to help people who missed class. He tells me to ask someone what I missed or says, 'You should have been here.'" Appendix E displays all of these comments organized by teacher in each theme.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was three-fold: to examine the behaviors middle

school teachers use and believe communicate caring and students' perceptions of their

caring behaviors; to determine if a discrepancy exists between the two; and to identify the

nature of any discrepancies. If middle school teachers believe their behaviors

communicate care to students, but their students do not perceive their teachers' behaviors

as caring, then students are unlikely to profit from the positive influence teacher caring

has on a number of factors that may impact their success in school. Likewise, if there are

teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring that their teachers do not believe

communicate care, some of the possible benefits to students may be lost.

Research demonstrates that beliefs influence behaviors and that teacher beliefs are

difficult to change (Brown, Cooney & Jones, 1990; Pajares, 1992). Tillema (1997) claims

that there must be an impasse, a discrepancy with available knowledge, before people are

concerned about changing existing beliefs. He states that three conditions must be met for

a change in beliefs to occur. The new information provided must: offer a better

explanation and make things more understandable (intelligence); offer efficient solutions

to problems and be consistent with knowledge in other domains (plausible); and hold the

promise to create new possibilities (fruitful). By providing evidence that a discrepancy

exists between teacher beliefs and student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors,

teachers may have intelligent, plausible, and fruitful reasons to alter their beliefs, resulting in enhanced caring behaviors.

A discussion of the findings and conclusions of this study is presented on the following pages and is organized according to the research questions presented in Chapter I.

<div align="center">Discussion</div>

How Do Middle School Teachers Believe They Communicate Caring to Their Students?

Many of the behaviors that the teacher participants believe communicate caring to students in the present study are similar to those identified in existing literature and may be described as humanistic (Agne, 1994). Findings from Agne's study indicate that a humanistic pupil-control ideology is typical of caring teachers. According to Agne, the teacher who has a more humanistic pupil-control ideology is more likely to maintain a classroom atmosphere with active interaction, close personal relationships, mutual respect, positive attitudes, flexibility of rules, and one that fosters student self-discipline, self-determination, and independence. She describes the belief system that influences these types of behaviors, "The specific teacher beliefs involved in humanistic pupil-control ideologies are trust, acceptance, friendship, respect, self-discipline, democratic climate, flexibility, student self-determination, and nonpunitive, nonmoralistic attitudes" (p 149).

Agne describes teachers on the other end of the continuum as custodial in their pupil-control ideologies. Custodial teachers are highly controlling and are characterized by using punitive sanctions, moralistic perceptions, highly impersonal relationships with

students, attitudes of mistrust, and a focus on maintaining order. The number of teachers in the present study who have behaviors categorized into caring themes that are similar to the behaviors associated with the more humanistic belief system suggested by Agne (1994) indicate that many of the teacher participants' beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate care are more caring than custodial.

An example of teacher behaviors that reflects a more humanistic or caring pupil-control ideology can be found when considering the large number of teachers who identified behaviors they believe communicate caring to students that were grouped in Caring Theme 1, *Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being*. These teachers said they believe providing individual attention to students, being compassionate towards students' concerns, smiling at students, and knowing their names and something about students to use in conversation are behaviors that communicate caring to students.

A possible explanation for why so many of the teacher participants in this study believe that treating students with courtesy and respect, and demonstrating an interest in their well-being communicates care is their knowledge of the characteristics and the developmental stages of the students they teach. Most middle school teachers know that young adolescents tend to be self-conscious, lack self-esteem, and are sensitive to personal criticism (National Middle School Association, 1995). According to Elkind (in Walley, 1999), adolescents have a tendency to create an "imaginary audience – the belief that you are the center of everyone's attention and that everyone is preoccupied with your appearance and behavior" (p 42).

Existing literature on effective middle schools describes the importance of middle level teachers understanding, accepting, and affirming their students (National Middle School Association, 2001). Stronge (2003) concurs when he states, "Effective teachers demonstrate care for the student first as a person, and second as a student. They respect each student as an individual" (p 15).

Additionally, the teacher participants in this study may believe that part of their role and professional responsibility is to model appropriate behavior to students. According to the National Middle School Association (2001) middle level teachers need to model among other things, cooperation, respect for diversity, and positive interactions with others. This explanation supports the notion that teacher behaviors are influenced by their beliefs.

Other humanistic behaviors that have to do with teachers using positive reinforcement and being encouraging, and setting and maintaining positive expectations for students are identified in existing research (Cotton, 1995; Agne, 1994) and are reflected by almost half of the teacher participants in the present study. Teacher availability and authenticity were other themes of caring mentioned frequently by teacher participants. Stronge (2002) notes the importance of teachers being available to students as an expression of teacher caring. He explains that, "Being available to students . . . legitimizes the teacher as a person when demonstrating genuine concern and empathy toward students" (p15). Cotton identifies these kinds of behaviors in a different classification of effective practices, suggesting that the availability of teachers to students is important, but not necessarily a means of communicating caring. His description

(1995) of teachers who, "share anecdotes and incidents from their experience as appropriate to build rapport and understanding with students," (p16) are reflected in the findings in the present study.

Some of the teacher participants also believe using humor and communicating a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning are behaviors that demonstrate caring to students. Stronge (2002) includes the use of humor when discussing the social interactions of caring teachers with students. He suggests that caring teachers exude an enthusiasm for teaching, learning, and the subject matter that supports positive relationships with students and encouraging student achievement.

Other behaviors listed by the teacher participants in the present study that could be considered humanistic are reflected in Caring Theme 6, *Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom and* Caring Theme 11, *Uses active communication skills*. In the existing literature, Cotton (1995) identifies similar teacher behaviors. These behaviors include teachers who "pay attention to student interests, problems, and accomplishments in social interactions in and out of the classroom," and who, "communicate interest and caring to students both verbally and through such nonverbal means as giving undivided attention, maintaining eye contact, smiling, and nodding" (p16). Stronge (2002) also identifies comparable teacher attributes that are demonstrative of caring that include knowledge of students, listening, understanding, and warmth and encouragement.

Less than 20% of the teachers in the current study believe that helping students to develop responsibility and independence or communicating with parents are ways of

expressing caring to students. Only one of the teacher participants listed a behavior that could be grouped in Caring Theme 13, *Is fair.* This is surprising since a characteristic of middle school students that the teacher participants in the present study should be aware of is middle school students' desire for social justice and what serves the common good (Manning & Butcher, 2001). According to Stronge (2002), "Respect and equity are identified as the prerequisites of effective teaching in the eyes of many students."

The small percentage of teacher participants who had behaviors grouped in Caring Theme 2, *Provides extra time when needed,* Caring Theme 14, *Explains concepts and checks for understanding*, Caring Theme 15, *Provides academic assistance,* and Caring Theme 16, *Provides opportunities for extra credit* indicate that few, if any, of the teacher participants in the current study believe these behaviors communicate caring. These results and those found in previous research support the finding that most teachers do not believe that providing students with extra time as needed, explaining concepts and checking for understanding, providing academic assistance, and providing opportunities for extra credit are behaviors that most teachers believe communicate caring.

It is helpful when analyzing these results to remember that the themes of caring behaviors that emerged in the present study were derived from the teacher behaviors that students perceived as caring. Behaviors teachers believe communicate caring were then grouped into these themes. The fact that fewer teachers identified behaviors placed in the themes of caring identified in the preceding paragraph suggests that these types of behaviors are not typical of the ones that they believe communicate caring to students. A possible explanation for why fewer teachers listed behaviors that could be grouped in

these themes is that the teacher participants believe these behaviors are part of their professional responsibilities related to the act of teaching and are not necessarily ways they believe communicate caring.

In addition, the results in the present study were obtained by asking teachers to list behaviors they use and believe communicate caring to students. In some of the previous studies that identified behaviors teachers use and believe communicate caring, teachers were provided with a list of behaviors to which they were able to respond. The difference in the methodology used may have influenced the results.

What teacher behaviors do middle school students perceive as caring?

When examining the results in this portion of the present study, it is important to bear in mind the characteristics and developmental stages of young adolescents, both of which are likely to influence the teacher behaviors that middle school students perceive as caring. According to Manning and Butcher (2001), middle school students, also called transescents, fall in between two stages of psychosocial development identified by Erikson: Industry vs. Inferiority (from approximately 6 years old to 11 years old) and Identity vs. Role Confusion, lasting from around age 12 to approximately age 18.

In the Industry vs. Inferiority stage, transescents need to accomplish specific and relevant tasks, complete assignments and feel a sense of pride in order to grow in confidence and build self-esteem. In the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage, young adolescents seek increased independence from adults and are concerned about the kind of person they are becoming (Manning & Butcher, 2001). By considering these stages of

development when interpreting the results of this study, the reasons for some students' perceptions are more understandable.

Some of the characteristics of middle school students include the onset of abstract reasoning; a sense of idealism, moral concern and social justice; the need for self-definition; and a desire to make sense of their world. They also have increased empathy and role-taking ability, increased interest in interaction with the opposite sex, and increased risk-taking behavior (Manning & Butcher, 2001; Walley, 1999). These characteristics support some of the existing research (Coles; 1986, Walley; 1999) that suggests that middle school students often base value judgments on what serves the common good or what satisfies particular emotional feelings or psychological needs, rather than what may seem to be clear evidence from an adult point-of-view. Knowing these characteristics assists in understanding why some of the students in the present study perceived particular teacher behaviors as caring.

The most salient teacher caring behaviors reported by students have to do with providing academic assistance. It is interesting to note that almost 1/5 of teacher behaviors perceived by students as caring were grouped in this category. This finding is similar to previous research that indicates that students perceive their teachers as caring when they help them with class work and assignments (Alder, 2002; Bosworth, 1995, Hayes et al., 1994).

In Bosworth's study, teachers who helped students with school work was the highest ranking category of teacher caring behaviors identified by males and females, whites, and students in all of the middle school grade levels examined. Findings from

Adler's study (2002) and a study conducted by Hayes et al. (1994) are comparable. Their research and findings from the present study indicate that students perceive teachers who help with academic work as caring.

A significant number of behaviors identified by students in this theme of caring have to do with teachers being helpful when students knew they were going to miss school or had been absent. Some examples of their comments grouped in this theme include, "I was asking about homework because I would be missing a few days and she wrote down my assignments for me," and, "She is always understanding when we are going to miss class. She gladly gets us our work ahead of time and explains just how to do everything without being upset that we are missing class." Other comments such as, "She helps us do well on tests by preparing us for them," "She tries to help by giving tips for studying and stuff like that (They really help – I raised one of my grades after using her advice)," and "She gives us review sheets to help people study," are typical teacher behaviors identified by students that were also grouped in this theme of caring.

A larger number of students also perceive teacher behaviors categorized in Caring Theme 1, *Is courteous, respectful, and interested in students' well-being*, as caring. As an example of this type of teacher behavior, one student stated, "If she sees something wrong, she'll either ask you if everything is ok or compliment you. One day I was upset about something and she asked me if I was ok and if I needed to talk and just let me know she was there." Other examples of teacher behaviors that are typical of those in Caring Theme 1 are, "(He) talks to single students if there is a problem," and, "He won't embarrass me or make an example of me." Similar student perceptions were identified in

Alder's study (2002). Students in that study perceived teachers who talked with students individually and discussed personal problems students were having at home or at school as caring. Findings from Hayes et al.'s study (1994) also indicate that students perceived teachers who responded to the individual and counseled the student as caring teachers.

Twenty percent or less of the students in the current study perceived teacher behaviors as caring that were grouped in the remaining themes. The low percentage of student respondents who identified teacher behaviors in these themes of caring indicates that they are behaviors that are not generally perceived as caring by most students in this study, although many of these behaviors are perceived as caring by students in existing literature. The results in the present study may also be reflective of the methodology used. Given more time or a list of behaviors to choose from, students may have identified additional behaviors that could have been grouped in this theme.

Is There a Discrepancy Between the Caring Behaviors Identified by Teachers and Those Perceived by Students?

Findings indicate that discrepancies exist between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use and communicate caring and their students' perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors in several themes. To facilitate a discussion of these discrepancies, themes of caring where teachers more often believe their behaviors communicate caring than are perceived by their students are considered first, followed by an examination of the behaviors grouped in the themes of caring that demonstrate that teachers are not always aware of the kinds of behaviors students perceive as caring

Teachers more often believe their behaviors communicate caring than are perceived by their students. There are 11 themes of caring that contain a higher percentage of teacher respondents than students. This finding suggests that teachers more often believe their behaviors communicate caring than are perceived by their students. Among these caring themes, the one that demonstrates the greatest discrepancy is Caring Theme 1, *Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students well-being.*

Although it is apparent that a discrepancy exists in Caring Theme 1, it is worth noting that both a substantial number of the teacher participants believe that being respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being communicates caring and that a large percentage of students also perceive these teacher behaviors as caring. Some of the students who perceive teacher behaviors categorized in this theme as caring said, "If she sees something wrong, she'll either ask you if everything is ok or compliment you. One day I was upset about something and she asked me if I was ok and if I needed to talk and just let me know she was there," "(The teacher) talks to single students if there is a problem," and, "He won't embarrass me or make an example of me."

Similar student perceptions were identified in Alder's study (2002). Students in that study perceive teachers who talked with students individually and discussed personal problems students were having at home or at school as caring. Findings from Hayes et al.'s study (1994) also indicate that students perceive teachers who respond to the individual and counsel the student as caring teachers. A possible explanation for why more students in the present study did not identify these behaviors is that most students

probably expect teachers to be respectful, courteous, and interested in their well-being and as a result do not perceive these types of behaviors as caring.

The second highest discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions is Caring Theme 4, *Sets and maintains positive expectations for students.* This discrepancy may be due in part to the expertise of the teacher participants in this study since they are probably aware that teacher expectations can influence students' success in school. It is not surprising, then, that almost half of them identified behaviors grouped in this theme as behaviors they believe communicate caring to students. In addition, when considering the relatively high achievement of many of the students in this particular school, the teacher participants in this study may be more inclined to believe that their students will experience academic success.

A possible explanation for the low percentage of students who identified behaviors that were grouped in this theme is that some students may feel that high teacher expectations puts too much pressure on them to perform. This perception is apparent in the following comments made by students in the present study, "Sometimes she pushes too hard," "Parents and teachers nag us about how we need to turn things in and say it is only because we care. Well, it doesn't make us feel cared for when we are getting yelled at," and, "I think she expects too much of 8th grade students." Weinberger and McCombs (2003, p. 119) suggest that,

> Attending to the needs of the learner allows for effective strategies that address high academic achievement and learning in combination with strategies for offsetting student problems of alienation, lack of engagement, fear of failure, or being stressed out and overwhelmed.

Discrepancies also exist between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in the caring themes that have to do with teachers using positive reinforcement and encouragement, being authentic, using humor with students, and communicating a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning. Of these themes of caring, the greatest discrepancy occurs in Caring Theme 3, *Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging.* This may be because most teachers are aware that positive reinforcement and encouragement are believed to impact student success. However the discrepancies between teacher beliefs and student perceptions may also suggest that there are inconsistencies between some teachers' beliefs and their practice.

The discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions of teachers communicating care by being authentic is surprising because teachers who share anecdotes about their experience in order to build rapport and understanding with students demonstrate a teacher attribute that Cotton (1995) identifies as characteristic of teachers who interact with students in positive and caring ways. The discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions of teachers using humor to communicate caring may be due to the fact that adults and young people often differ in what they think is funny.

In the three remaining themes where a higher percent of teachers believe they use behaviors that communicate care than are perceived by students, the discrepancy is less. These themes have to do with helping students develop responsibility and independence, being available to students, and communicating with parents. This indicates that these teacher behaviors are not generally perceived as caring by most students in this study,

although most of these behaviors are perceived as caring by students in existing research (Alder, 2002, Bosworth, 1995; Hayes, 1994). When observing the percentage of teacher respondents in these themes, some teachers do believe the behaviors in these themes communicate caring.

Teachers are not always aware of the kinds of behaviors students perceive as caring. There are five themes of caring where a higher percentage of students perceive their teachers' behaviors as caring than their teachers believe they use to communicate care. These findings suggest that teachers are not always aware of the kinds of behaviors students perceive as caring. Teacher behaviors in four of these five themes are related to students' successful completion of class work and assignments.

Of these themes, Caring Theme 15, *Provides academic assistance*, showed the greatest discrepancy. Students' perceptions that their teachers care because of the academic assistance they provide may be explained when referencing Erikson's developmental stage of Industry vs. Inferiority (in Manning & Butcher, 2001). Most young adolescents want to feel a sense of accomplishment. Teachers who provide academic assistance enable students to feel successful rather than inadequate.

A related theme, Caring Theme 14, *Explains concepts and checks for understanding* was the second highest ranking theme in the present study containing teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring, however, few teachers identified any behaviors that were categorized in this theme. One reason why students may perceive teacher behaviors having to do with explaining concepts and checking for understanding as caring may again be explained by considering Erikson's Industry vs. Inferiority

psychosocial stage of development (in Manning & Butcher, 2001). According to Erikson, a characteristic need of middle school students is to understand and make sense of their world. It appears that the teacher participants who meet this need are perceived by at least one third of the students in the present study as caring teachers. These types of teacher behaviors are similar to those identified in previously mentioned studies (Alder, 2002; Bosworth, 1995; Hayes et al., 1994) and might also be considered providing academic assistance or helping with academic work.

In related themes of caring, some students perceived teachers who provide extra time when needed and give extra credit opportunities as caring teachers. Examples of student responses in these caring themes are, "Sometimes she gives us extra days to do work," "She gives a little extra time for late assignments," and "She gives us plenty of time and information, so we have a good chance of getting good grades." Few if any teachers believe these types of behaviors communicate caring. Previous research (Alder, 2002, Bosworth, 1995; Hayes, 1994) supports the findings in the current study demonstrating that most teachers do not believe providing students with extra time as needed, explaining concepts and checking for understanding, and providing academic assistance are behaviors that most teachers believe communicate caring.

The fact that fewer teachers identified behaviors related to academic assistance as caring may be due to a variety of possible reasons. First, they may believe these behaviors are part of their professional responsibilities as educators and not behaviors that communicate care. In addition, the methodology used to collect teacher responses may have limited the number and types of behaviors that they listed. The amount of time

provided to teachers when listing the behaviors they believe communicate caring to students may have limited their responses.

The discrepancies found in behaviors related to academic assistance are indicative of what may be the most important finding of this study. When these results are examined in relation to the existing literature, few, if any of the studies included in this discussion (Agne, 1994; Cotton, 1995, Stronge, 2002) identify teachers who believe that providing academic assistance or explaining concepts and checking for understanding are ways that teachers communicate caring to students.

The last of the five themes of caring behaviors where a higher percentage of students had behaviors categorized than teachers is Caring Theme 13, *Is fair.* Although some discrepancy exists between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in this theme, it is not as great as in other themes of caring. This is surprising since middle school students are characteristically concerned about social justice, what serves the common good, and being treated respectfully (Manning & Butcher, 2001).

If a Discrepancy Exists, What is the Nature of the Discrepancy?

A subset of four teachers was chosen from the sample group to more closely examine the nature of any discrepancies. The findings for this portion of the present study are organized into two sections. The nature of any discrepancies for Teacher #4 and #15 are discussed first under the heading, *Teachers with the least discrepancies.* Findings pertinent to Teacher #3 and #5 may be found in the section entitled, *Teachers with the greatest discrepancies.*

Teachers with the least discrepancies. Several findings are of interest when examining the nature of the discrepancies between the variables for Teacher #4 and Teacher #15. First, it is apparent that there are at least some minor discrepancies between teacher beliefs and student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors in many of the themes of caring, even though these two teachers demonstrate the least discrepancy between the behaviors they believe communicate caring ant their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors.

Secondly, in ten of the 16 themes of caring, the amount of discrepancy between these two teachers' beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors are similar. In the remaining six themes, there are decided differences in the teachers' beliefs, as indicated by the behaviors they listed, and their students' perceptions of the behaviors their teachers use to communicate caring. These discrepancies have occurred because of the limited time teachers and students were given to list their responses. Given more time, they may have identified more or different behaviors that they believe communicate caring to students or that students perceive as caring.

An important finding when examining the discrepancies between the variables for these two teachers is that neither of these two teachers seems to be aware that behaviors associated with Caring Theme 14, *Explains concepts and checks for understanding* communicates caring even though their students perceive their teachers as caring because they use these types of behaviors.

It appears from these findings, that even the teachers with the least discrepancy between their beliefs and their students' perceptions are not always aware of some of the behaviors their students perceive as caring. For these two teachers, the nature of the discrepancies indicate that in over half of the themes, students perceived them using behaviors to communicate caring that the teacher did not identify.

Teachers with the greatest discrepancies. The two teachers demonstrating the greatest discrepancies between their beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors are Teacher #3 and Teacher #5. When comparing these two teachers, some discrepancy can be found in almost every theme of caring. In ten of the 16 themes, the amount of discrepancy between these two teachers' beliefs and their students' perceptions of their caring behavior is similar. In the remaining six themes, the discrepancies vary. Both of these teachers believe they use behaviors to communicate caring to students that their students do not perceive as caring. In at least half of the caring themes for both teachers, students identify teacher behaviors that the teachers seem to be unaware of using to communicate caring. This is particularly true for Caring Theme 14, *Explains concepts and checks for understanding,* and Caring Theme 15, *Provides academic assistance.*

When comparing the two teachers with the least discrepancies to the two teachers with the most discrepancies, some similarities and differences can be found between their beliefs and their student perceptions in most themes of caring. Students perceive all four of these teachers as using behaviors to communicate caring that their teachers did not identify. The two teachers demonstrating the least discrepancies seem better able to

identify the behaviors they use and believe communicate caring to students than the two teachers who have the most discrepant scores.

When considering these results in isolation from the other findings presented in this study, the differences between teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring and their students' perceptions are varied. However, several generalizations can be made. First, it is apparent that teachers sometimes believe they are using behaviors to communicate caring that students do not perceive. Secondly, teachers are often unaware of the behaviors they use that students do perceive as caring. Finally, many of the discrepancies noted between these four teachers do reflect those that were previously discussed when considering the entire sample of teacher participants. This is especially evident when examining the discrepancy in Caring Theme 1, Is courteous, respectful, and interested in students' well-being. It is also apparent when considering the discrepancies for all four of the teachers in the subset of teacher participants in the caring themes that have to do with explaining concepts and checking for understanding and providing academic assistance.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

The findings in this study support the following conclusions. The beliefs that many of the teacher participants in this study have about the behaviors they use to communicate caring to students are similar to those identified in the existing literature (Agne, 1994; Cotton, 1995, Stronge, 2002). In addition, these behaviors reflect those that Agne (1994) characterizes as humanistic and typical of caring teachers. They also reflect

the teacher participants' knowledge of the unique characteristics, needs, and developmental stage of middle school students.

Many of the teachers in the present study believe that behaviors having to do with being courteous, respectful, and interested in students well-being, both in and outside of the classroom, being encouraging, and maintaining positive expectations for students are behaviors that communicate caring to students. These behaviors were also identified in existing literature as behaviors teachers use and believe communicate caring. Behaviors having to do with providing extra time when needed, explaining concepts and checking for understanding, providing academic assistance, and providing opportunities for extra credit were not behaviors that most of the teacher respondents in the present study believe communicate caring to students, nor were they cited in previous research as behaviors that teachers believe communicate caring.

The teacher behaviors that students perceive as caring in the present study are analogous to those perceived by middle school students in other studies (Alder, 2002; Bosworth, 1995; Hayes, 1994. Many of the student respondents perceived teachers who provide academic assistance, and explain concepts and check for understanding as caring teachers. Students in the present study also perceived teachers who are respectful, courteous, and interested in their well-being, and who set and maintain high expectations as caring teachers.

Findings from the present study demonstrate that there is a discrepancy between the beliefs teachers hold about how they communicate caring and their students' perceptions of their caring behavior in many of the themes of caring. These

discrepancies may be due to inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and practice, the characteristics and developmental stage of the student respondents which may have influenced the teacher behaviors they identified, or the methodology used in this study.

The greatest discrepancies between teacher beliefs and their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors exists in the themes of caring that have to do with teachers being courteous, respectful, and interested in students' well-being, teachers setting and maintaining positive expectations, and teachers providing academic assistance. Although the discrepancy between teacher beliefs and student perceptions in the theme of caring having to do with teachers being courteous, respectful, and interested in students' well-being is the largest, when ranking the percentage of respondents, a large percent of both teachers and students seem to agree that behaviors categorized in this theme communicate caring. In this theme of caring, as well as in the theme of caring that has to do with setting and maintaining positive expectations, a larger percentage of teachers than students listed behaviors that were grouped in these themes. This indicates that teachers believe these behaviors communicate caring more often than students perceive their teachers using these types of behaviors to communicate care. This finding is similar in over half of the themes of caring.

The third theme of caring that demonstrates the greatest discrepancy includes teacher behaviors that have to do with providing academic assistance. In this theme, a greater percentage of students perceived teachers who used these kinds of behaviors as caring than teachers believe they use to communicate care. In existing literature (Alder, 2002; Bosworth, 1995; Hayes, 1994), students consistently perceived teachers who

provided academic assistance as caring. Research reveals that teacher behaviors in this theme of caring are often associated with effective teaching practices, rather than with behaviors teachers use to communicate caring (Agne, 1994; Cotton, 1995; Stronge, 2002). This is perhaps the most important finding in this study because of the implications it has for the classroom and for changing teachers' beliefs about the behaviors they believe and use to communicate caring.

Limitations

The findings of this study have several limitations. First, results may not be generalizable because the middle school from where the sample population was drawn is not typical of most middle schools. The school is a nationally recognized school and has earned state and local awards for excellence in middle level education. The above average achievement level of the students who contributed responses in the current study may have influenced the behaviors they perceived as caring. Less academically successful students may respond differently. The unique characteristics and developmental stage of the middle school students who provided responses may also limit the results from being generalized to students in different levels of schooling.

Secondly, the community from which the sample population was drawn is atypical, limiting the generalizability of the results. The income level, racial and ethnic make-up up of the community, and the average education of the adults, may have been influential in the responses that were collected. These factors may preclude the results from being generalized to schools with different demographics. In addition, the teachers in the sample population are all Caucasian and experienced teachers. Teachers of a

different race or new teachers may have identified different or additional behaviors that they believe communicate caring to students.

A third limitation of the present study is the sample size. There were 16 eighth grade teacher participants and 184 students who responded to the instruments used in this study. Mean student responses were utilized for comparison purposes reducing the number of student responses in actuality to 16. The small sample size did affect the ability to compute reliable correlations because the range of the correlations was restricted. A larger sample may have provided more significant results.

Finally, the methodology used may also have limited the results. The time allotted to participants in this study to complete the questionnaires provided to them was limited. Teachers and students may have provided different or additional responses if more time had been provided for them to think more deeply about the responses they contributed. Direct comparisons could not be made because teachers and students did not respond to the same items of caring. The data collected allowed a snapshot of what each group believed or perceived as caring, but a lack of responses may have been an indication that a particular behavior did not occur to the participants. A rating scale that utilizes a list of responses would provide results that were more directly comparable.

<div align="center">Implications for Classroom Use</div>

Findings from this study indicate that there are discrepancies between the behaviors teachers use and believe communicate caring to students and their students' perceptions of their caring behaviors. By increasing teacher awareness of how their caring behaviors are perceived by students, teacher beliefs and student perceptions may

be more closely aligned. This alignment has the potential of increasing students' success in school.

Findings from this study also indicate that teachers need to be attentive to students' perceptions of caring by providing academic assistance and being sure to explain concepts clearly. This is especially important when students will be absent from class or have already missed class. Teachers also need to treat students with courtesy and respect and demonstrate an interest in the student as a person.

<p style="text-align:center">Implications for Future Research</p>

The findings of this study indicate that discrepancies exist between teacher beliefs about how they communicate caring and student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors. Because teacher beliefs influence their behaviors, it is important to create an instrument that measures individual teacher beliefs and student perceptions in the themes of caring that emerged from this study and that are identified in existing research. No rating scales of this type were found in the literature reviewed in this study. The results of this study provide important data on the kinds of caring behaviors that should be included. The use of such an instrument would provide results that are more measurable and eliminate the possibility that the participants did not consider particular caring behaviors when responding. In addition, the results would provide teachers with more concrete evidence that a discrepancy exists. As teachers reflect on and reconcile their pre-existing beliefs with their behavior, a change in their practice may result.

Using an itemized scale of behaviors would also permit future researchers to identify if the discrepancies between teacher beliefs and student behaviors are a result of

differences between teacher beliefs and student perceptions or due to an inconsistency between teacher beliefs and their actual practice. By identifying the constraints of the school context such as the influence of administrators, colleagues, or the curriculum that may inhibit teachers who wish to teach in a manner that is more closely aligned with their beliefs, teachers would be better able to identify plausible reasons for changing their practice. Existing research indicates that these factors may interfere with teachers using behaviors that are more closely aligned with their beliefs (Ernest, 1989).

Future research that considers the role of the gender, race, and socio-economic level of the participants may provide different results. Comparing these results with the findings in the present study may yield new and interesting data about student perceptions of their teachers' caring behaviors. Measuring the discrepancies between teacher beliefs and student perceptions about their caring behaviors in schools with different demographics and student achievement levels may also provide data that would support the findings of this study or indicate that teacher beliefs about the behaviors they use to communicate caring influence students' success in diverse schools in different ways.

It would also be interesting to use the themes of caring that emerged from this study with students in a variety of grade levels. The characteristics and developmental stages of the eighth grade students in the present study may have influenced their choice of teacher behaviors they perceive as caring. Students of different age and maturity levels may perceive teachers' caring behaviors differently.

Finally, future research that tracks teachers' use of behaviors that have to do with explaining concepts and checking for understanding, and providing academic assistance may provide important information about the need for more teachers to communicate caring by using the types of behaviors. These teacher behaviors were identified in the present study and in existing literature as behaviors students perceive as caring, but were rarely identified in the present study or in existing research by teachers as the kinds of behaviors they believe communicate care.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEACHER ACTIVITY

Name_____

What behaviors do you use that you believe communicate care to students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

APPENDIX B

STUDENT WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Student Writing Assignment

Teacher's name   _____

Think about the ways this teacher shows you that he/she cares about you as a person and your success at school. List at least three ways here. (If you feel this teacher does not demonstrate that he/she cares about you or your success in school, explain why here).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe a specific time when this teacher demonstrated that he/she cared about you or did not. What did this teacher say or do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being
(Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students,
smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and
respectful.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S7	Likes getting to know us better
1	S5	When I was going through a bit of a tough time, she understood if I was a little sad, or if my work wasn't quite up to par. Also, when I wasn't feeling well, she helped me get through the day.
1	S5	We made a get well card for a student in the hospital
1	S8	She asked me how I was doing
1	S9	She talks to us individually
1	S9	She gave me a nickname that I now use everywhere and it makes me feel special
1	S9	She is very nice to us
1	S10	She doesn't yell unless she needs to
1	S10	She talks to us as if we were equal
2	S16	For my birthday she gave me a happy birthday card which I thought was really nice
2	S16	When I was having a bad day, she asked if everything was ok
2	S20	She never gets angry and doesn't yell at us even when the class is disruptive
2	S20	During the CAT tests she didn't give us any homework
2	S20	During the CAT tests she gave us a snack every day

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being
(Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students,
smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and
respectful.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
2	S20	She is also my homeroom teacher and she brings us food some days
2	S25	She nominated me for 2 Outstanding Citizenship Awards
2	S25	She recognizes me, knows who I am, knows my name
3	S31	If she sees something wrong, she'll either ask you if everything is ok or compliments you. One day I was upset about something and she asked me if I was ok and if I needed to talk and just let me know she was there
3	S36	If we were sick, she'll ask how we feel
4	S43	He respects you
4	S45	He took the whole class into the – room just so we could see it
4	S51	He is concerned if you are sick
5	S57	She is nice to everyone
5	S63	When a problem comes up, she asks what is wrong
6	S70	Seeing us after class and offering to talk and stuff
6	S74	She tells us that she cares
6	S77	Always says hello in the halls and asks how I am doing
6	S77	One time I was tired and not having a great day and she asked what was wrong and talked to me

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being
(Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students, smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and respectful.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
7	S86	One time I had a sore throat and cough. She gave me a handful of cough drops and jolly ranchers
9	S100	She teaches you like a person
9	S101	She asked me a lot of questions when I first came here to see if I was in the right class
10	S107	Gives me attention
11	S118	She looks at us as individuals
11	S120	If we get hurt, she is concerned – when I cut my finger she let me go to the nurse
11	S117, S122	Says hi/says hi when you see her other places
12	S132	Nice
13	S137, S141, S142	Very respectful to us/to our belongings/considerate
13	S138	Talks to single students if there is a problem/he won't embarrass me or make an example of me
13	S140	He called me up to his desk during a video so that the other students wouldn't listen and said I needed to turn in a project and explained it to me again
13	S141	When I first moved here, he didn't just let me figure out what was going on. He explained it to me in a kind way

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being
(Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students,
smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and
respectful.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
13	S144	He is nice to us and we learn things and everyone likes him
14	S149	She is there when I need her
14	S149, S161	She is understanding about my life/very understanding
14	S150	She was always helpful and caring
14	S150	She always had a smile
14	S152	Let me borrow some lunch money
14	S151, S154, S156	Nice/pleasant
14	S157	She lets you go to the bathroom if you need to
14	S159	She is always saying "Hi" and "How are you?"
14	S161	She noticed when someone got a haircut or a new outfit
14	S155	When I raise my hand she calls on me
15	S176	He is nice/usually nice/pleasant
15	S176	He asks how we are when we come in everyday
15	S166, S168, S174	He cares about our safety
16	S177, S180	She is very understanding to situations
16	S180	She let me go to the nurse one time when I was sick
16	S182	Asks how our day was

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being (Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students, smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and respectful.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
16	S182	Asks about our weekend
16	S183	She is relaxed and doesn't scream a lot – She was collecting homework and we were talking and she kindly asked us to stop. She just said, "Please stop talking."

Note. The number of student responses is 68/491 or 14% of all responses. The number of respondents is 53/184 or 29% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 2: Provides extra time when needed (Descriptors – The teacher provides adequate time to complete work, provides time for homework completion, extra time for review and testing, and is flexible with deadlines for make-up work and late work)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S3	Sometimes she gives us extra days to do work
1	S3, S6	She gives a little extra time for late assignments
2	S16	She gives us plenty of time and information, so we have a good chance of getting good grades
2	S23	She often gives us time to work on homework in class
2	S25	I was going on vacation and had a 15 minute oral report due 2 days after I returned. Being as kind as she is, she extended my presentation by 2 extra weeks
5	S59	She let me take a test a day late because I was absent
5	S59	She lets us start on our homework a few minutes before the bell
5	S60	She accepts late work
6	S66, S70, S75	She will accept papers that are late/willing to let us make-up late assignments
6	S69	She gives us time to do homework
9	S98	If we don't finish a certain part of the test, she gives us time to finish it later
9	S99	She gives us a week to review for the test
9	S99	She moved the test a day cause the class wasn't ready
9	S103	She gives time in class to start homework
10	S105	He let me bring a project late

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 2: Provides extra time when needed (Descriptors – The teacher provides adequate time to complete work, provides time for homework completion, extra time for review and testing, and is flexible with deadlines for make-up work and late work)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
10	S108	He lets me set a time for a test I may have missed
13	S135	He will give me more time if needed
14	S148	She gives us enough time to complete our projects
15	S169	He gives time to make up work
15	S171	If you forgot your homework, he would give you an extra day
16	S179, S180	You always get credit for everything even if you turn it in a month late - I thought I was going to get a 0, but I got ½ credit/ She will let you turn in your homework late
16	S180	Gives time for projects

Note. The number of student responses is 26/491 or 5% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 22/184 or 12% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 3: Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging (Descriptors – The teacher rewards excellence with words of praise and extra credit and is encouraging.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S7	When grading our papers, she wrote little notes on the papers commenting about how she felt
2	S14, S15	She rewards us for A's on tests and for extra credit opportunities/gives us candy
2	S15	She always offers extra credit to reward us, but only if we have done our work
6	S72	She told me I am one of the brightest kids in the school and that I make her day
7	S78	Motivational words
7	S78	She told me how good of a job I was doing
7	S79	She compliments me on my work
7	S79	She motivates me to do my work
7	S79	She lost one of my assignments, but found it later and kissed me on the forehead
7	S81	I was having a bad day because of something someone said to me and she told me what a good person I was and how I shouldn't let what other people say bother me
7	S82	She cares about us a lot. She told us almost everyday how she loved having us and how she wants us to come visit her later
7	S86	If we came to school/class and looked down, she gave us a big smile/hug
7	S88	When I was in 7th grade, he pulled me aside one day and told me I had decent athletic ability and to never to let it go my head and to never give up

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 3: Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging (Descriptors – The teacher rewards excellence with words of praise and extra credit and is encouraging.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
8	S90	He encourages me to study
8	S93	Buys us doughnuts
10	S106	He compliments my work
11	S114	She is always trying to make us smile and feel good about ourselves
11	S115, 117, S119	She complimented me and told me and told me my work had gotten a lot better/everyday she compliments you/she tells me how much I have improved and come a long way
12	S123, S124, S131, S132, S133, S134	He encourages us to improve
12	S123, S132, S126, S131	He tells us to try harder/to do our best
12	S123	He compliments me
12	S133	He kept saying, "Good job"
16	S181, S182	She gives compliments
16	S181	She is encouraging

*Note. The n*umber of student responses is36/491 or 7% of all responses. The number of respondents is 27/184 or 15% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 4: Sets and maintains positive expectations for students (Descriptors –
The teacher communicates high expectations, assists students in identifying their goals,
prepares students for the future, expects students to do homework, cares about grades.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S1	She makes sure our homework is done
1	S11	She gets concerned when grades drop
2	S21	She always encourages me to do my best
2	S22, S23	She doesn't accept late or partially done work
2	S23	She teaches a lot to prepare us for high school and such
3	S28	I never really needed help in her class
3	S29	She called me over about my grade and what I could do to fix it
3	S32, S37	She cares about your grades/ if you do well on tests
3	S37	She cares about how we do and wants us to do well
4	S46	He tells us what people will expect of us next year
4	S50	He tells us how to succeed in class
5	S63	She helps us learn things for next year
6	S69	She cares about our grades
6	S69	She gives us a high daily grade in class
6	S72	She would never give up on anyone
6	S77	She always tries to give us the best grade possible because she wants us to do well
7	S80	She wants us to succeed in life
7	S86	She cared about our grades

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 4: Sets and maintains positive expectations for students (Descriptors –
The teacher communicates high expectations, assists students in identifying their goals,
prepares students for the future, expects students to do homework, cares about grades.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
8	S90	He mostly cares about my grades in his class
8	S90	He gives me lectures all the time about grades
8	S94	Tells us how the skills we learn now will help us in the future
10	S112	He wants you to be successful and learn in his class
11	S114	She stuck with me until she thought I had it
11	S114	She believes that we can do just about anything
11	S115, S116, S117, S118, S121, S122	She cares by pushing us to our ability/do better/do our best/makes sure all students try hard
11	S115, S116	She helps you be prepared for when you get older/we are the people of tomorrow and we need to make a difference
11	S121	When I hadn't done my best, we talked about it and worked the situation out
11	S122	She cares about my grade
12	S123	He teaches us skills that are difficult
13	S136	He helped me bring my grade up a little
13	S139, S146	He helps us with our grades/gives us chances to improve our grade
13	S143	He wants us to do good and excel

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 4: Sets and maintains positive expectations for students (Descriptors –
The teacher communicates high expectations, assists students in identifying their goals,
prepares students for the future, expects students to do homework, cares about grades.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
13	S143	He shows us that he cares when he gives really strict directions on how he wants something done
13	S144	He only accepts our best work and that makes us better people
14	S154, S158	She wants everybody to do a good job/do their best
14	S161	Always makes sure you are doing what is right and are on task
15	S175	He always taught us about things we will need in the future

Note. The number of student responses is 48/491 or 10% of all responses. The number

of respondents is 37/184 or 20% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 5: Is authentic (Descriptors – The teacher is open and shares stories about his/her family likes and dislikes)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S10	She tells you what she thinks
1	S11	Talks to you outside of class as a friend
5	S62	Personalizes every lesson
6	S67	She is very understanding and open
7	S87	She talks to us about her life
13	S139	Tells stories about himself
14	S161	One time during Drop Everything And Read, she told us that reading was not a burden, it opens our mind
15	S176	He talks about his son
15	S179	Tells stories about her family

Note. The number of student responses is 9/491 or 2% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 9/184 or 5% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 6: Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom (Descriptors - The teacher incorporates things that occur in the lives of students outside of school into class discussions when appropriate, asks about their personal interests/activities, spends extra time with student activities)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
3	S36	She seems to take interest in students outside of school
4	S44	Shows us how to connect what we are doing with real life
5	S60	She helps us to understand this subject in non-school situations
8	S88	He helps me to learn more and more about and intramural sport and good sportsmanship
10	S105	He filled out my entrance exam
11	S121	She encourages us in things outside of class
12	S127, S128	He asked me how I was doing in other classes/ in school
12	S128, S132	He asks students on a daily basis how they are doing in sports

Note. The number of student responses is 10/491 or 2% of all responses. The number of respondents is 9/184 or 5% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 7: Helps students develop responsibility and independence (Descriptors –
The teacher reminds students that they are responsible to themselves and others, uses
appropriate discipline, promotes good citizenship)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
2	S17	She cares about how well you do, but then she completely leaves it up to you to choose how well you do
3	S41	She noticed a kid hit me and she punished him and asked me if I was alright
5	S60	She hasn't given anyone in my class a misconduct card or detention
7	S80	She tries to get us more involved in community service
8	S88	He is trying to lead me in the right paths of life so I don't make mistakes
10	S107	I had seen another student cheating on a test and when I told him, he talked to the student without letting him know it was me
10	S111	If it seems that individuals in the class are trying to disrupt the class, he will take them out of class and exclude them from the activity altogether so we can have a better learning environment
12	S130	He makes sure I am using good judgment
12	S130	He tries to make me a better person
12	S131	When one of my friends tried to trip me, he yelled at him
13	S137	Doesn't discipline using detentions – he tells you what is wrong
13	S137	Gives us good life lessons
13	S141	He isn't very strict

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 7: Helps students develop responsibility and independence (Descriptors –
The teacher reminds students that they are responsible to themselves and others, uses
appropriate discipline, promotes good citizenship)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
13	S146	Doesn't tell us our grade so we have to figure it out ourselves
14	S162	She demonstrates that she cares for the school and its rules by making me spit out my gum daily
16	S183	She is lenient

Note. The number of student responses is16/491 or 3% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 14/184 or 8% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 8: Is available to students (Descriptors – The teacher communicates to students that he/she is available outside of class time for assistance

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S12	She sacrifices her time to help people in the class
2	S14	She shows she cares by coming into school early to give those absent a chance to complete work
2	S25	She demonstrates that she cares when she shows up at the places we go for extra credit
4	S48	I talked to him about class outside of class and he helped me
5	S54, S61, S62	She will work with us individually outside of class/it always seems like she cares about each and everyone of us
5	S55	If you need extra help she will let you come in early and tutor you
5	S58	Held help sessions
5	S60	She let me come in early to get caught up on stuff I've missed
6	S75	Sometimes she takes lunch to help us finish things
6	S76	She says we can always come when we need help
7	S87	She made us feel like we could go to her for anything
8	S94	Has after school classes sometimes
8	S94	When I called him for help (at home) when taking an on-line test, he used his free time to help me
9	S100, S104	If you need help, you can come in during homeroom time/ before or after school

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Category 8 (cont.): Is available to students (Descriptors – The teacher communicates to students that he/she is available outside of class time for assistance

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
9	S104	I went to her room during activity period for help on something and she helped me
14	S157	Offers to stay after school, before school, or activity periods to work with us
15	S171	When I didn't finish my project, he let me come down during activity period and finish

Note. The number of student responses is 20/491 or 4% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 18/184 or 10% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 9: Uses humor with students (Descriptors – The teacher demonstrates a sense of humor when interacting with students)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S4	Jokes around
1	S5, S9	She jokes around with us in a way that makes us feel at home and shows that she cares
4	S52, S53	He tries to make us laugh and make class fun/ He always tells us stories about gigs he's done to try to make us laugh
5	S62	She makes jokes
11	S115, S120	She has fun and kids around/she jokes around with us
12	S131	He tries to lighten the mood by telling a joke, or a story, or something
13	S138, S140, S142	He jokes to liven up class
16	S179	She is funny

Note. The number of student responses is 13/491 or 3% of all responses. The number of respondents is 12/184 or 7% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 10: Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning (Descriptors – The teacher is dedicated, prepared and organized, interesting, teaches with enthusiasm, fun, and maintains a student-owned atmosphere.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S3	She tries to teach us in fun ways
1	S10	She wants to be a great teacher
1	S10	She makes us look forward to class
2	S14, S15	She is very dedicated to teaching and thinks of creative ways to help us learn/making sure we learn
2	S17	You can tell she loves what she is teaching
2	S18, S26	She tries to make class fun/does fun activities
2	S19	She is very organized and has all our papers in case we lost them for the notebook check
2	S26	She asked us if we would rather have one big test or a couple smaller tests and she went with the classes' decision
3	S33, S38	She is very enthusiastic in class and it seems like she wants us to learn.
3	S36	She encourages our class to be interested in (class)
3	S28, S31, S35, S36, S37	Makes class entertaining /exciting / does fun activities so we pay attention and get better grades/learn
4	S46	He tries to decorate his room so that we feel more comfortable
4	S49	He almost always has a smile on his face so that you can tell he likes his job
5	S54	She tries to present information in a clear, organized way, so it is easier to understand

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 10: Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning (Descriptors – The teacher is dedicated, prepared and organized, interesting, teaches with enthusiasm, fun, and maintains a student-owned atmosphere.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
6	S73	She show how much she loves to teach
6	S74	She lets us work with people we like sometimes
7	S79	She is very bubbly and peppy
9	S102	She gets people involved, like at the chalkboard
13	S136	He tries to make class interesting
13	S139, S142	He tries to make class fun
15	S174	He's a good teacher
16	S183	She tries to keep the class involved
16	S184	She helps us learn in a fun way

Note. The number of student responses is 31/491 or 6% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 28/184 or 15% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 11: Uses active communication with students (Descriptors – The teacher uses active listening, eye contact, asks for student opinions, etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S6	She pays attention to what we have to say
2	S17	She communicates very well with students
2	S18, S25	She listens to your needs/She listens to everyone's opinions, thoughts and ideas
4	S51	He always listens to what you have to say
5	S54	Listens to everyone
7	S78, S81	Always talks and listens to you /She tells us we can come to her when we have a problem, she's always willing to listen
12	S127	He tries to talk with me
14	S157	Listens when we are talking – listened everyday
16	S178, S181	She talks to us if we are having trouble with something /she actually talks to us
16	S184	She asks our opinion

Note. The number of student responses is 13/491 or 3% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 13/184 or 7% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 12: Communicates with Parents (Descriptors – The teacher sends home interims, calls or e-mails parents)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
3	S29	She sends home interims
5	S56, S64	When she talked to my mom about why I was having trouble in class. She really helped me find my mistakes
8	S89	He gives us interims to show us how we're doing
8	S90	He always calls my mom to talk about ways to improve
8	S91	I think he cares because he gets tests graded by the end of the day and e-mails them to our house
9	S97	She lets us take our tests home if we want our parents to see

Note. The number of student responses is 7/491 or 1% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 7/184 or 4% of all respondents.

STUMENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 13: Is fair (Descriptors – treats all students with equity)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S5	She doesn't play favorites, treats us all the same
3	S30	She lets everyone have a chance in the class
3	S38	She does not favor a certain person, so that is really nice
5	S57, S64	She helps everyone
5	S62	She is always including me and my classmates for answering
6	S76	She gives everyone a chance to participate
8	S95	He is fair about things
11	S117	She involves everyone and makes everyone equal
13	S141	He doesn't judge us by how smart we are
15	S168	He gives fair grades

Note. The number of student responses is 11/491 or 2% of all responses. The number of respondents is 11/184 or 6% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 14: Explains concepts and checks for understanding (Descriptors – The teacher provides explanations, answers questions, checks for understanding)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S1, S8, S13	She makes sure we understand a concept /understand the material
1	S3, S8, S10, S12	She explains things clearly, answers our questions
1	S2, S7	She really doesn't care if the whole class fails the test. She goes over the tests if we do bad so we can fix them for next time
2	S27	Explains things if I don't understand
3	S30, S34, S35, S37, S40	She'll ask you if you need help and she'll help you till you get it/she explains things completely
4	S44, S45, S47, S52	Helps you if you don't understand something/asks if you need help
4	S50	He answers my questions
5	S54, S58	She will always review a lesson if we're confused/helps if we don't understand
5	S55, S61	She answers any questions
6	S66, S67, S71, S74	She reviews everything to make sure we understand/ She makes everything very clear to us/She goes over things a million times
6	S68, S76	She tries to answer my questions as often as she can
8	S88	He tries to help me understand concepts when I don't understand

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme14: Explains concepts and checks for understanding (Descriptors – The teacher provides explanations, answers questions, checks for understanding)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
8	S89	He checks our homework to see if our answers are right
8	S89	He goes over things that we don't understand
8	S92	He tries to help people when they don't understand things
8	S93, S95	Goes over tests – the questions we want to – in depth
8	S91, S92	If we don't understand something/new concept, he'll make sure we learn it
9	S97	If we have a question about what we are doing, she will help us using great detail
9	S99	She answers all of our questions
9	S101, S103, S104	She explains stuff that I didn't know how to do in a way I understand
9	S102, S103	She walks around checking your work and takes time to help
10	S105	He helps us review for tests
10	S107	He always makes sure I understand everything
10	S107, S109	He takes questions from class and always answers, no matter what/he always answers any questions I might have
10	S106	He works with me to help change my mistakes

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Category 14: Explains concepts and checks for understanding (Descriptors – The teacher provides explanations, answers questions, checks for understanding)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
10	S110	He explains projects in great detail so you won't mess up
12	S133	Explains things
13	S135, S141, S145, S147	I have a question, he tries to explain so I understand/ If I didn't do something right, he helped me understand what I did wrong/clearly explains most of the assignments
14	S160, S163	Explains directions easily/explains things individually even when she is busy
14	S160	She walks around to see how everyone is doing
15	S165, S170, S171	Explained stuff we didn't know/don't understand
15	S165	He showed me how to do something
15	S167	When you make a mistake, he doesn't get mad, but figures out how to fix it and what you did wrong
16	S177, S178, S184	She helps when you don't understand/if we ask

Note. The number of student responses is 67/491 or 14% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 60/184 or 33% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
1	S2	She makes us do flashcards so we do good on our tests
1	S5, S7	She gives us suggestions on how to improve
2	S15	She is always understanding when we are going to miss class. She gladly gets us our work ahead of time and explains just how to do everything without being upset that we are missing class
2	S16, S19	She lets us know what we missed when we were absent
2	S16, S20, S26	She tries to help you so you can raise your grade if you are falling behind/having trouble with something
2	S22	She helps students out as much as possible
2	S23	She split our – unit in 3 parts so that we didn't have to remember as much
3	S28	Doesn't overload on homework
3	S29, S37	She gives us our worksheets/review sheets to help people study
3	S30	I was absent almost a whole week and she told me everything I missed and it was like I didn't even miss class
3	S31, S34, S36, S38, S39	She gives you individual attention if you need help
4	S44	He helped me do better by showing me different techniques

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
4	S47, S48	He demonstrates different types of devices
4	S49	He is always willing to help you find material that you need
4	S51	He knew I wasn't comfortable so he found a different way to do it – that was very nice of him
5	S54	She makes sure we will know what is on the test
5	S56	She tries to give us every trick in the book so that we do well in her class
5	S57	I was asking about homework because I would be missing a few days and she wrote down my assignments for me
5	S61	When I was absent, she was very kind in asking me if I needed help understanding the information that I missed
5	S61	She is my favorite teacher. She shows a lot of effort toward working with certain kids in each way possible
5	S61	Wrote a note with options to help my grade
6	S66	Everyday, she reminds us of homework, projects, and papers that are due
6	S70	Gives me help with class related stuff
6	S71, S72, S73	If I ever need extra help, she will give it/helps struggling kids out

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
6	S72	She makes flashcards and worksheets to help us study
6	S74	She offers to help the slower students as much as she can
7	S78	Helps you when you need it
7	S80	She makes sure we have our assignments in
7	S84	She gave me help when I asked her. She helped me get my grades up
7	S84	She told me about papers I had been absent for or didn't turn in
7	S85	She tries to help by giving tips for studying and stuff like that (they really help – I raised one of my grades after using her advice)
7	S86	She made sure we had what we needed
8	S91	I was sick and I missed a big test so he put it back on line
8	S91	He gives us a big packet of sheet that we can study
8	S92	He shows that he cares when he helps prepare for tests
8	S92	He lets us take our tests on-line
8	S95	Helps you as much as possible
9	S98	She helps us do well on tests by preparing us for them

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
9	S99	She let us use her (instructional material)
9	S102, S103, S104	She helped me/always helps/gives extra help
10	S106, S108	I missed a day of school once and he took the time to explain what we went over that day
10	S109, S112	He helps me with anything I need help with
10	S109	He gives me ideas when I am doing certain assignment
10	S110	He will tell you if you owe him something, rather than just giving you a zero
10	S110	He makes sure that we are organized and gives us a folder and a grade sheet
11	S114	She is always trying to help us if we are bad at something
12	S125, S127, S133	Helps everyone along/ helps me in class
12	S124	He cares about the kids who struggle
13	S138, S145	He lets me go to another classroom to take my tests
13	S138, S145	He helped me out after I was absent a few days/ He always helps
13	S147	He doesn't give homework often

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
13	S147	He reminds you to bring assignments personally
13	S147	He reminded me to bring in a report so I wouldn't fail
14	S150, S151, S156	When I was sick she helped me catch up
14	S161	She likes to expand your mental thoughts
14	S148, S151, S152, S154, S155, S156, S157, S158, S159, S160, S162, S163, S164	She helps us in class/helps us when we need it
15	S165, S167, S168 S170, S172, S174, S175	Assisted when help was needed in class/if you need help, he's right there
16	S177	She plays really good review games to make sure you know what is on the tests
16	S177, S181, S182	I was really behind because I had been sick and she took the time to come and help me/when I was struggling she wanted to help

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
16	S178	She will tell us what we do wrong and how to improve it
16	S178, S179	My grade dropped in her class and she talked to me about it and helped me with my work

Note. The number of student responses is 102/491 or 21% of all responses. The number

of respondents is 87/184 or 47% of all respondents.

STUDENT RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme   16: Provides opportunities for extra credit

Teacher	Student Respondent/s	Comments
2	S22	One time she let me do extra credit when I needed it
2	S23	She offers a lot of extra credit
2	S25	She gives 25 extra credit points
3	S29, S41	She gives extra credit opportunities
10	S105, S108	He gives extra credit points/extra credit on a test
13	S146	During interims he told me I could do some extra-credit to improve my grade
15	S169	He let us do a project that would help our grade

Note. The number of student responses is 9/491 or 2% of all responses. The number of respondents is 9/184 or 5% of all respondents.

APPENDIX D

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being (Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students, smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and respectful.)

Teacher	Comments
1	Maintain flexibility in difficult situations when students are feeling overwhelmed
1	Learn their names quickly
1	Provide opportunities for individual attention
2	Give birthday cards and pencils to each student throughout the year
3	Conversations with kids about them
3	Talk to them at their level – not at them
5	Greeting them in the AM
5	Telling them at the end of the week to have a good weekend
5	Letting them know it is ok to make a mistake and never embarrassing them
5	Calling them by name
6	Daily greetings
6	I enjoy what I do that raises the comfort level of students
6	A smile
6	One – on- one comments to students
6	Keep smiling
6	Offer to help when a student seems sad

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being
(Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students, smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and respectful.)

Teacher	Comments
6	Another smile
7	Smiling
7	Asking students individually about their day
7	Being compassionate towards students' concerns and everyday concerns
7	Telling students I love them and am pleased to see them
8	Treat them as young adults, not children
8	Talk to them individually about concerns, not in front of group
8	Demand respect while giving respect
9	Greet students/ say good morning/afternoon for each class
9	Expect students to respect myself and others and I will try to do the same
11	I try to acknowledge each kid by the end of class
12	Pull students aside when possible to talk to them
12	Smile at students
14	Take time to discover students' strengths and build on that
14	Knowing names and something about them to question in conversation

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 1: Is respectful, courteous, and interested in students' well-being
(Descriptors – The teacher talks to students at their level and not at them, greets students,
smiles, is interested in knowing students, cares about their well being, is nice and
respectful.)

Teacher	Comments
15	Keep in touch with former students
15	Always allowing students a way out of an undesirable situation – wrong answer, bad behavior

Note. The number of teacher responses is 33/110 or 30% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 12/16 or 75% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 2: Provides extra time when needed (Descriptors – The teacher provides adequate time to complete work, provides time for homework completion, extra time for review and testing, and is flexible with deadlines for make-up work and late work)

Teacher   Comments

0 Teachers responded.

Note. The number of teacher responses is 0/110 or 0% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 0/16 or 0% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Category 3: Uses positive reinforcement and is encouraging (Descriptors – The teacher rewards excellence with words of praise and extra credit and is encouraging.)

Teacher	Comments
1	Rewarding excellence with words of praise and credit/stickers
3	A pat on the back
5	Giving them "smarties" to make them smart
5	Occasionally using endearing terms such as "honey"
7	Touching on the shoulder
12	Make individual, positive comments to students that relate to their behavior/ actions in class
12	Lets students know they are doing well in class
13	Caring without candy
14	Making specific comments about their work
14	In written evaluations, write personal comments directed to their efforts

Note. The number of teacher responses is 10/110 or 9% of all responses. The number of respondents is 7/16 or 44% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 4: Sets and maintains positive expectations for students (Descriptors –
The teacher communicates high expectations, assists students in identifying their goals,
prepares students for the future, expects students to do homework, cares about grades.)

Teacher	Comments
2	Maintain high expectations and help ensure students reach theirs
4	At the beginning of the year, I give a survey to students about their expectations and needs. I share the results with the class
4	At the beginning of the year I start every class with an "I believe in you" activity
5	Letting them know that I expect success for them
9	Expect students to do homework
9	Expect students to care about their grades
12	Help students set goals individually
14	Ask other teachers to review student work
14	Display students work with professional appearance
16	Speak with students on a regular basis to discuss their grade and what I can do to make them successful in my class

Note. The number of teacher responses is 7/110 or 9% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 7/16 or 44% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 5: Is authentic (Descriptors – The teacher is open and shares stories about his/he family, likes and dislikes)

Teacher	Comments
3	Be a real person in their eyes
3	Show them I am only human
3	Share stories about my family
5	Telling them about me – my family, hobbies, etc.
7	Sharing my life with students
7	Sharing my likes and passions with students
8	Emphasize openness and honesty
11	I will be truthful and honest

Note. The number of teacher responses is 8/110 or 7% of all responses. The number of respondents is 5/16 or 31% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 6: Is interested in the student in activities outside of the classroom
(Descriptors - The teacher incorporates things that occur in the lives of students outside
of school into class discussions when appropriate, asks about their personal
interests/activities, spends extra time with student activities)

Teacher	Comments
1	Be aware of their lives beyond the classroom and inquire about success or interests
1	Ask them about their interests
5	Asking about them – their families, etc.
6	Spend extra time with student activities
10	I try to incorporate things that occur in their outside of school lives into class discussions when appropriate
12	Ask students about their personal interests/activities out of school
12	Ask students about family members
15	Individual attention to activities students are involved in – sports, student council, youth groups, etc.
16	Try to learn their interests and activities and discuss those interests with them during class examples or before or after class

Note. The number of teacher responses is 10/110 or 9% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 7/16 or 44% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 7: Helps students develop responsibility and independence (Descriptors – The teacher reminds students that they are responsible to themselves and others, uses appropriate discipline, promotes good citizenship)

Teacher	Comments
8	Don't let any disruptive/negative behavior halls, class, after school events
11	Holding them accountable and responsible
11	Reminding them that they are responsible for self and to others
11	They are the most powerful person in their life
11	Reminding them about work ethic and that they make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others
11	I tell them that I can like them and love them, but will not do their work for them
11	Bottom line – to direct them to be independent and make healthy decisions

Note. The number of teacher responses is 7/110 or 6% of all responses. The number of respondents is 2/16 or 13% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 8: Is available to students (Descriptors – The teacher communicates to students that he/she is available outside of class time for assistance

Teacher	Comments
2	Available for help outside the classroom
5	Letting them know repeatedly that I am available to help them
8	Give home phone number
9	Encourage students to come before/after school for tutoring
11	I let them know that I am available to talk with them
13	I make myself available to my students at any time
13	I communicate my availability to students

Note. The number of teacher responses is 7/110 or 6% of all responses. The number of respondents is 6/16 or 38% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 9: Uses humor with students (Descriptors – The teacher demonstrates a sense of humor when interacting with students)

Teacher	Comments
1	Laugh with them
3	Humor
8	Open class with joke/humor
12	Make them laugh when you can
14	Laughing with them

Note. The number of teacher responses is 5/110 or 5% of all responses. The number of respondents is 5/16 or 31% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 10: Communicates a positive attitude about being part of the class and learning (Descriptors – The teacher is dedicated, prepared and organized, interesting, teaches with enthusiasm, fun, and maintains a student-owned atmosphere.)

Teacher	Comments
4	I try to continue a student-owned atmosphere through-out the school year
4	Students can request material they want to use
4	Students can volunteer to help (in class)
7	Teaching with enthusiasm and fun when possible
7	Positive attitude (Teacher)
14	Being organized for class
16	Offers different types of learning activities to try and interest students so that they will enjoy class

Note. The number of teacher responses is 7/110 or 6% of all responses. The number of respondents is 4/16 or 25% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 11: Uses active communication with students (Descriptors – The teacher uses active listening, eye contact, asks for student opinions, etc.)

Teacher	Comments
3	Active listening
3	Eye contact
12	Look at them in the eyes when communicating one – on - one

Note. The number of teacher responses is 3/110 or 3% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 2/16 or 13% of all respondents.

Caring Theme 12: Communicates with Parents (Descriptors – The teacher sends home interims, calls or e-mails parents)

Teacher	Comments
2	Send home interims when grades are good as well as bad
7	Call home when students are sick to check on them
8	Open lines of communication
8	Call parents or e-mail parents if concerns exist

Note. The number of teacher responses is 4/110 or 4% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 3/16 or 19% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 13: Is fair (Descriptors – treats all students with equity)

Teacher   Comments

13   I believe I am a fair homeroom and classroom teacher

Note. The number of teacher responses is 1/110 or <1% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 1/16 or <1% of all respondents.

Caring Theme 14: Explains concepts and checks for understanding (Descriptors – The
teacher provides explanations, answers questions, checks for understanding)

Teacher   Comments

9   Take time to answer questions

Note. The number of teacher responses is 1/110 or <1% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 1/16 or <1% of all respondents.

TEACHER RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY CARING THEME (cont.)

Caring Theme 15: Provides academic assistance (Descriptors – The teacher provides needed instructional materials, re-teaches concepts when needed, reminds students about assignments, helps with class work and homework, provides accommodations etc.)

Teacher   Comments

6   Can I help?

8   On-line testing

15   Attempt to assist kids with extra projects

Note. The number of teacher responses is 3/110 or <1% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 3/16 or 19% of all respondents.

Caring Theme 16: Provides opportunities for extra credit

Teacher   Comments

2   Provide opportunities for extra credit for hard working individuals who
                 fall short of where they would like to be

Note. The number of teacher responses is 1/110 or <1% of all responses. The number of

respondents is 1/16 or <1% of all respondents.

APPENDIX E

STUDENTS' NEGATIVE RESPONSES ORGANIZED BY TEACHER

Students' Negative Responses Organized by Teacher

Teacher	Number of Students Commenting	Students' Negative Responses
1	1	She can be rude to some students.
2	1	I think she expects too much of 8th graders.
3	2	I don't care if she cares about me as a person as long as she teaches me the stuff I need to know. I have mixed feelings about – I feel like she cares about my grades, but does not care about me and my life.
4	2	He goes too fast and does not help. He said he can't help me with - , he can't slow the class for me. When someone isn't doing something right, he fixes the problem. But sometimes he doesn't. He makes us put our materials away when we do something bad. Sometimes he lets us out late after the bell.
5	4	She tries to make her class fun and amusing, but it doesn't work very well. She rushes through lessons…I feel clueless of what's going on. She goes a little too fast for us to write all our notes and thinks it's normal. Most of the time our class is rushed to finish things so questions or comments have to be eliminated. She didn't call on someone who had their hand up because we were rushing through the lesson.
6	1	Sometimes she gives us interims back late or takes a long time grading a 15 point quiz.
7	2	I don't think she really cared about me. She picked favorites and would care about one student in the room. She was telling us about her daughter and she just let it all out in my class.
8	2	He doesn't want to help people who missed class. He tells me to ask someone what I missed or says, "You should have been here." I think he tends to care more about how he looks as a teacher sometimes more than our education.

Students' Negative Responses Organized by Teacher (cont.)

Teacher	Number of Students Commenting	Students' Negative Responses
10	2	He always seems to be very sexist, and he always seems nicer to the girls. Once a girl in the class asked if she could go to the restroom. After he had finished talking and we were on our own time, he said, "I wandered when you would ask because it seems to be your time to go!" I think that was unnecessary and not nice! When you care for someone, you care about their feelings.
11	3	Sometimes her comments encourage us, but they can also make you feel bad like you are worth nothing. The people who are very good get a lot of attention from her. Sometimes she pushes us too hard.
12	3	I think he cares more about the kids who are good in his class. He thinks he's helping, but it doesn't make sense. So he tries, but it doesn't really click. He doesn't show compassion like if you are late for class w/o a pass he doesn't let you explain.
13	1	Parents and teachers nag us about how we need to turn things in…and say it is only because we care, well it doesn't make us feel cared for when we're getting yelled at.
14	2	She always seems upset or mad. She doesn't seem to have fun in our class. She gets frustrated and annoyed like we can't do anything. I think she cares about how I do in - , but I don't think she cares about me.

Students' Negative Responses Organized by Teacher (cont.)

Teacher	Number of Students Commenting	Students' Negative Responses
15	3	I don't think he likes me because I laugh a lot for no reason (I can't help it) and he called me the most immature student he has ever had and he basically called me messed up one other time. We were watching a video and there was a poisonous red substance in it and I made a joke by saying that I drank that when I was a baby. He immediately replied, "Well, that explains everything!" Even though he might have thought of his comment as a joke, I was deeply offended and embarrassed. He rushes a lot. He does get mad and yell at us sometimes.

Note. The number of teachers receiving negative comments from students is 14/16 or

88%. Comment were written by 29/184 students or 16% .

APPENDIX F

DEVIATION SCORES

Deviation Scores Between Teacher Beliefs About Their Caring Behaviors and Their Students' Perceptions of Their Caring Behaviors and the Mean of the Absolute Values in Each Caring Theme and for Each Teacher

Themes of Caring

Teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	MEAN*
1	0.62	-0.2	0.92	-0.2	-0.2	1	0	-0.1	0.77	-0.2	-0.1	0	-0.1	-0.6	-0.2	0	0.31
2	0.79	-0.2	-0.1	0.79	0	0	-0.1	0.86	0	-0.4	-0.2	1	0	-0.1	-0.5	0.79	0.37
3	0.86	0	1	-0.3	1	-0.1	-0.1	0	1	0.05	1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.4	-0.6	-0.1	0.42
4	-0.3	0	0	0.83	0	-0.1	0	-0.1	-0.2	0.83	-0.1	0	0	-0.4	-0.4	0	0.2
5	0.83	-0.2	1	0.92	0.92	0.92	-0.1	0.5	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3	0	0.42
6	0.75	-0.3	-0.1	-0.3	-0.1	1	0	-0.2	0	-0.2	0	0	-0.1	-0.5	0.5	0	0.24
7	0.8	0	0.5	-0.2	0.9	0	-0.1	-0.1	0	0.9	-0.2	1	0	0	-0.5	0	0.33
8	1	0	-0.3	-0.2	1	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1	1	0	0	0.67	-0.1	-0.7	0.67	0	0.38
9	0.75	-0.4	0	1	0	0	0	0.75	0	-0.1	0	-0.1	0	-0.3	0.37	0	0.24
10	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	0	0.89	-0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.6	-0.6	-0.2	0.23
11	0.56	0	-0.4	-0.8	1	-0.1	1	1	-0.2	0	0	0	-0.1	0	-0.1	0	0.33
12	0.92	0	0.42	0.92	0	0.75	-0.2	0	0.92	0	0.92	0	0	-0.1	-0.3	0	0.34
13	-0.5	-0.1	1	-0.4	-0.1	0	-0.2	1	-0.2	-0.2	0	0	0.92	-0.3	-0.3	-0.1	0.33
14	0.41	-0.1	1	0.82	-0.1	0	-0.1	-0.1	1	1	0	0	0	-0.1	-0.8	0	0.34
15	0.67	-0.2	0	-0.1	-0.1	1	0	-0.1	0	-0.1	0	0	-0.1	-0.3	0.42	-0.1	0.19
16	-0.5	-0.3	-0.3	1	-0.1	1	-0.1	0	-0.1	0.75	-0.6	0	0	-0.6	-0.6	0	0.38
MEAN*	0.64	0.04	0.45	0.55	0.34	0.43	0.18	0.02	0.35	0.3	0.2	0.19	0/111	0.33	0.46	0.08	

[a] The mean is of the