

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions on Teachers' Caring Behaviors

Patricia C. King

Tak Cheung Chan

Kennesaw State University

Paper Presented at GERA – 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

October 21-22, 2011

Coastal Georgia Center

Savannah, Georgia

## Introduction

While differentiating curriculum content is unquestionably a vital component when striving to close the achievement gap, there are other important factors that should not be ignored. Whether or not students are thriving in their learning environment often depends on contextual factors, which are not evaluated by standardized assessments. Literature has repeatedly said that caring teachers have the potential to motivate students to succeed in academic quests and to stay in school (Rich, 2006). Educational accountability is currently driving reform, particularly in diverse schools. Our nation's crucial need to close the achievement gap and decrease dropout rates is being addressed by raising expectations of achieving high academic standards (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). It appears that the era of accountability has fostered mechanistic educational organizations that are centered on numbers, statistics, and state-ranking (Noddings, 2005). State and federal mandates have placed undue stress on schools and teachers resulting in a paradigm shift in their pedagogy practices from value-driven to solely data-driven, when both are necessary to improve student achievement. According to Gay (2000), "many students of color encounter too many uncaring teachers at all levels of education from preschool to college" (p.62).

## Purpose Statement

Caring behaviors are crucial for student achievement (Garza, 2010), "especially for culturally diverse students who may be at risk of failing or who may be disengaged from schooling" (Perez, 2000). Review of the literature indicates that research exploring what students perceive as caring qualities of teachers is lacking. While teachers may think their

practices reflect caring, their students may perceive their teachers' behaviors and character quite differently (Garza, 2009). In the quest to break down barriers that may be preventing students from succeeding in school, this study aimed at examining students' and teachers' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors (Garza, 2007).

### Research Question

This research was designed to investigate teachers' and students' perceptions of caring behaviors to answer these questions. (1) Is there any significant difference between teachers' and students' perception of teachers' caring behaviors? (2) Does ethnic group make any difference in teachers' and students' perceptions of caring teachers' behaviors? (3) Is there any significant difference in teachers' and students' perceptions of caring teachers' behaviors among different classroom environments?

### Importance of the Study

Educators often describe students as unmotivated, introverted, or academically incompetent (Garza, 2009). Garza stated that a construct that may create a more positive school climate for students is the "ethic of care" in ways that are significant to them. When teachers foster positive relationships with their students, both student effort and engagement are promoted (Stipek, 2006) which are vital components of learning (Scales & Taccogna, 2000). The findings of this study identified important teacher caring behaviors from the perspectives of both teachers and students, which will be beneficial when examining current practices and determining the extent of culturally responsive classrooms (Garrett, Barr & Forsbach-Rothman, 2007).

### Definitions of Terms

The interpretations of caring behaviors make this venture a challenge (Garza, 2009). While researchers agree that caring is a key ingredient for establishing a relationship, their descriptors vary. Based on previous studies, caring behaviors have been characterized by Gay (2000) as "patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment for the participants (p.49). Others have expressed attributes such as trust, respect, and relationships (Mayeroff, 1971; Noddings, 2005; Pizarro, 2005). Nieto (2004) accepts that caring behaviors also involve providing students with necessary support. My definitions were built on the foundations of established researchers yet reflect my perception for the intent of this study.

*Behaviors* are actions or reactions relating to environmental factors that display personal values, beliefs, and experiences, whether conscious or unconscious. Meaning of one's actions can be conveyed either verbally or non-verbally.

*Caring* behaviors are purposeful actions exhibited when one is passionate enough about the well-being of someone or something to invest ample time and effort to ensure the desired outcome occurs. Caring involves actions such as being sensitive, compassionate, and honest which are relevant to a person's unique needs.

*Classroom environment*, also known as learning environment is the setting in which a class is being taught, which in this study will include: 1. General education classes taught by one content area, general education teacher. 2. Inclusive education classes taught by one content area general education teacher and one special education teacher.

*Culture* is the part of a society that reflects common languages, beliefs, social activities, and defines appropriate interactions. Margaret Mead's simplistic view of culture is "the way a group of people prefer to behave" (Tosti, 2007).

*Students* in this study are defined as seniors 18 years or older who are attending this public educational institute to learn.

*Student achievement* is evidence which displays a desired outcome being accomplished.

### Organization of the Study

This research is organized in the following sections:

- Introduction
  - Purpose statement
  - Research questions
  - Importance of study
  - Definition of terms
- Review of related literature.
- Description of methodology
  - Participants and related demographic data.
  - Proposed data sources and collection procedures.
  - Reliability and validity of the instrumentation and protocols used.
  - Proposed data analysis procedures.
- References
- Appendixes (including all pertinent data and materials to be used in study).

*Review of Related Literature**Introduction*

The purpose of this section was to report findings of previous research on the topic of how teachers convey caring behaviors and how these behaviors are perceived by their students. Research articles were obtained through the Horace W. Sturgis library search engines: Galileo Scholar, ProQuest, ERIC, EBSCOhost, SAGE Journals on Line, and also accessed through the University of Georgia Interlibrary Loan. The reviewed literature was organized in the following manner:

1. How teachers practice caring behaviors.
2. Students' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors.
3. Effects of teachers' caring on student achievement / behaviors.
4. Implications of related literature.
5. Why further research is needed.

*How Teachers Practice Caring Behaviors*

Noddings (2005) believed that the act of caring was complete whenever the teacher's caring behaviors were acknowledged by the student. He also felt that although teachers genuinely cared for their students, they were unable to connect to complete caring relations with their students. Noddings exclaimed that "caring teachers listen and respond differentially to their students" (p. 19). He emphasized the necessity of gaining the trust of students by persistently pursuing an ongoing relationship. Pang (2005) described teacher caring directly related to the

"ethic of care" where the teachers purposefully made a moral commitment to know about their students' experiences and backgrounds; teachers formed interpersonal relationships with their students and taught them to develop reciprocal relationships. Garza (2009) stated that caring for students should be relevant to each student's individual needs. He disagreed with Noddings and Pang by suggesting that teacher-student relationships were often one-way where the teacher serves as the caregiver and the student as the receiver.

The results from Schlosser's (1992) study indicated that caring practices consisted of: parent-teacher conferences, student portfolios to show improvement, goal setting with students, and creating a classroom environment that promoted mental and physical security. A sensitive classroom environment that sometimes involved stating expectations and implementing strategies were key to improve academic performance, especially for at risks students. Helping students develop good work habits and creating a warm, personal learning atmosphere were also discovered as vital elements for student success.

Teven and McCroskey (1996) included the importance of how a teacher communicates non-verbally. Behaviors comprised of facial expressions, gaze, posture, and other body movements conveyed a teachers' attitude, feelings, and emotional state toward their students.

#### *Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors*

Previous research suggested that while teachers may have perceived their actions and disposition as caring, their behaviors may have conveyed an all together different message to their students (Garza, 2009). For example, Thompson's (2007) study questioned teachers and high school students about caring. Students' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors "are worth considering as viable means in the quest to break down barriers that may prevent" (Garza,

2007) students from succeeding in school. Ferreira and Bosworth (2001) believed that "How students perceive their teachers as caring or noncaring has a direct impact on how students perceive the culture of the school" (p. 25). Studies repeatedly showed the value students place on a teacher's ability to successfully develop interpersonal relationships with their students (Garrett, Barr, & Rothman, 2009).

Garza's (2009) study highlighted five dominant themes on how Latino and White high school students identified teachers' caring attributes. Data from responses of 49 Latino and 44 White students in a large suburban high school in Central Texas generated five dominant themes: (a) provide necessary scaffolding during teaching; (b) exhibit a kind disposition, including having a good sense of humor; (c) being available outside of class to help students succeed; (d) show a personal interest in the students' well-being inside as well as outside of the classroom; and (e) do whatever is necessary to provide them with the academic support in the classroom to ensure that they pass.

Although both ethnic groups valued the same themes, they prioritized the attributes differently. Latino students indicated that teachers' kind disposition did not show that they cared as much as when the teachers scaffold during lessons, followed by provided affective academic support in a class setting. Perez (2000, p. 103) suggested that culturally diverse students not only needed to like their teachers and sense they care, but they also needed to form mutual respectful relationships with their teachers if they were to succeed in the classroom. It has also been noted that Latino students perceive that their teacher cares when she respects their language and cultural identity (Pizarro, 2005).



Contrary to Latino students' perception, White students commented most frequently that teachers' actions that reflected a kind disposition conveyed that they cared, yet academic support in the classroom setting was their least valued as teachers' caring attributes. The key element that may explain the differences in perceptions may be a result of the focus on Latino students passing state-mandated tests to navigate the competitive nature of our educational system. Findings on White high school students' perceptions from Garza's (2009) research stated that actions that reflect teacher disposition rank first were congruent with other studies (Garrett, Barr, & Forsbach-Rothman, 2009; Teven & McCroskey, 1996), which suggested teacher attention as a key component to a caring relationship. Garza warned that dismissing students' perspectives may lead to inadequate actions and dispositions that teachers display toward students.

Garrett, Barr, and Forsbach-Rothman's (2007) conducted their investigation in a large diverse urban setting and included African American students' perceptions in their research. According to Gay (2009), "many students of color encounter too many uncaring teachers at all levels of education from preschool to college" (p.62). Comments on how teachers demonstrated care reflected the perceptions of the participants, which included sixth-grade students (24 African American, 13 White, and 23 Latino) and ninth-grade students (22 African American, 27 White, and 46 Latino). Results suggested that African American students also perceived teachers providing academic support as a critical caring behavior over White students. White students again placed more emphases on teachers' personality and taking a personal interest in them as indicators that teachers cared. Findings in both studies suggested that ethnicity did not significantly influence the way students perceived teachers' caring behaviors, but the way the behaviors were prioritized varied.

Teven and McCroskey (1996) conducted a study with university students, predominately White, which revealed a strong correlation between perceived caring and instructor appraisal. Students who perceived their instructors as caring rated them favorably, as well as the content, and reported that they learned much in the course. This research provided evidence that teachers who engaged in behaviors that communicated a positive intent toward their students were more likely to influence the students to put forth more effort. Similarly, Teven (2001) suggested that students perceived teachers who showed a friendly disposition and interpersonal skills as caring.

Also McCroskey (1992) noted that students were motivated by the teacher's concern for them when they interpreted that teachers behaving in positive ways by displaying empathy, understanding, and responsiveness. Research based on building a caring classroom community and establishing strong interpersonal relationships was consistent with the studies on students' perceptions of "good teachers" which appeared to make all the difference between a functional and dysfunctional classroom (Garrett, Barr, & Rothman, 2009; Osterman & Freese, 2000; Wentzel, 1997). In contrast, disapproving or non-existent teacher-student interactions made students feel insignificant and of no value (Garza, Ryser & Lee, 2010).

Students in the Scholsser's study of successful middle school students noted the following behaviors as qualities of a good teacher: teachers who noticed if a student was in trouble; discussed topics of interest to students such as gangs, drug addiction, and values; also, teachers who told students that they could come back after class if they needed to talk more (Schlosser, 1992). Students felt that the good teachers knew about their students' needs and interests without judging them or jumping on them.

*Effects of Teachers' Caring on Student Achievement and Behaviors*

Positive effects from teachers' caring behaviors were evident throughout the literature. If students perceived their teachers as caring, academic performance and behavior improved (Perez, 2000). Research suggested that students' decisions to engage and remain in school were influenced by caring teachers who were willing to establish interpersonal relationships with their students (Garza, Ryser, & Lee, 2010). Garza (2009) previously reported that teachers who created a sense of community, built respectful relationships, and validated a student's self worth were likely to affect students' disposition in the classroom and their motivation to engage in the educational process. He also advised that understanding students' distinct perspectives lead to culturally responsive caring that provided more positive experiences for all students, especially for students who were at risk and experienced more failure than success, which ultimately affected their decision to drop out or remain in school.

To encourage students' commitment to school and their engagement in learning, Perez (2000) also noted that a caring demeanor was critical, "especially for culturally diverse students who may be at risk of failing or who may be disengaged from schooling" (p. 103). Perez (2000, p. 105) concluded by saying "The care, understanding, and sensitivity teachers show toward these students may in the final analysis, be the most important influence on student academic performance."

#### *Implications of Related Literature*

Garza (2009) reported that examining students' perceptions of caring behaviors provided an opportunity for educators to reflect on how their verbal and nonverbal actions and disposition influenced student learning and success. Teachers must be cognizant of their personal lens which will provide channels of understanding that will establish respect for students. These

outcomes are especially beneficial for teachers who are ethnically unique to their students, which can result in misaligned caring behaviors. Behaviors viewed by their students as caring will ensure the development of meaningful, caring relationships. Because each ethnic group's point of view is based on their experiences and ethnic background, race and ethnicity must not be overlooked as an important aspect when caring for students.

Garrett, Barr and Forsbach-Rothman (2007) shared that teachers could use the suggested caring behaviors to examine their own practice to determine if they indeed exhibit culturally responsive caring in their classrooms. Students' voices could be used as a springboard to shape content in preservice teachers' courses. Concrete examples of what students view as critical to fostering relationships and a sense of belonging could only enhance their pedagogical knowledge and understanding about how to best reach their students' needs.

#### *Why Further Research is Needed*

Like many other researchers, Garza (2009) points out that high school students' voices were underrepresented in the literature; Latino voices were somewhat absent. Tevon and McCroskey (1996) noted the importance of future research examining the relationship between perceived caring and nonverbal immediacy and additional research to further define specific behaviors students perceive as caring.

## *Methods*

### *Research Design*

The research design encompassed a quantitative survey method as the strategy of inquiry. For this study, a survey appeared to be the most efficient means to collect data. This method was chosen for investigating teachers' and students' perceptions of behaviors that teachers conveyed as caring, because as Creswell (2009) explained, a quantitative approach provided a numeric description of "trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 12).

The survey was cross-sectional and data were analyzed using statistical procedures to provide evidence for examining the relationships among variables. Using a self-administered instrument provided sufficient data which required no face to face contact.

### *Setting*

This quantitative study was conducted in a diverse public high school located 20 miles west of Atlanta. Based on the 2009-10 Adequately Year Progress (AYP) data, the school was in Needs Improvement Year Three (NI-3). The graduation rate of 74% was one of the second indicators that were not met.

This high school served approximately 1800 students in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Student population was 52% African American, 29% White, 12% Hispanic, 5% Multi-ethnic, and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. Socio-economic status was shown by 61% of the student population receiving free and reduced-priced lunch.

### *Participants*

A convenience sample of students 18 years old or older were asked to complete the survey as a warm-up activity; 48 students volunteered to participate. All teachers were given the opportunity to participate; the random teacher sample consisted of 38 general, special, and paraprofessional teachers.

### *Variables*

The dependent variables in this study were the teachers' perceptions and students' perceptions of caring behaviors as teachers. The independent variables were teachers, students, race/ethnicity, and class environment (general education classrooms taught with one (content teacher) or two teachers (content and special education)).

### *Source of Data*

The data for this investigation was obtained from teachers and students responding to the 24 - survey items. Demographic data was related to the respondents' background whereas quantitative data reflected the perceptions of teachers and students on the behaviors of caring teachers.

### *Survey*

To add efficacy and further investigate high school teachers' and students' perceptions of teacher behaviors that convey caring, a survey was devised by the researchers using a Likert-type scale. The survey, entitled "A Survey of The Behavioral Characteristics of a Caring Teacher", consists of a teacher version and a student version. The questions of the two versions are the same with different wordings to suit particular groups of participants. Characteristics of caring behaviors were based on patterns reflected in previous literature and existing measures pertaining

to teacher-student relationships (Bulach, Brown, & Potter 1998). Questions were reworded to better examine characteristics of caring behaviors of teachers versus caring behaviors of a specific teacher, one question was eliminated due to ambiguity, and questions were grouped into sub-themes to create new dimensions of interpretation. The instrument included 24 items grouped in four sub-themes: *Classroom Management*, *Academic Support*, *Interpersonal Relationships*, and *Sense of Respect and Trust*. The scale ranged from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important). The demographic section was updated to include race/ethnicity and classroom environment.

Validity of the instrument was examined by a panel of five experts in the areas of research, inclusive education, and leadership. Instrument's reliability was tested for internal consistency of the scales using the Cronbach alpha statistics.

#### *Statistical Treatment*

The objective of the data collecting process was to include in the study seniors (18 or older) and teachers at the participating high school. The researcher personally administered the surveys by first explaining the valiance of the study and instructions for completing the surveys to the participants. Each student was informed by a previously approved cover letter that they must be 18 years of age or older to participate and that participation was voluntary.

To examine the various relationships among the variables, three major statistical analysis procedures were used. First, demographic information of participating teachers and students was displayed by descriptive statistics. Second, responses of the participating teachers and students were presented by means and standard deviations. Third, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there was any significant difference between the teachers' perception and

the students' perception. Analysis of Variance was also used to determine if ethnic grouping made any difference in teachers' and students' perception of caring behaviors of teachers.

## Results

### *Analysis of Quantitative Data*

Results of quantitative data analysis indicated that 38 teachers and 48 students years 18 or over responded to all 22 questions on the survey. Items were grouped and reported by themes. An independent samples *t* test was calculated comparing the mean scores of the teachers' and students' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors to answer the first question: Is there any significant difference between teachers' and students' perception of teachers' caring behaviors?

The mean for the total items of the teachers' perception was significantly higher ( $m = 91$ ,  $sd = 10.66$ ) than the mean of the students' ( $m = 75.08$ ,  $sd = 16.08$ ). (See Table A1.) Significant differences were found throughout the themes; Classroom Management:  $t(84) = 5.30$ ,  $p < .05$ , Academic Support:  $t(84) = 5.23$ ,  $p < .05$ , Interpersonal Relationships:  $t(84) = 3.14$ ,  $p < .05$ , Respect and Trust:  $t(84) = 3.94$ ,  $p < .05$ , Total:  $t(84) = 5.25$ ,  $p < .05$ . (See Table A2.)

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of teachers' and students' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors that varied by ethnic group to answer the second question: Is there any significant difference in teachers' and students' perceptions of caring teachers' behaviors among different ethnic groups?

The teachers' means within ethnic groups for the total items were compared using a one-way ANOVA. African American teachers ( $N = 7$ ) had a mean score of 85.00 ( $sd = 13.37$ ); Hispanic teacher ( $N = 1$ ) had a mean score of 68 ( $sd$  was not reported due to only having 1 in



group); Caucasian teachers ( $N = 30$ ) had a mean score of 80.53 ( $sd = 15.17$ ). (See Table A3.) No significant difference was found ( $F(2,35) = .61, p > .05$ ). The teachers from the three different ethnic groups did not differ significantly in their perception of teachers' caring behaviors. (See Table A4.)

The students' means within ethnic groups for the total items were also compared using a one-way ANOVA. Results indicated that African American students ( $N = 27$ ) had a mean score of 72 ( $sd = 15.38$ ); Hispanic students ( $N = 5$ ) had a mean score of 74.40 ( $sd = 25.62$ ); Caucasian students ( $N = 14$ ) had a mean score of 82.64 ( $sd = 4.95$ ); other students ( $N = 2$ ) had a mean of 64.50 ( $sd = 4.95$ ). (See Table A5.) No significant difference was found ( $F(3,44) = 1.71, p > .05$ ). (See Table A6.)

Although no significant ANOVA were found, post-hoc tests were performed on students only to compare students' perceptions in different ethnic groups. Significant differences were found in the following themes: for Classroom Management, the mean difference between African Americans and Caucasians was  $-3.66, p < .05$ ; for Interpersonal Relationships, the mean difference between African Americans and Caucasians was  $8.21, p < .05$ ; and for Total, the mean difference between African Americans and Caucasians was  $-10.57, p < .05$ . (See Table A7.)

An independent samples  $t$  test was calculated comparing the mean scores of the teachers' and students' perceptions of teachers' caring behaviors that varied by the number of teachers in the classroom to answer the third question: Is there any significant difference in teachers' and students' perceptions of caring teachers' behaviors among different classroom environments?

The mean for the total items of the teachers' perception with one teacher in the classroom was not significantly higher ( $m = 89.44, sd = 11.25$ ) than the mean of the teachers with two

teachers in the classroom ( $m = 94.82$ ,  $sd = 8.30$ ). (See Table A8.) Significant difference was found in the Academic Support theme  $t(36) = -2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ . (See Table A9.)

The mean for the total items of the students' perception with one teacher in the classroom was significantly lower ( $m = 72.45$ ,  $sd = 14.94$ ) than the mean of the students with two teachers in the classroom ( $m = 85.10$ ,  $sd = 17.11$ ). (See Table A10.) Significant differences were found in three out of the four themes: Classroom Management  $t(46) = -1.92$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Academic Support  $t(46) = -2.61$ ,  $p < .05$ ; Respect and Trust  $t(46) = -2.31$ ,  $p < .05$ . (See Table A11.)

### Discussion and Implications

Findings of this study indicated that teachers and students perceived behaviors of a caring teacher differently. The results contributed to the previous studies by focusing on high school students' perception which is lacking in research. This study went more in-depth by investigating perception by race and classroom environment.

The results of this study are two-fold. It showed that teachers' and students' perception of caring differ across all themes: Classroom Management, Academic Support, Interpersonal Relationships, and Sense of Respect and Trust. Results also revealed the areas in which they agreed. Teachers and students did not show significant differences of perception in four out of the twenty-two questions. Their perceptions were similar on certain attributes of a caring teacher such as "Caring teachers: make time for students before and after school, provide students with "treats and "goodies" on special occasions, joke around with students, and ask students to help with classroom tasks." These findings are vital when it comes to implications of the research.

Findings also revealed that ethnic group was not a factor when examining teachers' perceptions but was with students. It is important to note that the majority of the teachers were

Caucasian, and the majority of students were African American and Hispanic. The information concerning students is particularly valuable to enhance the research on this topic because it voiced African American and Hispanic students' perspectives of caring teachers' behaviors which was almost non-existent in previous literature. It appears that African American students and Caucasian students perceive caring attributes differently in all areas except for the theme pertaining to academics, which illustrates that students in all ethnic groups have similar perceptions when it comes to academics.

This research also displayed valuable results based on classroom environment. The purpose of this portion of the research was to show teacher and student perspectives based on those who were in co-taught classrooms versus those who were not. Teachers' perspectives did not differ significantly in the different classroom settings, except in the Academic theme. However, students' perspectives were different in the following themes: Classroom Management, Academic Support and Respect and Trust.

### Conclusion

As educators, we are constantly trying to reach our students. These findings support the finding of previous students by providing evidence that we are not on the same page as our students when it comes to what we perceive as behaviors of a caring teacher. If students perceive their teachers as caring, it could have a direct impact on academic achievement. Although perceptions may have differed, it was evident that most teachers and students perceived caring behaviors related to academics as important. Therefore, teachers who set high expectations and go over and beyond to help students achieve those expectations are perceived as caring.

### Recommendations

My first and possibly most important recommendation from the findings is that we acknowledge our differences in teachers' and students' perceptions of what behaviors define a caring teacher. Teachers cannot continue to exhibit the same behaviors that they feel are caring if students do not perceive those behaviors as caring. Based on these results, teachers need to raise the bar of academic achievement and help each student master those expectations; all the while, building interpersonal relationships with their students. These results can be used as an introduction to professional development relating to improving academic achievement, building culturally responsive classrooms, or reaching our students through differentiation. To further strengthen the theory of caring teachers can improve academic performance, research should also be conducted in high performing schools, and perhaps schools in different regions. On a final note, if educators are truly vested in improving student achievement, they must not just ask "how" yet also listen to the answers and implement changes accordingly.

### References

- Bulach, C., Brown, C., & Potter, L., (1998). Behaviors that create a caring learning community. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 4*, 441-453.
- Christenson, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2004). School dropouts: Prevention considerations, interventions, and challenges. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13*, 36-39.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009) *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ferreira, M. M., & Bosworth, K. (2001). Defining caring teachers: Adolescents' perspectives. *Journal of Classroom Interaction, 36*(1), 24-30.
- Garcia, V., Agbemakplido, W., Abdella, H., Lopez, O., Jr., & Registe, R. T. (2006). High school students' on the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act's definition of a highly qualified teacher. *Harvard Educational Review, 76*, 698-724.
- Garrett, T., Barr, J., & Forsbach-Rothman, T. (2007). *Perspectives on caring in the classroom: Do they vary according to ethnicity and grade level?* Papers presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Chicago, IL.
- Garrett, T., Barr, J., & Rothman, T. (2009). Perspectives on caring in the classroom: Do they vary according to ethnicity or grade level? *Adolescence, 44*, 505-521.
- Garza, R. (2007). She teaches you like if she were your friend: Latino high school students describe attributes of a caring teacher. *Journal of Boarder Educational Research, 6*(1), 81-90.
- Garza, R. (2009). Latino and white high school students' perceptions of caring behaviors: Are we culturally responsive to our students? *Urban Education, 44*, 297-321.

- Garza, R., Ryser, G., & Lee, K. (2010). Illuminating adolescent voices: Identifying high school students' perceptions of teacher caring. *Empirical Research*, 7(4), Retrieved 3/15/11 from [http://www.academicleadership.org/emprical\\_research/Illuminating\\_Adolescent\\_Voices\\_Identifying\\_High\\_School\\_Students\\_Perceptions\\_of\\_Teacher\\_Caring.shtml](http://www.academicleadership.org/emprical_research/Illuminating_Adolescent_Voices_Identifying_High_School_Students_Perceptions_of_Teacher_Caring.shtml)
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goldstein, L. S., & Freedman, D. (2010). Challenges enacting caring teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54, 441-454.
- Mayeroff, M. (1971). *On caring*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1992). *An introduction to communication in the classroom*. Edina, Minnesota: Burgess International Group.
- Monzo, L. D., & Rueda, R. S. (2001). Professional roles, caring, and scaffolds: Latino teachers' and paraeducators' interactions with Latino students. *American Journal of Education*, 109, 438-471.
- Nieto, S. (2004). *Affirming diversity* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). New York: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon.
- Noddings, N. (1988). An ethic of caring and its implications for instructional arrangements. *American Journal of Education*, 96, 215-230.
- Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge of care in schools: An alternative approach to education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Osterman, K., & Freese, S. (2000). Nurturing the mind to improve learning: Teacher caring and student engagement. In S. T. Gregory (Ed.) *The academic achievement of minority students: Perspectives, practices, and prescriptions* (pp. 287-305). Lanham, Md: University Press of American.
- Pang, V. O. (2005). *Multicultural education: A caring-centered reflective approach*. New York: McGrawHill.
- Perez, S. A. (2000). An ethic of caring in teaching culturally diverse students. *Education*, 121(1), 102-105.
- Pizarro, M. (2005). *Chicanas and Chicanos in schools*. Austin, Texas: The University of Texas

Press.

Rich, D. (2006). The theory behind the recipes. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88, 324-325.

Scales, P. C., & Taccogna, J. (2000). Caring to try: How building students' developmental assets can promote school engagement and success. *NASSP BULLETIN*, 84(619), 69-78.

Schlosser, L. K. (1992). Teacher distance and student disengagement: School lives on the margin. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 43, 128-140.

Stipek, D. (2006). Relationships matter. *Educational Leadership*, 46(1), 46-49.

Teven, J. J. (2001). The relationships among teacher characteristics and perceived caring. *Communication Education*, 50(2), 159-169.

Teven, J. J. & McCroskey, J. C. (1996). The relationship of perceived teacher caring with student learning and teacher evaluation. *Communication Education*, 46(1), 1-9.

Thompson, G. L. (2007). *Up where we belong*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tosti, D. T. (2007). *Aligning the culture and strategy for success*. *Performance Improvement*, 46(1), 21-25.

Wentzel, K. R. (1997). Student motivation in middle school: The role of perceived pedagogical caring. *Journal of Education Psychology*, 89, 411-419.

## Appendixes

Table A1

Group Statistics Comparing Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors

by Themes

Themes	Participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Classroom Management	Teachers	38	22.89	2.65	.43
	Students	48	17.94	5.26	.76
Academic Support	Teachers	38	25.89	3.42	.55
	Students	48	21.17	4.66	.67
Inter-Personal Relationships	Teachers	38	20.18	3.80	.62
	Students	48	17.42	4.26	.62
Respect and Trust	Teachers	38	22.03	2.98	.48
	Students	48	18.56	4.73	.68
Total	Teachers	38	91.00	10.66	1.73
	Students	48	75.08	16.08	2.32



Table A2

Independent Samples T-Test Comparing Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behavior by Themes

		<u>T-test for Equality of Means</u>				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Classroom Management	Equal variances assumed	5.30	84	.00	4.96	.94
Academic Support	Equal variances assumed	5.23	84	.00	4.73	.90
Interpersonal Relationships	Equal variances assumed	3.14	84	.00	2.77	.88
Respect and Trust	Equal variances assumed	3.94	84	.00	3.46	.88
Total	Equal variances assumed	5.25	84	.00	15.92	3.03

Table A3

Descriptives for Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors based on Ethnic Group

Themes	Race	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Classroom Management	African Am.	7	22.14	3.63	1.37
	Hispanic	1	19.00	.	.
	Caucasian	30	19.07	5.67	1.04
	Total	38	19.63	5.37	.87
Academics Support	African Am.	7	24.86	2.19	.83
	Hispanic	1	16.00	.	.
	Caucasian	30	22.33	5.16	.94
	Total	38	22.63	4.88	.79
Inter-Personal Relationships	African Am.	7	17.00	4.80	1.81
	Hispanic	1	15.00	.	.
	Caucasian	30	18.90	3.80	.69
	Total	38	18.45	3.99	.65
Respect and Trust	African Am.	7	21.00	4.40	1.66
	Hispanic	1	18.00	.	.
	Caucasian	30	20.23	3.92	.72
	Total	38	20.32	3.93	.64
Total	African Am.	7	85.00	13.37	5.05
	Hispanic	1	68.00	.	.
	Caucasian	30	80.53	15.71	2.87
	Total	38	81.03	15.17	2.46

Table A4

ANOVA for Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors based on Ethnic Group

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Classroom Management	Between Groups	54.12	2	27.06	.94	.40
	Within Groups	1012.72	35	28.94		
	Total	1066.84	37			
Academic Support	Between Groups	81.32	2	40.66	1.78	.18
	Within Groups	801.52	35	22.90		
	Total	882.84	37			
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups	32.70	2	16.35	1.03	.37
	Within Groups	556.70	35	15.91		
	Total	589.40	37			
Respect and Trust	Between Groups	8.84	2	4.42	.28	.76
	Within Groups	561.37	35	16.04		
	Total	570.21	37			
Total	Between Groups	287.51	2	143.75	.61	.55
	Within Groups	8227.47	35	235.07		
	Total	8514.97	37			

Table A5

Descriptives for Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors based on Ethnic Group

Themes	Race	N	Std.		
			Mean	Deviation	Std. Error
Classroom Management	African Am.	27	16.48	5.47	1.05
	Hispanic	5	19.80	6.46	2.89
	Caucasian	14	20.14	3.63	.97
	Other	2	17.50	6.36	4.50
	Total	48	17.94	5.26	.76
Academics Support	African Am.	27	20.56	4.34	.84
	Hispanic	5	20.60	7.20	3.22
	Caucasian	14	22.93	4.43	1.18
	Other	2	18.50	.71	.50
	Total	48	21.17	4.66	.67
Inter-Personal Relationships	African Am.	27	16.56	4.01	.77
	Hispanic	5	17.00	6.67	2.98
	Caucasian	14	19.36	3.69	.99
	Other	2	16.50	2.12	1.50
	Total	48	17.42	4.26	.62
Respect and Trust	African Am.	27	18.48	4.41	.85
	Hispanic	5	17.00	6.36	2.85
	Caucasian	14	20.21	4.17	1.12
	Other	2	12.00	4.24	3.00
	Total	48	18.56	4.73	.68
Total	African Am.	27	72.07	15.38	2.96
	Hispanic	5	74.40	25.62	11.46
	Caucasian	14	82.64	12.67	3.39
	Other	2	64.50	4.95	3.50
	Total	2	64.50	4.95	3.50

A6

## ANOVA for Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors based on Ethnic Group

		Sum of				
		Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Classroom Management	Between Groups	143.06	3	47.69	1.81	.16
	Within Groups	1,157.76	44	26.31		
	Total	1,300.81	47			
Academic Support	Between Groups	69.37	3	23.12	1.07	.37
	Within Groups	953.30	44	21.67		
	Total	1,022.67	47			
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups	75.29	3	25.10	1.42	.25
	Within Groups	778.38	44	17.69		
	Total	853.67	47			
Respect and Trust	Between Groups	136.72	3	45.57	2.20	.10
	Within Groups	913.10	44	20.75		
	Total	1,049.81	47			
Total	Between Groups	1,270.90	3	423.63	1.71	.18
	Within Groups	10,886.77	44	247.43		
	Total	12,157.67	47			

Table A7

## Post Hoc for Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors based on Ethnic Group

Dependent Variable	(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
	Student race	Student race			
Classroom Management	1.00	2.00	-3.32	2.50	.19
		3.00	-3.66*	1.69	.04
		6.00	-1.02	3.76	.79
	2.00	3.00	-.34	2.67	.90
		6.00	2.30	4.29	.60
	3.00	6.00	2.64	3.88	.50
Academics	1.00	2.00	-.04	2.27	.98
		3.00	-2.37	1.53	.13
		6.00	2.06	3.41	.55
	2.00	3.00	-2.33	2.43	.34
		6.00	2.10	3.89	.59
	3.00	6.00	4.43	3.52	.22
Interpersonal Relationships	1.00	2.00	-.44	2.05	.83
		3.00	-2.80*	1.39	.05
		6.00	.06	3.08	.99
	2.00	3.00	-2.36	2.19	.29
		6.00	.50	3.52	.89
	3.00	6.00	2.86	3.18	.37
Respect and Trust	1.00	2.00	1.48	2.22	.51
		3.00	-1.73	1.50	.25
		6.00	6.48	3.34	.06
	2.00	3.00	-3.21	2.37	.18
		6.00	5.00	3.81	.20
	3.00	6.00	8.21*	3.44	.02
Total	1.00	2.00	-2.33	7.66	.76
		3.00	-10.57*	5.18	.05
		6.00	7.57	11.53	.52
	2.00	3.00	-8.24	8.20	.32
		6.00	9.90	13.16	.46
	3.00	6.00	18.14	11.89	.13

Note: 1 = African American; 2 = Hispanic; 3 = Caucasian; 6 = Other

\* = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table A8

Descriptives for Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors: Factoring in Number of Teachers in the Classroom

Themes	No. of Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Classroom Management	1	27	22.89	2.65	.51
	2	11	22.91	2.77	.84
Academics Support	1	27	25.15	3.63	.70
	2	11	27.73	1.90	.57
Inter-Personal Relationships	1	27	19.78	3.97	.76
	2	11	21.18	3.28	.99
Respect and Trust	1	27	21.63	3.12	.60
	2	11	23.00	2.49	.75
Total	1	27	89.44	11.25	2.17
	2	11	94.82	8.30	2.50

Note: 1 = one teacher taught classes; 2 = co-taught classes

Table A9

Independent Samples T-Test Comparing Teachers' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors:  
Factoring in Number of Teachers in Classroom

		<u>T-test for Equality of Means</u>				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Classroom Management	Equal variances assumed	-.02	36	.98	-.02	.96
Academic Support	Equal variances assumed	-2.22	36	.03	-2.58	1.16
Interpersonal Relationships	Equal variances assumed	-1.03	36	.31	-1.40	1.36
Respect and Trust	Equal variances assumed	-1.30	36	.20	-1.37	1.06
Total	Equal variances assumed	-1.43	36	.16	-5.37	3.76



Table A10

Descriptives for Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors: Factoring in Number of Teachers in the Classroom

Themes	No. of Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Classroom Management	1	38	17.21	5.28	.86
	2	10	20.70	4.40	1.39
Academic Support	1	38	20.32	4.27	.69
	2	10	24.40	4.90	1.55
Inter-Personal Relationships	1	38	17.05	4.31	.70
	2	10	18.80	3.99	1.26
Respect and Trust	1	38	17.87	4.36	.71
	2	10	21.20	5.37	1.70
Total	1	38	72.45	14.94	2.42
	2	10	85.10	17.11	5.41

Note: 1 = one teacher taught classes; 2 = co-taught classes

Table A11

Independent Samples T-Test Comparing Students' Perceptions of Teachers' Caring Behaviors:

Factoring in Number of Teachers in Classroom

		<u>T-test for Equality of Means</u>				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Classroom Management	Equal variances assumed	-1.92	46	.06	-3.49	1.82
Academic Support	Equal variances assumed	-2.61	46	.01	-4.08	1.56
Interpersonal Relationships	Equal variances assumed	-1.16	46	.25	-1.75	1.51
Respect and Trust	Equal variances assumed	-2.05	46	.05	-3.33	1.63
Total	Equal variances assumed	-2.31	46	.03	-12.65	5.47

**A SURVEY OF  
THE BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS  
OF A CARING TEACHER  
(Teacher Version)**

The purpose of this survey is to identify through teacher perception teacher behaviors that are considered to be caring.

**Part I--Demographics**

**Directions:** Please respond to each item by circling one which most accurately describes you.

1. **Grade level:**    K - 5<sup>th</sup>                      6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>                      9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>
  
2. **Subject(s):**    English    Math    Science    Social Studies    Other:\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **Most of my classes currently have:**    one teacher                      two teachers
  
4. **Total years of teaching experience:**    0 - 5                      6 -10                      11 - 15                      16 - 20                      21+
  
5. **Gender:**    male    or    female
  
6. **Race/Ethnicity:**    African American  
                                  Hispanic  
                                  Caucasian  
                                  Asian American  
                                  American Indian  
                                  Other:\_\_\_\_\_

## Part II--Survey items

**Directions:** Using the scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the least important and 5 being the most), rate the importance of the following teacher behaviors in terms of “caring”.

### Caring teachers:

		Least > > > > > Most					
Classroom Management	1.	create an environment where students feel safe.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	are positive with students.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	step in when students pick on each other.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	give students positive reinforcement for good behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
	5.	enforce the same rules for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Support	6.	hold high expectations for student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
	7.	return work promptly with meaningful feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
	8.	recognize students for academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
	9.	display students' work.	1	2	3	4	5
	10.	give students hints when they do not understand or respond.	1	2	3	4	5
	11.	make time for students before and after school.	1	2	3	4	5
	12.	inform parents about their student's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Relationships	13.	take a personal interest in what students do outside their class.	1	2	3	4	5
	14.	call students by their names.	1	2	3	4	5
	15.	provide students with "treats" and "goodies" on special occasions.	1	2	3	4	5
	16.	joke around with students.	1	2	3	4	5
	17.	recognize students for extra-curricular achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Respect and Trust	18.	greet students when entering the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
	19.	ask students to help with classroom tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
	20.	ask students for their opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
	21.	maintain eye contact with students when talking to them.	1	2	3	4	5
	22.	give students opportunities to make decisions that affect them.	1	2	3	4	5

END OF SURVEY

**A SURVEY OF  
THE BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS  
OF TEACHER CARING  
(Student Version)**

**The purpose of this survey is to identify through student perception teacher behaviors that are considered to be caring.**

**Part I--Demographics**

**Directions:** Please respond to each item by circling the one which most accurately describes you.

1. **Gender:**    male            or            female
  
2. **Level:**    Freshman            Sophomore            Junior            Senior
  
3. **Total Years at This School:**    1        2        3        4        5
  
4. **Most of my academic classes are taught by:**    one teacher                            two teachers
  
5. **Race/Ethnicity:**    African American  
                                  Hispanic  
                                  Caucasian  
                                  Asian American  
                                  American Indian  
                                  Other:\_\_\_\_\_

## Part II--Survey items

**Directions:** Using the scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the least important and 5 being the most), rate the importance of the following teacher behaviors in terms of “caring”.

### Caring teachers:

		Least > > > > > Most					
Classroom Management	1.	create an environment where students feel safe.	1	2	3	4	5
	2.	are positive with students.	1	2	3	4	5
	3.	step in when students pick on each other.	1	2	3	4	5
	4.	reward good behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
	5.	enforce the same rules for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Support	6.	hold high expectations for student achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
	7.	return work promptly with meaningful feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
	8.	recognize students for academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
	9.	display students' work.	1	2	3	4	5
	10.	give students hints when they do not understand or respond.	1	2	3	4	5
	11.	make time for students before and after school.	1	2	3	4	5
	12.	inform parents about their student's progress.	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Relationships	13.	take a personal interest in what students do outside their class.	1	2	3	4	5
	14.	call students by their names.	1	2	3	4	5
	15.	provide students with "treats" and "goodies" on special occasions.	1	2	3	4	5
	16.	joke around with students.	1	2	3	4	5
	17.	recognize students for extra-curricular achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Respect and Trust	18.	greet students when entering the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
	19.	ask students to help with classroom tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
	20.	ask students for their opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
	21.	maintain eye contact with students when talking to them.	1	2	3	4	5
	22.	give students opportunities to make decisions that affect them.	1	2	3	4	5

END OF SURVEY