

1-1-2013

## Care As the Essential Element in Teacher and Student Interactions: Examining Dialogue as a Vehicle for Building a Caring Environment

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CARE AS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN TEACHER AND STUDENT  
INTERACTIONS: EXAMINING DIALOGUE AS A VEHICLE FOR BUILDING A  
CARING ENVIRONMENT

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

Educational Administration

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2013

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## ABSTRACT

This present study considers to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment. Research investigating behavior and qualities of effective teaching has been linked with caring relationships (Anfara & Schmid, 2007; Marzano, 2007; Noddings, 2005). “Relationships and instruction are not an either-or-proposition, but rather an incredible combination.” (Brown, 2010, p. 10) The present study will examine to what extent dialogue, as one of the components of a proposed model of caring, can build a caring environment in seventh grade classrooms at a local middle school (Noddings, 2005, p.53). Specifically, dialogue skills such as intonation, empathy, respect, and listening will be explored through classroom observations, as well as interviews and surveys with students and teachers. Results suggest that the elements of dialogue skills between teachers and students support a caring environment.

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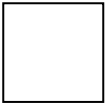
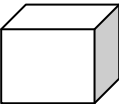

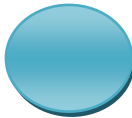
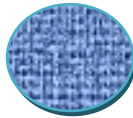
## CHAPTER 1

### OUR STORY

“Just as sunlight burns away the morning fog, the more light you shine on what you stand for, what you believe in, and what you care about, the more clearly you’ll see those roads signs pointing in the direction you want to go. (p. 35)” This quote from *The Truth About Leadership* by Kouzes and Posner captured my attention as it catapulted me back in time to the 2006-2007 school year, the first year I became principal of Landrum Middle School. My memory serves me magical chunks of time as I become omniscient to the past. Returning to my first year is a memory filled with a self critique of *I should have done this* and *why did we do it this way* in juxtaposition with celebrating how far we have come as a school as I now enter my eighth year as principal. Landrum Middle School’s PASS scores ranked as one of the top three in Spartanburg County, and for Landrum Middle School we ranked two out of three according to the overall weighted points total of the Federal Accountability System among the middle schools across our district. In addition, we just recently were awarded the *Making Middle Grades Work Depth of Implementation Award* that is primarily based on having a continuous pattern of high test scores and scoring “Met” on AYP for the past two years. For the first time in eight years, I feel that there is a movement towards teachers feeling connected to their students and teachers connecting to each other, as well as to the school administration. We are closer

than we have ever been, and it is imperative that we move forward the essence of this connection that has enabled us to build relationships that are inextricably linked to developing a caring environment for all who enter the doors of Landrum Middle School. The process of moving forward has been a journey, and it began with coming to grips with who we were as individuals and how this transferred into the classroom as educators. Through staff development during approximately the first two years as I was principal, we became critical thinkers as we examined ourselves in an artistic metaphorical spectrum by creating a piece of art to represent how it related to the elements in which we needed to grow professionally and/or personally. By utilizing a metaphorical lens, we were allowed the opportunity to examine ourselves using the Feldman Method, “a mechanism of critiquing art” to evaluate through judgment the elements of art: line, value, shape, form, space, color and texture (Kelehear, 2006). Table 1.1 below describes the intersection of the elements of art and pedagogy to result in creating a piece of art and a self-reflection to represent where personal and professional growth needed to emerge (Kelehear, 2006).

**Table 1.1 Intersection of the Elements of Art and Pedagogy**

Line	Value	Shape	Form	Space	Color	Texture
						
<p><b>Helps us to define the relationship with the other person.</b></p> <p>A long narrow mark/stroke on the surface. Being clear about boundaries and parameters. How do we communicate expectations? How do we plan our meeting dates and times? What do we expect from our teams? Are we clear on where our school is going? What needs to become clearer to me as a teacher, leader, and student?</p>	<p><b>Helps us to bring light to what matters most in schooling.</b></p> <p>Lightness or darkness of color. Where is our attention—is it on what matters most? Do we confuse what is pressing with what matters most? What is in the background of our personal lives or the lives of our students that needs to come to the light—receive more attention. What is most pressing (light)? What can wait (dark)?</p>	<p><b>Helps us to develop a capacity to help students learn.</b></p> <p>Two-dimensional area. May not be about instruction but definitely are important to the success of a school. How are you doing? (Health, family). It's typical to put ourselves last—we have to be careful—this will lead to burnout and ineffective instruction.</p>	<p><b>Helps us to seek empathy; both the supervisor's and teacher's capacity to understand/feel another person's perspective.</b></p> <p>Develop active listening skills. Empathy allows us to hear both the content and the feelings in a message. What I hear you saying is... Help me to understand what you mean by... What do you mean by... So you're wondering... Your hunch is that... You're suggesting...</p>	<p><b>Helps us differentiate positive and negative space.</b></p> <p>We communicate to students what we consider to be important; what we want to see. Focus on learning outcomes for students and classroom management first! What is your lesson about? What are your goals? What is really important to you? What do you want them to walk away with? How will you know they have it? What will success look like?</p>	<p><b>Helps us to encourage different teaching styles.</b></p> <p>Different teaching styles can help teachers respond to different kinds and needs of students. Color blends students, teacher, and curriculum. Do I know my students well? Do I know about their families, interests? How do I respond to the varying needs of my students? Is my curriculum rigorous and relevant?</p>	<p><b>Helps us to focus on collegiality and collaboration – move away from cliques.</b></p> <p>Try to bring varying teaching staffs together. Cohesion among staff greatly benefits the students. How do we bring people together....community, our stakeholders, our parents, volunteers? How do we bring different groups together? Different departments? (related arts to content) ...visiting each others' classrooms?</p>

Fast forward a few years and the self reflection evolved from self to looking outside of ourselves to what kind of school we would want for own personal children. This was a slightly different lens to view a school but one that would epitomize our expectations of what every parent would desire as a school for his/her own child. It would also lead our school to establishing our beliefs and a vision. I took the descriptions of what type of school each teacher would want for his/her child, and I added the stem LMS is a.... The following represents a snapshot of what was collected from faculty members:

LMS is a school where students feel comfortable, safe, loved, and valued.

LMS has an environment that is inviting and inspiring to aid in the quest for knowledge.

LMS is a place where students can build and expand on their dreams.

LMS is a place where a strong work ethic and an attitude of achievement prevail.

LMS is a place where we give pats on the back to every member to show support and offer words of encouragement.

LMS is a place where all the adults in the building remain calm, confident, and compassionate-knowing things will get done, knowing we can expect encouragement and support from our colleagues, and knowing at the end of each day that we gave 110% for our kids.

LMS expects the best from each student.

LMS is a school where education is something to be cherished.

LMS is a school where every child is given every opportunity to learn and is challenged.

LMS is a school that looks out for the total well-being of every child.

LMS is a school that does not give up on children.

LMS is a school where children succeed.

LMS is a school where it is important to have caring relationships.

LMS is a school where respect is understood, manners are used, and empathy is applied.

LMS is school where colleagues trust colleagues and our public school system.

LMS is a school where all students develop a passion for reading and learning.

LMS has teachers who touch the lives of his/her students and influence them to strive to do their best.

LMS is a school that looks at individual children and makes education plans that meets each child's abilities.

LMS is a school where parent relationships are valued and welcomed.

Soon thereafter, we were able to condense the statements into our belief statements, and a mission was born as well. If you were to "google" our webpage this is what you would find:

#### Beliefs

Landrum Middle School believes:

Students need to be challenged with rigorous academics

All students can learn when provided the opportunity to do so

Students need to be engaged in their learning

Students need to be surrounded by role models who are caring, respectful and knowledgeable

Attractive and clean schools provide a safe and productive learning environment

Everyone who enters Landrum Middle School needs to feel welcomed

Home, school and community relationships can strengthen learning experiences

### Mission

The mission of Landrum Middle School is to give each student every opportunity to make the most of themselves.

### Vision

-A school for the heart and mind-

We have published for the entire world to see; and, therefore, a commitment, no a promise, has been made to the children of Landrum Middle School.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the No Child Left Behind (2001) Federal legislation, the effectiveness of teachers has been pushed to the forefront of educational policy discussions. Complicating the discussion of effectiveness is the lack of clarity as to what successful teaching actually looks like and how it might be evaluated. Consequently, in *Middle School Journal* (May 2007), the article, “Defining the Effectiveness of Middle Grades Teachers,” reported that there was a high degree of agreement with regards to the behaviors or qualities associated with effective teaching: “content knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, and issues dealing with the relationships between teachers and students” (p. 55-56). Specifically, “through strong interpersonal skills, [teachers] have the ability to motivate students, set high expectations for student learning, interact with students in positive and caring ways, encourage students, communicate interest in students both verbally and nonverbally, and provide a classroom climate of respect and rapport that reflects their commitment to the students and their

education” (p. 56). Another specific study outlined in the article focused on two main dimensions of effective teaching: intellectual excitement and interpersonal concern/effective motivation. Intellectual excitement involves teacher qualities such as enthusiasm and humor; whereas, interpersonal concern/effective motivation deals with concern, caring, availability, friendliness, and accessibility. In a recent publication, *The Art and Science of Teaching*, Marzano dedicates one entire chapter on “What Will I Do to Establish and Maintain Effective Relationships with Students?” Marzano states that teachers should think in terms of teacher behaviors as opposed to teachers’ thoughts and feelings. With this assertion in mind, there are two critical components of effective relationships. One component related to behaviors is to communicate an appropriate level of concern and cooperation such as knowing something about each student; engaging in behaviors that indicate affection for each student; bringing student interests into the content and personalizing learning activities; engaging in physical behaviors that communicate interest in students; and using humor when appropriate. The second component involves behaviors that communicate an appropriate level of guidance and control such as consistently enforcing positive and negative consequences; projecting a sense of emotional objectivity by recognizing that emotions are natural and inevitable and monitoring your thoughts and emotions; and maintaining a cool exterior (Marzano, 2007, p.154-160). Marzano also includes research that supports the idea that “if the relationship between the teacher and the students is good, then everything else that occurs in the classroom seems to be enhanced” (p. 150). Marzano conveyed that many behavioral problems are related to a breakdown in teacher-student relationships. Moreover, the components of good teacher-student relationships include consideration,

buoyancy, and patience (Marzano, 2007). In summary, upon review of previous research, there is a reoccurring theme of positive relationships between teacher and student as one of the factors associated with teacher effectiveness. Teacher effectiveness has been linked to student achievement and has been described through the *Middle School Journal* (May 2007), in the article, “Defining the Effectiveness of Middle Grades Teachers,” as relating to the following behaviors or qualities associated with effective teaching: “content knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, and issues dealing with the relationships between teachers and students.” Obviously, teacher effectiveness in the realm of building relationships goes beyond teaching basic academic skills. As Noddings (2005, p. xv) describes extensively, it is through moral education and the concept of providing a climate of care that “caring relationships might flourish” and “to be credited properly with the virtue of caring, one must regularly succeed in establishing caring relations.” Noddings’ relational view of caring embodies two contributors in a caring relation: the carer and cared for. There are many educators today who find themselves in a situation where they try to establish caring relationships and students who want to receive care yet we find many students who claim, “Nobody cares” (Noddings, p. xv, 2005)! Noddings (1988, p.215) encourages her readers to entertain not that the aim of American schooling should be the education of a moral life but that “the conception of morality needs revision.” Consequently, Noddings proposes a model of caring that encompasses four components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. By putting this model and its components of care into schools, Noddings emphasizes that “teachers and students spend more time together so that relations of trust may be



established” (Noddings, p. 107, 2005). More specifically, to emphasize the need for dialogue, Noddings conveys:

Dialogue is also essential in learning how to create and maintain caring relations with intimate others. Unfortunately, there is little real dialogue in classrooms. A typical pattern of talk can be described this way: Teacher elicitation, student response, teacher evaluations. Then the teacher moves on to someone else, and the student-his or her turn over for the hour-breathes a sigh of relief and returns to other thoughts. If dialogue cannot be introduced into formal lesson structures, it must be provided somewhere. There must be time in every child’s day for sustained conversation and mutual exploration with an adult. (2005, p. 53)

Therefore, given that care matters in building relationships, this study will determine to what extent dialogue between students and teachers can support a caring environment.

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

The study is a qualitative inquiry that utilizes the research designs of an ethnographic study. This type of research design allowed for the understanding as to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment. More specifically, Noddings suggests that by giving intentional effort to developing the skills of dialogue that engender a positive relationship and a caring classroom environment teachers might establish a caring setting for learning. The site chosen for the study will be Landrum Middle School located with Spartanburg County School District One. Four, seventh grade middle school students representing varying ethnicities and gender, as well

as high and low achievers will be chosen as part of the research population sample. The seventh grade population of 82 students consists of 44 females and 38 males. Of those 82 students, 66 are white, 11 are black, 3 are Hispanic, and 2 are Asian. In addition, 38 students receive free lunch and 3 students receive reduced lunch. The age range for seventh graders is 12 to 13 years. Psychologist, Robert Selman, is known for his theory of adolescent social cognition which is the ability to understand social relationships. He suggests that students move through five stages of development as indicated in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2 Five Stages of Development**

Stage of Development	Descriptor	Age Frame
0	Egocentric undifferentiated stage	Ages 3 to 6
1	Differential or subjective perspective-taking stage, or social-informational stage	Ages 6 to 8
2	Self-reflective thinking or reciprocal perspective taking	Ages 8 to 10
3	The third person or mutual perspective –taking stage	Ages 10 to 12
4	In-depth and societal perspective-taking stage	Adolescence to Adulthood

(Rice, p. 35, 2008)

The third stage known as “The Third Person or Mutual Perspective-Taking Stage” usually occurs in children ages 10-12. At this stage, students can see their own perspectives as well as a partner and a neutral third person. They have the ability to understand a more generalized perspective of a group, and friendships are seen as a series of interactions. In addition, seventh graders are usually in what Psychologist Jean Piaget describes as the “Formal Operational Stage”. During this stage, adolescents transition beyond concrete to more logical terms. They have acquired introspection, think about their thoughts, and can think beyond the present by placing themselves into the future

(Rice, 2008). Therefore, as seventh graders, students have the cognitive ability to engage in dialogue and to the extent in which dialogue can influence relationships.

In addition, four teachers that are representative of gender and who teach in different content areas will be interviewed. I will choose only 4 because I would like for my qualitative research to represent an equal voice of teachers and students. Data collection methods will include interviews, surveys, classroom observations, and recording the narratives of the participants involved. For this qualitative study, the process of coding, to “put the data together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories to develop several main categories,” will be utilized (Merriam, 2002, p. 149) Interviews will be used throughout this study with students to gain knowledge on the topic of how teachers exhibit certain characteristics of care in the classroom, specifically the importance of using dialogue skills.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The significance of the study was supported by three factors: (1) teacher characteristics affect student and teacher relationships, (2) student and teacher relationships have an impact on student achievement, (3) care matters in building teacher and student relationships, (4) dialogue is a component of a care model, (5) limited research has been conducted on to what extent the role of dialogue supports a caring classroom environment.

A study as to the extent to which dialogue between teachers and students supports a caring environment is important for several reasons. First of all, there are limited studies that focus specifically on how conversations support a caring environment. However, there are studies that have concluded caring relationships are linked with the

behavior and/or qualities associated with effective teaching (Anfara & Schmid, 2007).

Effective teaching affects student achievement in the classroom and with the passage of the South Carolina Educational Accountability Act in 1998 and the No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation, student achievement has been one of the primary indicators that measures accountability. Consequently, rapport has been defined as the ability to build relationships. Given that care matters in building relationships, a study that explores the degree that the characteristics of care supports the seventh grade classroom is crucial for the impact of improving a caring environment in the middle school classroom. These theories are important because a teacher's knowledge of content and the way he/she delivers it to the students is indicative of effective teaching. "There is a high degree of what constitutes effective teaching. Basically the behaviors or qualities that are identified focus on content knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management techniques, and issues dealing with the relationship between teachers and students" (Anfara, 2007, p 55-56). However, if a teacher doesn't have a positive relationship with his/her students or they feel that he/she doesn't care about them, students lose motivation; and, figuratively speaking, build a wall that cannot be permeated with just teacher knowledge of content and instructional strategies. "Relationships and instruction are not an either-or proposition, but are rather an incredible combination. Research tells us this combination will increase engagement, motivation, test scores, and grade point averages while decreasing absenteeism, dropout rates, and discipline issues" (Brown, 2010, p. 10). The relationship and rapport with a teacher's students is an essential piece of the puzzle that needs to be strategically placed so that the whole child can have his/her needs met emotionally, psychologically, and academically. As an instructional leader, I would like

to explore through definitive research the facets that would complete the puzzle of what it truly means to meet the needs of the whole child. It is within our educational ethic to give our students the best of who we are when we enter the classroom so that our teaching is effective. Some teachers are not aware that there may be something more out there that could help them reach and better educate their children (Noddings, 1988). I would like to utilize the findings from the audience of students and teachers to inform teachers what it is beyond knowledge or instructional practice that could benefit them in becoming more adept in educating our children. I want them to hear the voices of students and what it is that they receive from teachers that drive them to perform well or at least try to excel. I have always said there are some characteristics that I see in some teachers that I would love to bottle and administer to other teachers. If we as educators truly identify ourselves as lifelong learners, then the desire to improve any aspect of our teaching that could improve the classroom environment should be evident, even if we have to change something about ourselves or achieve a whole new paradigm about who we are and what we exhibit when we close our classroom doors.

In my study, I think these theories will help me as an instructional leader to establish my own personal expectations of what I would like to see for the educators in our schools. Ultimately, we are all in education to do what is best for children, and I am responsible for, as Jim Collins states in his book *From Good to Great*, to “get the right people on the bus.” When I am I charged with the task to choose the right teachers for our children, I need to find out as closely as is feasible what that individual “will look like” in the classroom when he/she closes the door to teach. How will our students

receive this individual and is this individual “for real”? Do they have all the students’ best interests in mind when they take on the ultimate responsibility of educating them?

Currently, as I am in my eighteenth year in education and my seventh year as a principal, I tend to notice relationships with students and their teachers as I observe classroom instruction and deal with disciplinary issues. Specifically, what piques my interest is when I see some of the same children who have been sent from the same teacher repeatedly. I hear comments from students such as “She doesn’t like me”; she calls me down for nothing”; “I can’t stand her and I don’t care what she does to me.” It creates an interest because when I discussed this child that I have mentally ingrained in my mind with his other teachers, I did not receive the same response that I received from the teacher who sent the child to the office. Through my hindsight, I can’t help but wonder if it is the teacher’s rapport with his/her students. I do see differences among teachers; and, for this specific scenario, the teacher is not as nurturing and kind as the other child’s teachers. I am curious as to what exactly would make this child say that the teacher doesn’t like him and is there a possibility that we could change the whole relationship between these two individuals, not to mention the child’s grades, which plummeted from the second nine weeks to the end of school.

## SUBJECTIVITIES

Through my research there are numerous subjectivities that I need to remain cognizant of in order to determine clear and true “findings.” One of the most dominant “subjective Is” that I need to remind myself of is the “Administrator I” versus who I use to be when I was a classroom teacher. Not every teacher will teach like me or conduct a lesson as I would. We as individuals bring our own idiosyncrasies in regards to personal

teaching. Also, I must never “forget where I came from.” It tends to be easier to work with some children for only one session versus 180 days. Even though I am in the classroom as an administrator a few times out of the year, it is still not comparable to the full 180 days a teacher fulfills in an academic calendar year. In addition, as an administrator, students’ behavior, not to mention teachers’ behavior, tend to improve when I enter the classroom. I must question am I truly seeing an accurate picture of what occurs on a typical day in the classroom. An additional “subjective I” that may come into play throughout my research is the “Empathetic I.” Due to not being with students as much as teachers, I may tend to be a little more empathetic than their “Stressed-Out Is” would allow. I have to be mindful of this “Empathetic I” when I am working with disciplinary issues as well. It’s not easy when I have not been at the forefront of the disciplinary issue. I have to play the middle and hear both sides and yet remain supportive of teachers and what they are dealing with in the classroom. I may work with one to three children at a time and they have between 20-25 in their classrooms—huge difference! A third “subjective I” is my “Religious I.” A huge part of my actions relate to my Christianity beliefs. The “golden rule” of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is a constant struggle, yet is an undercurrent of what I hope and strive for in my daily actions. A huge majority of my success with most students comes from lots of prayer and simply treating them with kindness. However, I am not so sure that some individuals are mindful of how they treat others-or at least it doesn’t appear to be when working with students. Another “subjective I” is my “Pleasing I.” I like to please people, and I want to make them happy. Students are not excluded. Sometimes I think I may be too heavily oriented on the end of the continuum of “trying to please people.” In

addition, my “Experiences I” define somewhat of who I am at this time in my life. I am not the same educator that I was 18 years ago. Through my experiences I have learned what instructional practices, in my opinion, are deemed as necessary and important and what may be considered as frivolous. However, I still consider my learning curve to be pointed in an almost vertical direction; I have acquired new knowledge over the years based on my experiences in dealing with students. I believe this has helped me to “save face” for my students many times. One of the most important “subjective Is” that needs to be written as a reminder at the top of my notepad before I conduct observations in classrooms is my “Frustrated I.” As an administrator who has been exposed to several types of teachers and classrooms, I have found lots of joy and approval in some classrooms; and I have found some that I, ashamedly, admit that I would not want my own children to be apart of. I am ashamed because I am at fault for letting these individuals remain. Even though I have “inherited many faculty members, I have already built a frustration for previous administrators who allowed teachers to switch schools or classrooms because they felt the change would prove beneficial. What I am seeing is not a need for change in location but attitude and the overall relationships that teachers have established with their students. Students have a keen sense of when they are not wanted. Therefore, with this frustration I must remind myself that this research is not for retaliation, and I’m not looking for those individuals who have established or acquired these negative characteristics, but I would like to provide or at least help educate how dialogue is an important factor in supporting a caring classroom environment.

In essence, remaining cognizant of subjectivities and how they may interact with the research process will allow me to strengthen my motivation of establishing and



articulating my own personal expectations of what I would like to see for the educators in our schools. I have to subtract my limitations of thinking everyone comes to the table with the same characteristics and beliefs of how we should treat children. I have to utilize the motivation that may come from frustration and turn it into something positive that will benefit children. Monitoring my subjectivities comes with first being aware of my subjectivities. As I am collecting data, I will refer to my subjectivities when analyzing anecdotal notes from interviews and observations so as not to skew conclusions and to remain as objective as possible.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is evidence in selected 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms that the elements of dialogue between teachers and students engender a caring environment. In order to understand, four skills of dialogue will be explored through the following research questions:

1. To what extent is intonation present in the classroom?
2. To what extent is empathy present in the classroom?
3. To what extent is respect present in the classroom?
4. To what extent is listening present in the classroom?

The research question was supported with Noddings' proposal for future purposeful research: "to seek out situations in which educators are trying to establish settings more conducive to moral growth and study these attempts at some length..." (Noddings, p. 226, 1988).

## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this study the following will be used as definitions for key terms:

Care (Caring) - as described by Noddings “is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors” (Noddings, p. 17, 2005). Due to her definition being primarily relational, Noddings uses the term caring relation interchangeably with the term care or caring. Noddings states that a caring relation “is, in its most basic form, a connection or encounter between two human beings-a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for. In order for the relation to be properly called caring, both parties must contribute to it in characteristic ways” (Noddings, p. 15, 2005). In addition, Stronge conveys caring as a broad term and that its characteristics include more than just knowing the students but includes teacher attributes such as “listening, gentleness, understanding, knowledge of students as individuals, warmth and encouragement, and overall love for children” (Stronge, p.14, 2002).

Dialogue- “a conversation in which people think together in relationship. Thinking together implies that you no longer take your own position as final. You relax your grip in certainty and listen to the possibilities that result simply from being in a relationship with others-possibilities that might not otherwise have occurred” (Yankelovich, 1999, p. 19).

Rapport, as defined in this study, is building relationships between students and teachers. There are “two critical components of effective relationships. One component relates to behaviors that communicate an appropriate level of concern and cooperation such as knowing something about each student; engaging in behaviors that indicate affection for each student; bringing student interests into the content and personalizing

learning activities; engaging in physical behaviors that communicate interest in students; and using humor when appropriate. The second component involves behaviors that communicate an appropriate level of guidance and control such as consistently enforcing positive and negative consequences; projecting a sense of emotional objectivity by recognizing that emotions are natural and inevitable and monitoring your thoughts and emotions; and maintaining a cool exterior” (Marzano, 2007). For the purpose of this study, building relationships between students and teachers will be referred to as rapport (Catt & Miller, 2007).

Coding is “put[ting] data together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories to develop several main categories.” (Merriam, 2002, p. 149) “Weaving together the key categories” from observations, interviews, and surveys conducted throughout this study will provide a way to “label categories with a term” and for this research study the terms will be the teacher characteristics that affect teacher and student rapport (Merriam, 2002, p.167 & Creswell, 2003, p. 192).

A “survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From the results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population” (Creswell, 2003, p. 152). The survey will be conducted in a middle school located within Spartanburg County School District One. A survey among four teacher participants who represent varying genders and who teach in different content areas will be used to verify the qualitative data collected through classroom observations. The additional participants of a survey will include the four seventh grade middle school students who represent the ratio of percentages of the gender, varying ethnicities, as well as high and low achievers within

the school and the remaining seventh grade population. Data on the survey will be collected through the means of a questionnaire using Likert-like items based on a scale from “never” to “sometimes” to “often.”

Likert scale “asks individuals to check their level of agreement (i.e., strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree) with various statements” (Gall, 2003, p. 214).

Teacher effectiveness has been described through the *Middle School Journal* (May 2007), in the article, “Defining the Effectiveness of Middle Grades Teachers,” as relating to the following behaviors or qualities associated with effective teaching: “content knowledge, pedagogical skills, classroom management, and issues dealing with the relationships between teachers and students.”

Student Achievement will be defined using the focus of achievement. The American Heritage Dictionary defines achievement as “something accomplished successfully, especially by means of exertion, skill, practice, or perseverance.” Evidence of student achievement will be collected through data such as MAPS (Measures of Academic Progress) and PASS (Palmetto Assessment of State Standards) results.

## DELIMITATIONS

Initially, this study will confine itself to Landrum Middle School in Spartanburg County School District One. The participants will include four seventh grade middle school students who represent the ratio of percentages of the gender, varying ethnicities, as well as high and low achievers within the school and the remaining seventh grade population. In addition, four, seventh grade content area teachers who represent varying genders and who teach in different content areas will also participate. Therefore,

generalizability to other situations may be limited. In addition, due to the study using a qualitative design, empirical evidence will not be an analytical focus.

## ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study will be organized into five chapters, a bibliography, and appendices. As a result of Noddings and Feldman's studies, I have embedded their work as my theoretical lens to understand the art of caring as practice. Chapter two will present a review of literature regarding building relationships, also referred to as rapport, among teachers and students as part of teacher effectiveness. In addition, the role of dialogue between teachers and students to create a caring environment will be included. Chapter Three will describe the research design and methodology of the study. The instruments used to gather the data, procedures followed, and the participants selected for the study will also be included. An analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings will be presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will use the Feldman Method as an approach to provide a description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment with implications of how the ethnographic research experience with the four dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening relate and interact to add and create meaning, specifically a caring environment (Kelehear, 2006). The study will conclude with a bibliography and appendices.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on dialogue as a component of caring may provide a new perspective for how to provide an environment that supports student and teacher relationships in the classroom. This chapter will explore the role of dialogue and the skills associated with dialogue that can be extended into educational practice to influence a caring environment that builds and sustains teacher and student relationships.

#### CARE IN SCHOOLS

In her second edition of *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, Noddings (1995) continues her plea for a “central place for caring in our schools” by putting the “human dimension back into an educational system that has become dehumanized.” She advocates for a curriculum that “centers around care: care for one’s self; for intimate others as well as strangers and distant others; for animals, plants, the earth; and for human instruments and ideas” (Noddings, 1995, ix). In Noddings’ book, *An Ethic of Caring*, she emphatically advocates for moral education and describes a caring model consisting of four components: dialogue, modeling, practice and confirmation. Specifically, to concentrate on dialogue is essential in order to provide a vehicle for the teacher and student to know each other, for trust to develop, and for relationships to be established (Noddings, 1988).

Coincidentally, Isaacs articulates through the definition and the etymology of dialogue the end result of what is accomplished in a learning environment where teacher and student relationships are established:

The roots of the word dialogue come from the Greek words *dia* and *logos*. *Dia* means “through”; *logos* translates to “word” or “meaning.” In essence, a dialogue is a flow of meaning. But it is more than this too. In the most ancient meaning of the word, *logos* meant “to gather together,” and suggested an intimate awareness of the relationships among things in the natural world. In that sense, *logos* may be best rendered in English as “relationship.”

...dialogue is a conversation in which people think together in relationship. Thinking together implies that you no longer take your own position as final. You relax your grip in certainty and listen to the possibilities that result simply from being in a relationship with others-possibilities that may not otherwise have occurred (Isaacs, 1999, p.19; Yankelovich, D., 1999).

People, in general, have an “unsatisfied hunger for community: a place where people know about you, care about you, where you belong. In the conditions of the twenty-first century, we cannot reproduce the communities of the nineteenth-century small town America. But through dialogue we can penetrate the veneer that has been created by too many interpersonal transactions” (Yankelovich, 1999, p. 151). “When people engage one another, formally or informally, in dialogue, they are seeking truths to live by, and through dialogue they have a good chance of finding them” (Yankelovich

1999, p. 216). Noddings' argues her educational philosophy to be a marriage between care, relationships, and academics:

A child's place in our hearts and lives should not depend on his or her academic prowess. Lots of young people see through today's educational slogans. We preach constantly that 'all children can learn'; we even suggest strongly that they all can learn anything the school has to offer if they are taught well and they try. If they don't try, they are made to feel like traitors, even though they might work very hard at tasks over which they have some control and choice. Thus, despite our determined optimism and insistent everyone-can-do-it, students complain, 'They don't care!' They suspect that we want their success for our own purposes, to advance our own records, and too often they are right (p.13).

In essence, Noddings' theory that schools cannot achieve their academic goals without implementing a curriculum that includes care for students is the foundation for her argument of how to allow the best ideas to flourish from both traditional and progressive methods in education (Noddings, 1995). Good teachers make a difference and "learning is about constructing relationships in which students connect with teachers or subjects" (Ark, 2002, p.10). "Relationships and instruction are not an either-or-proposition, but are rather an incredible combination. Research tells us this combination will increase engagement, motivation, test scores, and grade point averages while decreasing absenteeism, dropout rates, and discipline issues" (Brown, 2010, p. 10). Moreover, in order for students to achieve at high levels, "they must be well known to



their teachers” and students must know their teachers in order for trust to develop (Ark, 2002, p.13; Noddings, 1988). Dialogue is essential to building the foundation of trust between student and teacher. “True dialogue is open; that is, conclusions are not held by one or more of the parties at the outset. The search for enlightenment, or responsible choice, or perspective, or means to problem solution is mutual and marked by appropriate signs of reciprocity” (Noddings, 1988, p. 223). Consequently, making personnel connections through dialogue by teachers sharing themselves through personal stories and “insights concerning who they are outside the classroom are taking a leap toward establishing trust-and even credibility-with their students. Teachers who create comfortable learning environments by revealing themselves are ultimately rewarded with rich discussions” (Polochanin, 2007, p.40). Rapport as being described as “the ability to build relationships based on mutual trust and harmony” is a crucial element for learning effectiveness. Students are interested in the personal experiences of their teachers so they can get to know them; and, therefore, they might feel more comfortable opening up to them (Catt, et. al, 2007, p. 369). “The benefit of learning what is on students’ minds, and including some of these issues in class discussions, is connecting with students, which helps to build trust-a key element in effective communication” (Hedin, 2007, p. 62). “Districts that attempt to increase academic pressure without improving personalization are seeing even higher dropout rates, especially among disadvantaged groups” (Ark, 2002, p.14). If we do not know our students in terms of what they love, fear, or hope for and we just expect them to do well, then we are more or less treating them like “an unreflective animal” (Noddings, 1988, p.224).

In addition, with respect to care and as it relates to moral education in our schools, Klonoski's article, "Teaching as a Primordial Act of Friendship," connects the activity of teaching to many of the essential characteristics traditionally associated with friendship such as "frankness, critical self-assessment and self-understanding, and the obligations to perfect the soul, care for the world, and express love for humanity" (Klonoski, 2003, p. 140). On a side note, to address the claim that teacher and students should not be friends is "premised on a misconception about what sort of friendship is appropriate between teachers and students" (Klonoski, 2003, p.140). Interestingly, in regards to students and teachers communicating for learning effectiveness, students conveyed teachers' enthusiasm, higher-energy levels, positive attitudes, and passions for the subject matter were important. The common denominator for teacher effectiveness revolved around the theme of teachers who were good communicators with students. "For communication to occur between two individuals, a sharing of meaning must exist between the sender and the receiver" and it is incorrect to conclude that sharing of meaning has occurred "just because the communication process of sending and receiving has been completed" (Catt, et. al, 2007, p.370).

Consequently, conversation is the medium for which learning emerges and influences whether or not experiences are transformed into learning (Baker, et. al, 1997). Furthermore, in *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, the dialogue process is described as follows:

A form of conversation that can be meaningful to people from a large number of backgrounds: from every walk of life, from every nationality, from many different professions and levels of

responsibility within organizations and communities. People come to dialogue for many different reasons. Dialogue achieves this by deepening the glue that links people together. This “glue” is the genuine shared meaning and common understanding already present in a group of people (Isaacs, 1999, 10).

Isaacs also describes the dialogue as a practical tool and practice that can assist individuals with producing successful results out of difficult conversations while “integrat[ing] the good, the true, and the beautiful within each of us and within the larger institutions in which we live” (Isaacs, 1990, 3). Most problems can be traced directly to their inability to think and talk together.

As an example to support Isaacs’ idea of dialogue being utilized as a practical tool, dialogue played a role in reversing the nuclear arms race that ended the Cold War:

Some years after the end of Ronald Reagan’s presidency, George Schultz, who had been Reagan’s secretary of state, asked Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of the Soviet Union, what the turning point in the Cold War had been.

“Reykjavik,” Gorbachev answered unhesitatingly.

He explained that at their meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, he and Ronald Reagan had for the first time entered into genuine dialogue with each other—a dialogue that extended far beyond their main agenda (arms control) to cover their values, assumptions, and

aspirations for their two nations. Gorbachev credited this dialogue with establishing enough trust and mutual understanding to begin to reverse the nuclear arms race (Yankelovich, 1999, p.9).

This snapshot into history also captures a representation of the art “of not just talking together but of thinking together that seems to have been all but lost in our modern culture” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 6).

Even though dialogue appears to challenge most hierarchical models, it supports a method for sustaining partnerships between teachers and students and students with each other. It provides a framework where students and teachers can learn from each other in a setting where people listen, respect differences, and let go of the certainty in order to see ideas from new perspectives (Isaacs, 1999).

#### THE FACET OF TRUST IN A CARING ENVIRONMENT

Dialogue has a place and promise in today’s education in which all participants must be treated equally (Yankelovich, 1999). “Dialogue becomes possible only after trust has been built and the higher-ranking people have, for the occasion, removed their badges of authority and are participating as true equals. There must be mutual trust before participants of unequal status can open up honestly with one another” (Yankelovich, 1999, p. 42). “Relationships of all kinds are built on and sustained by trust” (Covey, 2006, p. 12). Students want to trust that their teachers care and to guide them through the learning process. “Effective instructors work quickly to help students feel comfortable in trusting them with the important task of guiding their efforts to learn” (Catt, et. al, 2007, p.374).

In *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools*, Tschannen-Moran conveys how five facets of trust are essential for establishing and maintaining trust within schools in order to foster relationships among teachers and students: benevolence, extending good will; honesty, telling the truth; openness, engaging in open communication; reliability, being dependable; and competence, setting an example and working hard. Tschannen-Moran, however, emphasizes the most commonly recognized facet of trust is a sense of caring: “There is a sense of care, not just care about the immediate outcome but also care about the relationship...Students who do not trust their teachers or fellow students cannot learn efficiently because they invest their energy in calculating ways to protect themselves instead of engaging in the learning process” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 19). The nature and power of care and its inextricable link to trust is reiterated frequently by Covey in *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. “The motive that inspires the greatest trust is genuine caring-caring about people, caring about purposes, caring about the quality of what you do, caring about society as a whole” (Covey, 2006, p. 78). Covey presents trust as one of the most powerful forms of motivation and inspiration because people want to be trusted and they respond and thrive on trust; therefore, it is worth the dedication to get “good at establishing, extending, and restoring trust...as the most effective way of relating to and working with others, and the most effective way of getting results” (Covey, 2006, p. 29).

## DIALOGUE SKILLS

In general, people crave a sense of community and to feel “we are not alone in the world” (Yankelovich, 1999, p.31). Unfortunately, “many of the social bonds that once unified us as a people now appear to be eroding. Average American opinion polls show

that our population is growing apart. Americans sense that civility and respect for one another are losing ground” (Yankelovich, 1999, p.29). Dialogue is a process of relationship building and “life itself is a form of meeting and dialogue is the ridge on which we meet.” (Yankelovich, 1999, p.15) Unfortunately, “at the present stage of our history, the ability to conduct dialogue is a marginal skill that only a tiny handful of people do well”; therefore, the skills needed to master the art of dialogue are critical (Yankelovich, 1999, p.19).

The craft of dialogue and the skills and principles needed to create it in order to establish and sustain relationships have been explored; and the core of dialogue can extend into the classroom as a method to build relationships, to create a caring atmosphere, and as a teaching device to engage students in the learning process (Yankelovich, 1999; Isaacs, 1999). In *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation* by Yankelovich, *That’s Not What I Meant: How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Relationships* by Tannen, *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results* by Marzano, and *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together* by Isaacs, the combination of four skills and principles for developing dialogue are presented: Intonation, Responding with Empathy, Respect, and Listening.

## INTONATION

When we speak, signals are sent through the intonation of how we speak our words to communicate “what we think we’re doing when we speak: teasing, flirting, explaining, or chastising; whether we’re feeling friendly, angry, or quizzical; whether we want to get closer to back off. In other words, how we say what we say communicates social meanings” (Tannen, 1986, p. 30). The main signals of intonation make-up the

mechanics of conversation and include pacing, pausing, loudness, and pitch. These signals help form or change the metamessage which is “what is communicated about relationships-attitudes toward each other, the occasion, and what we are saying” (Tannen, 1986, p.29). Body language, voice inflection, volume, and facial expressions should “convey a sense of high energy, excitement, and relevance” (Brown, 2010, p. 9). In the *Art and Science of Teaching*, Marzano outlines several behaviors teachers should practice to communicate interest in students:

- Smile at students at appropriate times.
- In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student’s shoulder as a form of encouragement.
- When talking with students, look them in the eyes.
- When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space.
- Look interested in what students have to say (Marzano, 2007, p. 157).

Therefore, making adjustments with intonation as we are engaged in dialogue could make a difference in adding to the strength and success of the metamessage and, in essence, the relationship. Connecting with students and presenting oneself should give students a reason to get excited, sit up, and pay attention (Brown, 2010).

## RESPONDING WITH EMPATHY

The ability to “think someone else’s thoughts and feel someone else’s feelings are indispensable to dialogue” (Yankelovich, 1999, p. 43). Empathy can influence the behaviors of individuals when responding in dialogue; consequently, the behaviors we exhibit and the responses rendered require observational skills that are not easy to acquire

in regards to empathy. Even though human beings are not accountable for how they feel, they are accountable for how they act. Therefore, teachers have the freedom and control to monitor their thoughts and emotions and, consequently, to behave in a way that communicates care to the students in the classroom (Marzano, 2007). Our reactions and behavioral responses can either “make a deposit to or a withdrawal from our relationship account” (Mendes, 2003, p.58). The “ability to read and identify emotions work together with self-management and leads to the optimal timing of responses” (Mendes, 2003, p.58). Some of the behaviors that communicate an appropriate level of concern, control and guidance are the following:

- Speaking directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone
- Looking directly at the student, without glaring or staring
- Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student
- Having a facial expression that is either neutral or positive (Marzano, 2007, p. 160)

## RESPECT

In *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, Isaacs views respect as a central element when practicing dialogue. The author defends that “at its core, the act of respect invites us to see others as legitimate” (Isaacs, 1999, p.111). Something as simple as addressing students by their names is indicative of showing respect (Brown, 2010; Marzano, 2007). In addition, respect also means honoring people’s boundaries to the point of protecting them (Isaacs, 1999, p. 114). Consequently, a teacher who incorporates good manners in the classroom and consistency in demeanor is showing respect and helping students understand and learn the power of positive, healthy



interaction (Brown, 2010). “If you respect someone, you do not intrude. At the same time, if you respect someone, you do not withhold yourself or distance yourself from them” (Isaacs, 1999, p. 114). “Students look for reasons to respect and follow you. You must send the message from day one that you are in control and worthy of their respect. This message, however, should not convey an overbearing, authoritarian, inflexible approach. Striking the right distance between being approachable without being their friend is the challenge and art of teaching” (Brown, 2010, p. 8). Covey summarizes how to demonstrate respect in the book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*: “Genuinely care for others. Show you care. Respect the dignity of every person and every role. Treat everyone with respect, especially those who can’t do anything for you. Show kindness in the little things. Don’t fake caring. Don’t attempt to be ‘efficient’ with people (p.151). With a genuine respect comes a desire to know a person more fully, understand him or her more deeply, and connect with that person. Respecting individuals looks, sounds, or feels like the following:

- Listening
- Asking for input
- Making time for the person
- Using positive humor
- Accentuating the positive
- Accepting the person “as is,” while helping him or her grow
- Learning and demonstrating an appreciation for each person’s culture and background

- Providing the best (respectful tasks-everyone's work is equally important and equally engaging)
- Expecting the best-always "teaching up"- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible
- Holding the person to a high standard
- Ensuring a positive environment for growth (Tomlinson, et. al, 2008, p.3)

## LISTENING

"Listening may be the single most powerful creative act we perform; we listen and create reality based on what we hear in each moment. Without listening, dialogue cannot exist. In the absence of listening, the streams of meaning that move among a group of people become disconnected and often invisible" (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998, p. 99). *In Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation*, the authors, Ellinor and Gerard, identify three levels of listening that take place during dialogue: first, one listens to others to sift for what is important and to expand one's own understanding; secondly, one listens for an internal conversation of one's own voice as he/she speaks; third, one listens for the shared meaning and collective themes that are emerging from the group as a collective whole (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998). As individuals "listen together" dialogue creates the opportunity for common understanding and communion. Sometimes listening requires for individuals to simply be still. The stillness, along with the quietness of our minds, helps to recognize how one is actually listening and to ensure that one is present so that listening can take place through minds and hearts, not through the ears (Isaacs, 1999). "Active listening is a system of techniques for focusing the listener, encouraging the speaker, and ensuring the listener understands what the speaker has said"

(Frey, et. al, 2009, p. 74). Table 2.1 below outlines active listening techniques and how to perform them:

**Table 2.1 Listening Techniques**

<b>What to Do</b>	<b>Why Do It</b>	<b>How to Do It</b>	<b>Examples of What to Say</b>
Encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To convey interest in what the speaker is discussing</li> <li>▪ To keep the person talking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and use other facial expressions.</li> <li>▪ Don't agree or disagree.</li> <li>▪ Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "I see ..."</li> <li>▪ "Uh-huh ..."</li> <li>▪ "OK ..."</li> <li>▪ "Keep going ..."</li> </ul>
Restate or clarify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To show that you are listening and understand</li> <li>▪ To check your perception of the speaker's message</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.</li> <li>▪ Clarify points.</li> <li>▪ Don't "fake listen"!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "If I understand correctly, your idea is ..."</li> <li>▪ "I see what you mean."</li> <li>▪ "In other words, this is ..."</li> <li>▪ "What did you mean when you said ..."</li> </ul>
Reflect or paraphrase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To show the speaker that what he or she is saying is being heard</li> <li>▪ To show you understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the other's basic feelings.</li> <li>▪ Respond to the other's main ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "So you feel that ..."</li> <li>▪ "You must feel angry that ..."</li> <li>▪ "I think you're very happy that ..."</li> </ul>

	the speaker's feelings		
Summarize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To pull important ideas, facts, and so on together</li> <li>▪ To establish a basis for further discussion</li> <li>▪ To review progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “So would you say the key ideas are ...”</li> <li>▪ “If I understand you, you’re saying that ...”</li> <li>▪ “Based on your presentation, would it be accurate to say that ...”</li> </ul>

(Frey, et. al, 2009, p. 75)

## SUMMARY

Good teachers make a difference in the lives of students every day (Ark, 2002, p.10). In order for learning to take place, students must make a connection with teachers and the subjects they are studying. The combination of student and teacher relationships and instruction is instrumental in increasing engagement, motivation and student achievement (Brown, 2010). Noddings (1995) has proposed through her model of caring that schools cannot achieve their academic goals without implementing a curriculum that includes care for students. Emphasizing dialogue in the classroom is a component of the model of caring because it supports how teachers and students can spend more time together in order for trust to be established (Noddings, 2005). Moreover, in order for students to achieve at high levels, “they must be well known to their teachers” and students must know their teachers in order for trust to develop (Ark, 2002, p.13; Noddings, 1988). Dialogue is essential to building the foundation of trust between student

and teacher; and, therefore, dialogue is a process of building relationships to create a caring atmosphere (Yankelovich, 1999). Consequently, when implementing the skills and principles of dialogue such as intonation, responding with empathy, respect, and listening, dialogue becomes a teaching tool to engage students in the learning process (Yankelovich, 1999; Tannen, 1986; Marzano, 2005; Isaacs, 1999).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The theoretical foundation for the present study was outlined in Chapters One and Two. Chapter Three presents the methodology for the dissertation research. As a result of Noddings and Feldman's studies, I have embedded their work as my theoretical lens to understand the art of caring as practice.

This chapter is composed of 4 sections. The first section restates the purpose of the dissertation study and the research design. Subsequent sections describe the research sample, measures, procedures, and analysis.

#### PURPOSE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is a qualitative inquiry that utilizes the research designs of an ethnographic study, "a focus on human society with the goal of describing and interpreting the culture of a group" (Merriam, 2002, p. 236). An ethnography will allow for the understanding of to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment through the skills of dialogue used by teachers that engender a positive relationship (Figure 3.1). The purpose of this study is to determine if there is evidence in selected 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms that the elements of dialogue skills between teachers and students engender a positive relationship. In order to understand, four skills of dialogue will be explored through the following research questions:

- To what extent is intonation present in the classroom?
- To what extent is empathy present in the classroom?

- To what extent is respect present in the classroom?
- To what extent is listening present in the classroom?

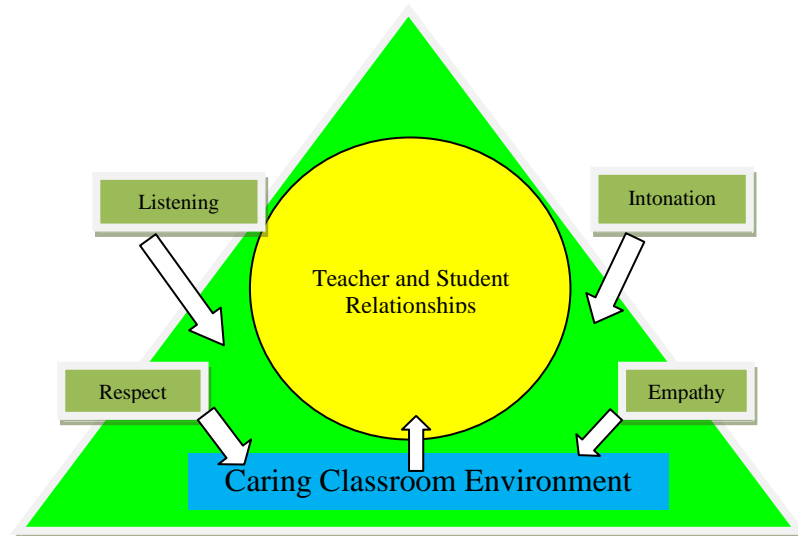


Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework of the support of dialogue skills for a caring environment to build student and teacher relationships.

## SAMPLE

The site chosen for the study was Landrum Middle School located within Spartanburg County School District One in Landrum, South Carolina. The author of this research study is the principal of the site chosen. She has a continued focus on the climate of Landrum Middle School; and, therefore, intended this study to provide insight into what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment, specifically for Landrum Middle School, so that appropriate staff development could be developed to enhance teacher and student relationships. The principal understands the importance of how care matters in building relationships. Upon her review of previous research, she has noted there is a reoccurring theme of positive relationships between teacher and student as one of the factors associated with teacher effectiveness. Again, the

principal wanted to conduct this research study to determine what extent dialogue between students and teachers can support a caring environment at Landrum Middle School.

Four, seventh grade middle school students with an age range of 12 to 13 years participated. The four students represented varying ethnicities and genders, as well as high and low achievers. The students included the following: Student A is a Hispanic female, receives free lunch, and struggles academically. Student B is a white female, average middle class, and would be considered average in academics. Student C is an African American male, considered a medium to high achiever, and receives free lunch. Student D is a white male, high achiever, and would be considered to be middle class. The seventh grade population of 82 students consists of 44 females and 38 males. Of those 82 students, 66 are white, 11 are black, 3 are Hispanic, and 2 are Asian. In addition, four teachers that are representative of varying genders and who teach in different content areas were surveyed as well. All seventh grade teachers at Landrum Middle School are white in ethnicity. Four students and four teachers were chosen for the qualitative research in order to represent an equal voice of teachers and students.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Data collection methods included interviews, observations, as well as teacher and student surveys of the participants involved. For this ethnographic study, the process of coding, to “put the data together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories to develop several main categories,” was utilized (Merriam, 2002, p. 149). Interviews with students assisted with helping to gain knowledge on the topic of how teachers exhibit certain characteristics of care in the classroom, specifically during a



dialogue. Quotes and anecdotes that resulted from the individual student interviews were also included to capture the essence and the perceptions of how conversations can support a caring environment. A survey was provided to the four teachers and the entire seventh grade population participating in the research. Survey results indicated how often certain behaviors of care were demonstrated during a typical classroom period of dialogue.

## MEASURES

Observations were conducted in the classrooms of the four teacher participants beginning February 5, 2013 through March 1, 2013, using an observational tool that focused on the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect and listening during a typical classroom period (Appendix A). Classroom observations for each of the four teacher participants were conducted at least once a week during the course of the four week data collection period. During the third week of observations, teacher participants and the seventh grade student population were given a survey to indicate how often during a typical classroom period behaviors related to dialogue such as intonation, empathy, respect, and listening were demonstrated (Appendix B). In addition, during the second week of data collection, interviews were held with each of the four student participants to answer the following questions:

### **Interview Questions for Students (Parallel with the Feldman Method):**

#### **Describe**

1. Describe what your day looks like?
2. What types of things do you study?

3. Describe your content area classes this year. Which do you like the most? Which do you like the least?

4. Describe typical interactions with your teachers.

### **Analyze**

5. How do you feel in the content area classes?

6. Describe what an ideal classroom where teachers respect his/her students would look, sound or feel like.

### **Interpretation**

7. Describe what your teachers do during class each day.

8. Tell me about the content area teacher with whom you have the best relationship with in seventh grade. What specific things about this relationship are most important to you?

9. Tell me how this teacher shows interest in what you have to say in class.

10. Tell me how this teacher shows concern for you during class.

11. Tell me how this teacher demonstrates respect for you during the class period.

12. Tell me how you know that your teacher really listens to what you have to say.

### **Judgment**

13. What do you wish your teachers would do more of?

### **DATA ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENT CONTENT**

Data was collected and placed for coding using Appendix A as a data collection matrix for the following dialogue skills: intonation, empathy, respect, and listening.

Coding is “put[ting] data together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories to develop several main categories” (Merriam, 2002, p.

149). In addition, survey data collection results (Appendices B and C) were determined by utilizing a Likert scale to determine the percentage of how often teacher behaviors are exhibited during a classroom setting as they relate to dialogue. Individual interview sessions with student participants were recorded and transcribed by a transcriptionist to be coded by the researcher to determine the extent that dialogue skills create a caring environment. An additional tool of coding was used for an aesthetic analysis to gain insight and understanding by using the Feldman Method to process and analyze the compilation of completed data from the classroom observations, interviews, transcriptions, and surveys in four stages: description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation (Kelehear, 2006, pp. 6-7). All codes were recorded in the researcher's notebook.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of the present ethnographic study was to determine if there was evidence in selected 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms that the elements of dialogue skills between teachers and students engendered a caring environment. In order to understand, four skills of dialogue were explored: intonation, empathy, respect and listening. The following chapter is organized in terms of the results using the Feldman Method of analysis and interpretation through classroom observations, teacher and student surveys, and student interviews related to the extent to which the four skills of dialogue were present in the classroom (Kelehear, 2006).

#### CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS AND EVIDENCE OF DIALOGUE SKILLS

Observations were conducted in the classrooms of the four teacher participants beginning February 5, 2013 through March 1, 2013, using an observational tool that focused on the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect and listening, as well as an analysis of the dialogue skills during a typical classroom period (Appendix A).

Classroom observations for each of the four teacher participants were conducted at least once a week during the course of the four week data collection period. As the researcher observed, notes were recorded based on what the teacher said and demonstrated during instruction. On many occasions, the researcher was able to document what the students said and demonstrated during instruction to emphasize the dialogue skills being demonstrated by the teacher. The researcher analyzed the observation notes and

paralleled the statements and behaviors to the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening.

Table 4.1 represents a synthesis of actual statements and behaviors of teachers and students observed that were paralleled by the researcher to the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening.

\*Names of students have been changed to protect the interest of minors.

**Table 4.1 Synthesis of Teacher and Student Statements and Behaviors Paralleled to Dialogue Skills**

Teacher Legend 

Teacher A  
Teacher B  
Teacher C  
Teacher D  
T=Teacher  
S= Student

Dialogue Skills		Evidence (Interpret)
Intonation	Smile at students at appropriate times.	<p>Week One: Teacher grinned when he used humor and subtle jokes</p> <p>Week 2: T: Buddy, go right to the edge of the paper and it'll be perfect (teacher and student giggle)</p> <p>Week 4: A student explained how he went across with his answers instead of vertical and that's why he missed them. T: Please make sure you're careful. S: Can I drop this grade-student was crying. T: I'm not going to drop but what I'm going to do-I will turn both of these into 5. I did this for Trevor and I'll do this for you. It will all work out. You have a 90. Just make sure you make a 100 on your test and the teacher smiled as he said this.</p>
	In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement.	

	<p>When talking with students, look them in the eyes.</p>	<p>Week One: Teacher worked math problems in the document camera but faced the students and frequently would look up towards the students. When referred to moving the decimal-whistled-easy to multiply 10.</p> <p>Week 2: Students were talking about a song vs their assignment. Teacher gave a raised eyebrow. Student smiled and said “I’ve got this.”</p> <p>Week 2: T: Looked across the classroom at students when giving information about Korea</p> <p>Week 3: T: Asked student who said Pearl Harbor-Do you know the date? Didn’t you write it down—with a smile.</p> <p>Student responded with the answer “Adolf Hitler.” Teacher asked student “bad boy, good boy?”</p> <p>T: Student H, can you think of anything?</p> <p>T: Who was responsible? Student answered with Hitler</p>
	<p>When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space.</p>	<p>Week One: T:-Whispered in media center to Rita and turned at an angle to point to computer screen.</p> <p>T: Talked to Student R again and slightly bent her back so she could get a little closer while being about 12 inches away.</p> <p>Week One: T: Explained to Student R-stood beside desk, held paper halfway in air so they could see, pointed and explained directions for the quiz since she was absent the day the quiz was administered</p> <p>Week One: T: When talked with group she knelt down and became eye level with the students at the table and participated as a member of the group</p> <p>Week One: T: Stood at front of room in front</p>

		<p>of desks-paced back and forth</p> <p>What is ration?-looked directly at Student S</p> <p>Turn your attention to the map—used a laser pointer so he could stay close to front of class.</p> <p>Week 2:T: Sat down on desk behind students and asked questions---“I painted a picture for someone”</p> <p>Week 2: T: Sat down at table with Student B and Student C to discuss reading. Teacher read the back and title. Child was smiling when Mrs. Hart returned the book to her.</p> <p>A student wanted to go to nurse. As teacher and student faced each other, the teacher asked what do you think she should be able to do? Student replied she didn’t know. Teacher wrinkled up her nose and face to give a lighthearted response of let’s see if you can wait until later.</p> <p>T: Constantly paced the room and visited with each group.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Knelt down beside a student that was confused with the assignment just given.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Stood beside student. She asked length X width and teacher responded with “yes, length X width” The teacher confirmed.</p> <p>T: What shapes are those? What’s the formula? This is why you find length x width.” Teacher proceeded to bend down near the student to point at specific examples in her book.</p> <p>T: Let me see, Student R. In reference to checking over her work she had just completed.</p> <p>Week 3: As students were taking a test, teacher would appear to ask a question to student</p>
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		<p>Week 4: While teacher worked with student she sat on her knees beside the student's desk.</p>
	Look interested in what students have to say	<p>Week One: As the teacher described trapezoid a student stated that's how my house is. The teacher gave her eye contact and responded with that it even sounds like 3 trapezoids.</p> <p>Week One: As teacher circulated, she stood on the edge of table facing the group. She would look at the papers and point to the highlights on the paper as a point of reference. She asked questions to those who needed assistance with understanding the portion of the article</p> <p>Week One: Teacher cupped his hand to his ear and "Said what?"</p> <p>Week 2: Do you want to add another, Student E?</p> <p>Week 2: Teacher appeared to look at cover of one child's book to inquire what she was reading during SSR time.</p> <p>Teacher sat down at table with a student and her peer to discuss reading. Teacher read the back and title. Child was smiling when teacher returned the book to her.</p> <p>Teacher pointed and gave a cue to direction of students' table to indicate she was coming to help them.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Now looking at bias by inclusion- Why do you think this editor put this in there. Why did the editor include this fact?</p> <p>Teacher to a student: You expressed an opinion on the fact. It made you feel a reaction.</p> <p>A student read aloud and teacher stood one student away with hand on her cheek and eyes on the student reading as he read.</p> <p>Week 3: A student discussed someone who had</p>



		<p>3 transplants. Teacher responded with “Oh, wow” and gave eye contact as the student told her story.</p> <p>T: Now you’re onto something. A student explained to the teacher how they were exchanging the water to rid waste. The teacher kept her attention on the model while the student explained and demonstrated with the model.</p>
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In summary of the table above, the researcher was able to note a variety of examples to include as evidence for intonation being present during the classroom observations. Several examples the researcher believed to be of value to summarize included the teachers would face the students and scan the classroom. When working with individual students or groups of students, observations included teachers kneeling down beside the students and becoming eye level. Also, if the students were responding during the class discussion or to a question, teachers would keep their eyes on the students and offer responses to the students.

In addition to studying intonation in the classroom, the researcher also observed how the dialogue skill of empathy was demonstrated in the classroom. The following represents evidence of empathy through actual statements and behaviors of teachers and student observed.

**Table 4.1, continued**

<b>Empathy</b>	Speaking directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone	<p>Week One: Student walks into room late. Teacher states to student we’re just taking some notes.</p> <p>Student R, what do we multiply here?</p> <p>Week One: T: Whispered to Student N. Student N., would you like to read this entire article or</p>
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		<p>break into pieces?</p> <p>What do you think, Student B?</p> <p>T: Can we read them all together? Student T, what do you think?</p> <p>Do we need to break this apart? Student D, what do you think?</p> <p>In a whisper while students were working, the teacher stated If you finish reading, write in the side margins what you're going to share with the group</p> <p>Week One: Student W raised his hand as the teacher was talking and the teacher acknowledged, "Student W, do you have a question?"</p> <p>Week 2: Teacher "talked with hands" while demonstrating with shapes.</p> <p>T: The number one thing that frustrates students is that you don't draw far enough from the edge.</p> <p>Week 2: Student J came in late with a pass—Teacher stated-"Thank you, Sweetie."</p> <p>Teacher worked with a group: "Oh, you better figure it out." Stood at edge of table to guide students through the textbook.</p> <p>Week 2: T: Remember when we read the article-not dealing with rational people. We will continue to talk about N. Korea and the drones. Today we are going to talk about the League of Nations.</p> <p>Week 3: T: What I have for you is the briefing page from time. What's cool is sparks a lot of discussion. We are going to scan this whole page.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Your job is to demonstrate a closed circulatory system. I'm going to come around and watch.</p>
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		<p>Week 3: T: Student H, can you think of anything?</p> <p>T: Imagine being in the position that Truman was in to send marines into Japan-teacher showed on map the distance in reference to the invasion. Told expected 200,000 minimum deaths of US marines. Remember a marine is someone's brother, father, or son.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Someone help me to help her add a main point to the second part of her last sentence.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Son, Son, I know what you're doing wrong. You're doing 4 squares instead of a trapezoid. You must be doing it on our own. I need you to follow me—make sure you watch me.</p> <p>A student explained how he went across with his answers instead of vertical and that's why he missed them.</p> <p>T: Please make sure you're careful.</p> <p>S: Can I drop this grade-student was crying.</p> <p>T: I'm not going to drop but what I'm going to do-I will turn both of these into 5. I did this for Student T and I'll do this for you. It will all work out. You have a 90. Just make sure you make a 100 on your test and the teacher smiled as he said this.</p>
	Looking directly at the student, without glaring or staring	<p>Week 3: As students were taking test, teacher stood to the side near computer and gazed across the room. Students did not appear to notice.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Do you think Great Britain wants US on their side? Teacher spoke like Roosevelt "I will not send your boys to die in a foreign war."</p>
	Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student	<p>Week 2: Teacher walked around and assisted with demonstrating with cylinder for drawing circles on graph paper.</p> <p>Week 2: Teacher worked with a group: "Oh, you better figure it out." Stood at edge of table to guide students through the textbook.</p>

		<p>Week 3: Teacher stood beside student. She asked length X width and teacher responded with “yes, length X width” The teacher confirmed.</p> <p>T: What shapes are those? What’s the formula? This is why you find length x width.” Teacher proceeded to bend down near the student to point at specific examples in her book.</p> <p>T: Let me see, Student R. In reference to checking over her work she had just completed.</p> <p>Week 3: As students were taking test, teacher stood to the side near computer and gazed across the room. Students did not appear to notice.</p> <p>As students continued taking their test, teacher would change directions from standing at the front of the room and go to the back and gazed through his own materials. Few seconds later paced back to the front of the classroom near the computer and technology station</p>
	Having a facial expression that is either neutral or positive	<p>Week 3: T: What I have for you is the briefing page from time. What’s cool is it sparks a lot of discussion. We are going to scan this whole page.</p> <p>Week 3: A student went to the front of the room and gave what appeared some more work to turn into the teacher. Teacher acknowledged him by saying something—neutral facial expression.</p> <p>T: Who was responsible? Student answered with Hitler.</p>

In summary of the table above, the researcher was able to note a variety of examples to include as evidence for empathy being present during the classroom observations. Several examples important to highlight included the teachers speaking directly to the students in a calm and respectful tone when the teachers called on students to answer questions: “What do you think, Barry?” and “Wyatt, do you have a question?”

Other examples included when students would walk into the room late, the teachers would address the student and provide a brief synopsis of what was currently taking place: “We’re just taking some notes.” Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student was also observed. When teachers were demonstrating they would walk around the classroom. Also, if the students were working in groups or as individuals on assignments, the teachers would walk around to check on progress.

In addition to studying empathy in the classroom, the researcher also observed how the dialogue skill of respect was demonstrated in the classroom. The following represents evidence of respect through actual statements and behaviors of teachers and student observed.

**Table 4.1, continued**

Respect	Listening	<p>Week 3: T: You expressed an opinion on the fact. It made you feel a reaction.</p> <p>T: You guys and girls had some good observations.</p>
	Making time for the person	<p>Week One: While in media center got a chair for Student R</p> <p>Spoke to Student E at checkout desk in media center</p> <p>Student A was sitting by herself and the teacher pulled up a chair and sat elbow to elbow and conference about the book Student A was reading.</p> <p>Week One: T: How many of you have said, “My heart is broken.”?-</p> <p>Teacher read over Student Y’s shoulder to help guide his reading. Paced around the room while students were reading.</p> <p>Week One: T: Noticed Student M didn’t have</p>

		<p>a paper-gave her an extra copy without saying a word.</p> <p>Week 2: T: Referred to Student A, “Talk to me.”—in reference to how to solve a problem.</p> <p>T: Buddy, go right to the edge of the paper and it’ll be perfect---(giggles from student and teacher)</p> <p>Week 2: Teacher sat down at table with Student B and Student C to discuss reading. Teacher read the back and title. Child was smiling when teacher returned the book to her.</p> <p>Teacher constantly paced the room and visited with each group.</p> <p>T: Student M, think –how does your skeletal system work with your heart?</p> <p>Week 3: T: Anyone else want to read? A student responded “I do but it’s kind of long. The teacher responded “That’s okay; we’ve got time.”</p> <p>Week 3: T: If you get to number 3, just wait a minute. I’ll help you out.</p> <p>T: To a student who had his hand raised the teacher said...I’m on my way.</p> <p>Teacher responded to a student’s work: Something went wrong in here—held student’s paper and pointed specifically to a problem.</p> <p>Week 3: Called on Student G and said his name with an accent to indicate some special attention. Student smiled.</p> <p>When the bell rang a student came up to teacher and asked, “Will you sign this for me?” The teacher replied. “I’ll sign you right up!”</p>
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		<p>Week 4: T: Let's take a few minutes and I want to walk around the room and look at your thesis-then you can begin the body of your paper.</p> <p>Week 4: A student comes in late and teacher explained how they can get half points added back to grade. "Student R, we are going over one of the most missed problems."</p> <p>T: Student D walked in late. Student D, I'm grading yours right now and explained how he could get half points credited to his grade. Teacher explained to class that PASS doesn't give partial credit. The machine does not have deep feelings</p> <p>Week 4: T: Is there anything in the first paragraph to support? Why the last sentence, Student R?</p>
	Asking for input	<p>Week One: T: Why do we organize anything we write?</p> <p>What do you think, Student P?</p> <p>Student D, what is the purpose of this paper?</p> <p>How do you feel about him as a person?</p> <p>Week One: Student S, what numbers do I need to add? You're right!</p> <p>Student K, what's the area, honey?</p> <p>Teacher asked the class why we have a different word-why some funny word for circle-why not use perimeter?</p> <p>Week One: T: What does this article have?</p> <p>Student D, what do you think?</p> <p>Week One: Would you consider the deaths to be extremely high or average?</p> <p>Student M, can you tell us which country....?</p>

		<p>As Student B read aloud, teacher stopped and asked what do you think the atmosphere was at that moment?</p> <p>Can anyone offer the meaning adjacent aisles?</p> <p>Student E, what do you think?</p> <p>Week 2: What do you think is the most important information in those notes, Student H?</p> <p>If I'm going to give you notes, you've got to find the most important information, Student A. What else, Student L? Yeah, very good.</p> <p>Student J, what do you think this one is going to be about?</p> <p>T: What might we want to mark? What do you think Student L-most important word that stands out?</p> <p>Week 2: T: Did anyone get anything different?</p> <p>T: Student S, talk to me about the last one.</p> <p>T: Student E, how did you do that?</p> <p>T: Why is B wrong?</p> <p>Week 2: T: Student M, what is the unit we're studying?</p> <p>Week 2: T: The United States said what_____</p> <p>S: Don't do it.</p> <p>T: Student E, what did you put for that?</p> <p>T: Student M, are you going to help explain?</p> <p>Student S, what did you get?</p>
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		<p>Student A, did you find anything?</p> <p>T: What did they do with the army they removed?</p> <p>Week 3: T: What are statistics, Student L? How else could it be explained, Student W?</p> <p>T: After reading this fact-What do you think individually-how does this fact influence your thought. Write it down.</p> <p>T: Now looking at bias by inclusion-Why do you think this editor put this in there. Why did the editor include this fact?</p> <p>Week 3: T: Talk to me. What shapes do we have? Teacher demonstrated with a cylinder.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Student D, which one carries blood away? Which one carries blood to our heart, Student S?</p> <p>T: Student D, which tube does the water come through? What keeps it from seeping back through?</p> <p>T: Student D, what did you do to keep them even? Student L, what did you do?</p> <p>Week 3: T: Get out a scratch sheet of paper so you can jot a few things down on it. Take a look at chart on board. You've noticed I've written WWII which stands for ____-teacher paused and waited for students to respond. Do a little brainstorming: Anything you didn't already know about WWII let me know.</p> <p>T: Asked student who said Pearl Harbor-Do you know the date? Didn't you write it down—with a smile.</p> <p>T: Anyone else that hasn't shared?</p> <p>Student C?</p>
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		<p>Week 4: T: Where did Monkey Joe's get some of their resources? Who remembers some of the sources? Who knows what the CDC is?</p> <p>T: What might be some good meat and potatoes to help you with your argument? Student J, how might that help you?</p> <p>T: If we hadn't asked you to do the scenarios and ratios would you have been able to think about them like you have? (Majority of students raised their hands to indicate no)</p> <p>T: What's another verb? Which one do you like better, Student S? Why? S: Because it sounds better.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Someone spell adolescence-I think I may have spelled it incorrectly.</p> <p>T: Student C, based on the organization's name, will this article be for physical education or against it?</p> <p>T: What would our profit be, Student E, if we invested in programs? Students R, help him out.</p> <p>Week 4: A class discussion on aggression as it related to Hitler and Mussolini. Teacher asked students if they knew the meaning of aggression.</p> <p>T: Which treaty am I referring to?</p> <p>As teacher referred to a map, he asked... why would the Germans be concerned, Student N?</p> <p>Teacher continued to give notes via Power Point. Teacher stated: Now let me switch back to the map for a moment. Can you see Austria? What year?</p> <p>T: Hitler and Stalin wanted Poland-can they both have it?</p>
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	Using positive humor	<p>Week One: A student mentioned diaphragm instead of diameter. Teacher laughed and stated that's good-I'll have to remember that. Teacher giggled again-that's good-students laughed.</p> <p>In a funny voice the teacher talked to himself-Mr. B, what's the difference? It looks the same.</p> <p>Anecdote by teacher: discussed when he was in college- had a no nonsense math professor and pretended to speak in her voice: Does anyone know the circumference? He furthered explained she told a joke that <math>\pi</math> are not square, <math>\pi</math> are round.</p> <p>Did you hear it? Brain parasite—<math>\pi r^2</math></p> <p>Week One: T: Make sure before you take out your SSR that you know what you're going to tell the group. Teacher pointed finger with a grin at Student D and he returned a grin.</p> <p>Week One: If in trenches put yourself in that position (referring to soldier letter) more in there than just send pop tarts.</p> <p>If fighting for life, don't have time to cook a casserole.</p> <p>Even as much as I like to eat, someone is not going to list food at top of list.</p> <p>Teacher showed a picture of Lusitania and said in reference to what was going on in the picture-not anything on your list of things to do but where was the ship leaving from?</p> <p>If go to swimming pond and no life guard with a sign swim at own risk—is it the life guard's fault?</p> <p>Friday is WWI party-going to be a test. This will be the last bit of information I pile on you before the WWI party on Friday a.k.a. test.</p>
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		<p>We (US) flexed our muscle on the world stage.</p> <p>In reference to the Zimmerman note—when you see this it will knock your socks off.</p> <p>Week 3: Student A, I hope you have your listening ears on because it's going to blow you mind.</p> <p>What is 3 to the second power? If you say 6 (pointed finger) I'll give you silent lunch—smiled at students.</p> <p>Week 3: T: I prefer cups to stay in the bin—it's magical because if you keep them in the bin, the water stays in the bin.says while smiling.</p> <p>T: In reference to a lab activity states to a group of students... "Oh, your water is not even, you're having a heart attack."</p> <p>Week 3: Do a little brainstorming: Anything you didn't already know about WWII let me know. Don't everyone raise their hands at once—smiled.</p> <p>Asked student who said Pearl Harbor-Do you know the date? Didn't you write it down—with a smile.</p> <p>Student responded with the answer "Adolf Hitler." Teacher asked student "bad boy, good boy?" Teacher added most people didn't think he was too cuddly.</p> <p>T: At the end of class teacher stated "Have a good weekend and thank you for shopping at Wal-Mart." The bell rang.</p>
	Accentuating the positive	<p>Week 2: T: A is right, absolutely!</p> <p>Week 3: T: Good job, Student R.</p>

		<p>T: Let me ask you a question. Yesterday I blew your mind. So does today seem as bad? No? It's going to get better with practice. Just like basketball. Don't say you can't because you can.</p> <p>Week 4: S: Now that I know the word it helps me know the article.</p> <p>T: That's what I was hoping for, Student J.</p>
	Accepting the person "as is," while helping him or her grow	<p>Week One: T: Referred to quizzes that were going to be returned. Teacher stated they were pretty good for a second attempt. I do need to talk to a few folks so I'm going to get you started on your homework.</p> <p>Week 2: A student complained about a marker getting on her hand. Teacher stated with a smile—You'll survive. The student continued with the assignment.</p> <p>Week 2: Eventually I will ask you to solve this problem (Korea and US) because as 7<sup>th</sup> graders you know everything (humor)</p> <p>Week 3: T: You guys seem to have a handle on the hook but let's play around with some thesis statements to see what we need to work on as a class.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Does someone else want to revise their thesis? A student raised his hand. We have to remember what our topic is. In reference to student, let's try this for you. What is your counterargument?</p> <p>S: I don't know how to say it (a word in article). Teacher walked over to student's desk and helped him pronounce the word.</p> <p>Student mentioned pathophysiology and teacher said let's look at that word. The teacher helped the students to dissect the word.</p>
	Learning and demonstrating an appreciation for each	<p>Week One: T: "I grew up around cows and when we bought fence, on the front it tells how much." Teacher used a funny voice</p>

	<p>person's culture and background</p>	<p>(rural) when explaining the perimeter of the fence and used his hands to demonstrate working with a fence.</p> <p>Referring to a trapezoid the teacher stated I think about a Pizza Hut.</p> <p>Week One: T: Who can come up with a different way to say he broke my heart? I'm thinking you broke my neural synapses when we first met.</p> <p>Week 2: T: Anyone else read <i>Skeleton Creek</i>—They freaked me out—too creepy. I don't want to ruin the book for you.</p> <p>Week 3: T: 815 million estimated amount of money Americans will spend on Valentine's Day gifts for their pets this year. What does that make you think when you read that statistic?</p> <p>Week 3: T: Have you ever cut your finger on paper or a knife and you think I'm never going to stop bleeding. Students asked questions about blood tests and losing blood. Teacher responded with a discussion of universal precaution.</p> <p>Week 4: T: I'm giving you this article. I'm not forcing an opinion on you-I want you to form an opinion.</p> <p>Week 4: Teacher referred to Prime Minister Chamberlain and teacher spoke in a modern voice to imitate Chamberlain: "We're going to have to talk, Pal." Then teacher responded with a modern voice of Hitler: Oh, my! Please don't spank me. I'm sorry I didn't know."</p> <p>T: Would you rather fight a contender or a lightweight? Both Hitler and Stalin didn't want to fight so they made an agreement.</p>
	<p>Providing the best (respectful tasks- everyone's work is</p>	<p>Week One: I'm going to freeze my screen. I'm going to do it, you're going to do it, and we'll come back together.</p>

	equally important and equally engaging)	<p>Week One: I'm going to become a member of Student D's group. We're going to model how we are going to read. Student D gets one; Student D gets and I'll get the long one. Decide the pattern of readers on the left hand side. Decide whose reading what and assign names.</p> <p>Week 2: Teacher modeled writing on screen. She spoke out loud as writing paragraph. Explained that she was modeling... "Kindness to others can help make a person popular when a classmate forgets a pen or pencil, instead of ignoring him, a kind person would lend him a pencil."</p> <p>T: We did a great paragraph in 3 sentences. What do you think? Body paragraph, not so bad?</p> <p>Week 3: In reference to grade levels being rewarded for the most books read...teacher stated "I'm all about getting recess for 40 minutes to play."</p> <p>Week 4: T: Mrs. R and I read several articles for several days to determine which ones had the best information.</p>
	Expecting the best- always "teaching up"- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible	<p>Week One: T: Why is <math>\pi d</math> and <math>2\pi r</math> the same thing? This is going to take someone being sharp. Look at the elements</p> <p>Week One: In reference to breaking an article down to summarize, the teacher stated, "I think we can handle all of that at one time."</p> <p>Once again, we're smarter than the dude who wrote the article</p> <p>Week 2: I want you to see this thinking process as we model a paragraph.</p> <p>Week 2: T: The number one mistake is that people don't write it out. Make sure T: The number one mistake is that people don't write</p>

		<p>it out. Make sure you think through this.</p> <p>T: Listen, I'm going to make you pay attention to detail.</p> <p>T: Just wait until you get to surface area of a cylinder-I'm going to love it</p> <p>Week 2: T: Today we are going to make an anchor chart about the circulatory system. Notice they are neat, make sense, look nice, and plan them out in appropriate format.</p> <p>T: I'm not giving a lot of instructions because I want you to design your anchor chart.</p> <p>T: Are you making a plan?</p> <p>Week 3: T: Listen up, when you look in your college textbooks, it's a real formula and we made it! Can they pluck it from your brain cells? It will make your life easier to memorize.</p> <p>T: Your test will be easier if you can remember. We will work on it so I can put it in your brain.</p> <p>Week 4: T: If you want in your essay you can add a third element. I think you have enough to build on.</p> <p>T: I want you to try-try the outline and we'll work together on it.</p> <p>Week 4: T: This is a quiz. Tomorrow is a test. Don't stress, be concerned if made less than 80, and find out what went wrong so it doesn't happen again.</p> <p>T: How do you show your work to me? I've given you the answers. Write why you missed it-explain it well.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Read paragraphs 3 and 4 on your own. Let's see what you can come up with.</p>
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		<p>T: Student G, what were the main points? What you read was great but tell me in your own words.</p> <p>Week 4: T: I would think this would make for a good discussion question: Treaty of Versailles Violations-Be sure to make some good notes.</p>
	Holding the person to a high standard	<p>Week One: Teacher referenced Purdue University—you can go to this website in high school. I found this PowerPoint and knew it would be good for you.</p> <p>What are you going to do with these notes when you get home? Students responded with write a summary.</p> <p>Mrs. R will check-put in homework folder please.</p> <p>Week One: T: You need to be thinking of this because all these formulas are on the reference sheet.</p> <p>Look at these [formulas] you've done them before. This is my expectation.</p> <p>Week One: T: Based on what we know, what kind of muscle is it? Noting the article but I'm smarter than the expert.</p> <p>Week One: T: It's [soldier letter] due. Letter to be written in first person. Everyone understand? Correcto? pause Student S, can you tell us?</p> <p>Don't answer yet because everyone should know.</p> <p>Week 2: T: While I gave you notes this time-I normally don't do that. So we need to do something with them to have a deeper understanding</p> <p>Week 2: T: I'm going to say this once.</p>

		<p>Everyone look at this...the hardest part is this-these triangles-I want you to think about this....</p> <p>Week 2: Student A was still trying to read her SSR book—Teacher stated, “Student A we have to do science.”</p> <p>T: I’m interested in you being at the top of the state test because we’re going to kick some booty.</p> <p>T: I’m not telling you to be mean. You’re providing to me how much you know. Break open a book, an article, your brain.</p> <p>Week 2: Teacher to a student who couldn’t give an answer...I’ll come back to you in a second.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Which of the two quotes would stand out more?</p> <p>Week 3: T: It’s a thinking thing...kind of tough</p> <p>Week 4: T: What can you do if you are waiting for me? Yes, you can work on your body and evidence.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Here’s what we are going to do—we’re going to put these words to use.</p>
	Ensuring a positive environment for growth	<p>Week One: T: I wanted to give you a template. I found this one and loved it! I found this one and loved it!</p> <p>I wanted to help you break it down for yourself.</p> <p>Week One: T: I’m going to freeze my screen. I’m going to do it, you’re going to do it, and we’ll come back together.</p> <p>Open up your textbooks with me because I need to talk about these with you before I let you go.</p>

		<p>Week One: T: Don't say anything, just think. Was US neutral? To Student B....are you reading my mind- after Student B made a statement about the learning.</p> <p>Week 2: Mrs. R likes the 3 Es: Evidence, Examples, and Explanations</p> <p>T: Do I have a topic sentence? Check; Do I have a piece of evidence? Check-Thank you, Student K, you're with me.</p> <p>T: Let's be honest-we did this together but how painful? Students responded that it was not.</p> <p>Week 2: T: Don't get scissors until I tell you. I want to make sure it's going to look right when you get finished.</p> <p>Week 2: A student was having difficulty with one of the questions on an assignment. Teacher stated, "Think about it...." The student erased her documentation and revised according to teacher's instructions/feedback.</p> <p>To a group of students working together.....Teacher states, "Listen, I love all 4 of you. But you're not almost done. We're not talking about you know who, what you did last night...."</p> <p>T: You can do it in your own words.</p> <p>Week 2: T: Good question</p> <p>Week 3: T: So how many of you agree that this is a positive message?</p> <p>T: Can I hear 2 of you read? Read to me what you wrote.</p> <p>T: Will you do me a favor? Put all your papers on Student D's desk. You did really good</p>
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		<p>today! Are your brains hurting?</p> <p>Week 3: T: If you get to number 3, just wait a minute. I'll help you out.</p> <p>T: Stop at number 2. I think most of you are okay. I know the answer and I'm coming to check on you. This is scaffolding-this won't happen on the PASS test.</p> <p>T: Ladies and Gentlemen, watch how it fits perfectly when you roll it up so can you find the circumference?</p> <p>Week 3: T: Those of you still working on the test, try to finish in the next five minutes or so.</p> <p>Do a little brainstorming: Anything you didn't already know about WWII, let me know</p> <p>Week 4: T: Every one of you should have done the assignment with Mr. B that used the info graphic. One at a time-I know you want to answer.</p> <p>T: Mr. B and I wanted to find something for you that had good quality resources.</p> <p>Week 4: T: When you first see the grade you'll be like oh, my goodness. Some of the problems were tricky.</p> <p>T: I don't do this all the time. Work on the problems and you'll get half back (credit to grade)</p> <p>T: When you get finished with corrections, bring them to me so I can give you back credit.</p> <p>Week 4: T: It looks like we're finished skimming and scanning. Let's look through and let me know some words you may have some problems with.</p>
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		<p>T: When others don't know the word we're not going to go aagh.</p> <p>Teacher worked with students to "chunk" the article. They decided together which paragraphs could be combined in order to record annotations.</p> <p>Two students gave each other a fist bump when the teacher gave them a "yes!" to their response to a question.</p> <p>T: When we're reading an article we must be sensitive to those around us.</p> <p>T: Let's finish reading the article for the next 8 minutes and I'll give you a graphic organizer that will help you write your paper.</p> <p>Week 4: Teacher gave an analogy of aggression to pit bull and poodle. Teacher asked if the description made sense.</p> <p>T: You don't have to remember all the details because I'm throwing a lot of names at you. Just want you to get the big picture.</p> <p>After showing a map to discuss the Hitler takeover, a student asked: What about Switzerland? The teacher, using the map, gave an in depth strategy of Hitler to explain why.</p>
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In summary of the table above, the researcher was able to note a variety of examples to include as evidence for respect being present during the classroom observations. Examples included teachers making time for students when they would read over the student's shoulder to help guide the student his/her reading; a teacher noticing a child who didn't have a piece of paper and, without saying a word, put one on her desk; teachers sitting down at a table with a group of students to discuss what books they were reading; and if teachers were working with another student, they would

acknowledge the other students who had their hands raised and would convey to the students, “I’m on my way.” Numerous examples of evidence for teachers asking for input were present in all teachers’ classrooms. The evidence resulted from the teachers asking groups of students, whole class, to individuals for their input. The following quotes from teachers are examples taken from the classroom observations: To the class: “Why do we organize anything we write”; “What do you think is the most important information in those notes, Hazel?”; and “Donnie, what do you think?” In addition, the teachers would use positive humor by talking in funny voices to take on a different character to being able to use idioms or analogies such as “Allison, I hope you have you listening ears on because it’s going to blow your mind” and “When you see this it will knock your socks off.” Ensuring a positive environment for growth appeared to stand out in terms of the number of examples that were documented during the classroom observations. An overall sense of camaraderie between the teachers and students was gleaned from the classroom observations.

In addition to studying respect in the classroom, the researcher also observed how the dialogue skill of listening was demonstrated in the classroom. The following represents evidence of listening through actual statements and behaviors of teachers and student observed.

**Table 4.1, continued**

Listening	Encourage : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and use other facial expressions.</li> <li>▪ Don't agree or disagree.</li> <li>▪ Use noncommittal</li> </ul>	<p>Week One: T: Where am I going to get examples? When students answered research the teacher pointed to them and smiled and nodded her head yes.</p> <p>Student stated that it didn’t seem like it should be the end of class. Teacher smiled.</p>
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	<p>words with positive tone of voice.</p>	<p>Week One: Student E stated I thought it does it itself. Teacher responded with I'll have to try that.</p> <p>Teacher went to the door to check on a student who went out of the classroom to get his book. Teacher didn't smile, just stated Come on. The student had been absent for quite some time</p> <p>St: How do you make a circle? T: That is a good question.</p> <p>Week 3: T: You guys and girls had some good observations.</p> <p>A student read aloud and teacher stood one student away with hand on her cheek and eyes on the student reading as he read.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Did you hear, Student N? He said it doesn't smell metallic. Ooh, why would he say that?</p> <p>Week 4: A student asked teacher: Why didn't Hitler go to other continents? Teacher responded with "First plan –he wanted Europe-ultimate goal."</p>
	<p>Restate or clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restate the basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.</li> <li>Clarify points.</li> <li>Don't "fake listen"!</li> </ul>	<p>Week One: Student needed clarification-It answers the right question, right, Student B.</p> <p>Week One: T: What is the perimeter-I'm asking Student M. Yes, you're right- it's 20 inches.</p> <p>Student E piped in there is a square. Teacher stated Student K mentioned a good point. There is a second formula. This is the one you are going to see.</p> <p>Week One: Student T, what do you think I am wanting you to find?</p> <p>Teacher repeated answers from the students.</p> <p>Student C had a good question...are arteries and veins apart of the heart?</p>

		<p>What's a good way we can remember A is at the top and V are bottom chambers?</p> <p>Week one: T: Did we read the document about the number of paragraphs 1-4? Take a moment to read.</p> <p>Week 2: T: Is that what you're saying?</p> <p>T: Teacher responded to student by demonstrating what the student had said with a triangle diagram</p> <p>Week 2: T: Student M summed it up really well. Teacher wrote on document camera to restate Student M: No, Britain and France wanted harsh punishment for Germany while Wilson wanted lasting peace.</p> <p>T: Rephrase what Student S just said—Germany lost all colonies.</p> <p>T: Student A said ____ so I'm going to put strictly limited Germany's military</p> <p>Week 3: Teacher read a quote to the class from an editorial: We were never sent here to be perfect. We were sent here to make what difference we can-Pres. Obama. To a student the teacher stated, "Ooh that's an interesting perspective. Say that out loud."</p> <p>T: Can you read back with a thoughtful ear? I've noticed some fragments. It's fine you can go back and fix them.</p> <p>Week 3: A student stated that if you didn't (squeeze with the same force) the water would go out. Teacher repeated verbatim so it would go blakkkkkk.</p> <p>Week 4: T: You know that's a good point. Great way to look at it.</p>
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		<p>T: Okay, what about that? As she added the student's suggestion of the student to the sentence.</p> <p>T: Thank you for giving me an answer that connects –gave a funny face with tongue sticking out—smiling.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Student B said in case you couldn't hear him – what if we added all the PE teachers' salaries to determine if this could be a counter argument reason.</p>
	<p>Reflect or paraphrase :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restate the other's basic feelings.</li> <li>Respond to the other's main ideas</li> </ul>	<p>Week One: To Student A-I love that you said so people will believe you –in regards to including evidence in writing.</p> <p>T: I thought you guys said you had it in science. It's okay, I'll show you. Teacher showed Cornell notes to the entire class.</p> <p>That's really a good point; it's really helpful. What does it mean to reason your way through something? –This is what you were talking about, Student E.</p> <p>Student R asked a question related to notes that she didn't understand the gist. Teacher said this is what you need to do: "help reader understand your thinking."</p> <p>Student P talked about a story and teacher stated, "Oh, yea-I'm glad you brought that up."</p> <p>Week One: T: Some people were asking why we are finding perimeter. I want to make sure we have a solid foundation before going to surface area.</p> <p>T: Why don't we have a different word-why some funny word for circle-why not use perimeter?</p> <p>Let me show you what it's so different. I'll show you because students think they can use either one <math>2\pi r</math>, <math>\pi r^2</math></p>

		<p>Student K, if you remember your diaphragm goes across your belly—just trying to get ya’ll to remember things. I was a math major- things funny to me may not be to others. Students laughed.</p> <p>Week One: T: Write heart contracts or squeezes. Student K did an awesome job on that one.</p> <p>Week One: T: Student J, that’s a good point</p> <p>Week 2: T: Student C, what about C? C can actually be right. I see why you said that, though.</p> <p>Week 2: T: To expand on Student B’s question....(teacher pretended to speak in Pres. Wilson’s voice)</p> <p>Week 3: T: “love how you connected that article in social studies.”</p> <p>T: You guys are totally open to this?</p> <p>T: Holy Cow! This is interesting-this links to who you’ve been studying in social studies.</p> <p>T: I like some of the phrases you’ve used.</p> <p>T: Sounds like a pretty good summary-I liked the facts you’ve used.</p> <p>Week 3: T: Repeated what a student explained to her: So you squeezed your left and right with the same force.</p> <p>Week 4: T: Student J just said how we grouped the paragraphs 1 and 2, the problem and 3 and 4 is how to fix it.</p>
	<p>Summarize :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>	<p>Week 2: T: Think about it like this—this may be more along the line of your thinking....My son sometimes crosses the line and gets punished-this is like Britain and France.</p>

In summary of the table above, the researcher was able to note a variety of examples to include as evidence for listening being present during the classroom observations. Examples included teachers using facial expressions such as smiling when students would respond with correct or insightful answers. Other examples included the teachers restating answers the students had given or clarifying students' responses. For example, questions such as "Is this what you're saying?" were asked by teachers during the observations. Also, when students would respond with an opinion to an issue being studied in class, the teachers would respond to their ideas or feelings with statements such as "Ooh, that's an interesting perspective. Say that out loud"; "That's really a good point; it's really helpful"; "To expand on Brian's question..."; "Sounds like a pretty good summary-I like the facts you've used."

In addition to synthesizing teacher and student behaviors and statements as they related to the dialogue skills being studied, the teachers who were observed were asked to complete a survey regarding how often they felt they demonstrated specific characteristics related to the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening.

#### TEACHER SURVEYS AND EVIDENCE OF DIALOGUE SKILLS

As part of the data collection, each teacher was asked to complete a survey during the week of April 8-12, 2013. The survey was given to help determine how often during a typical classroom period the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening are demonstrated by each teacher to support a caring classroom environment. The survey was voluntary and anonymous. All four teachers returned a survey. Below in Table 4.2 is a numerical summary of the four teachers surveyed. A value of 0-4 indicates the number of teachers who felt they demonstrated the characteristics associated with the dialogue

skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening on a Likert scale of Never, Sometimes, or Often.

**Table 4.2 Teacher Survey Indicating How Often Dialogue Skills Are Demonstrated**

		Never	Sometimes	Often
	<b>Intonation</b>			
1.	Smile at students at appropriate times	0	0	4
2.	In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement	1	3	0
3.	When talking with students, look them in the eyes	0	0	4
		Never	Sometimes	Often
4.	When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space	0	0	4
5.	Look interested in what students have to say	0	0	4
	<b>Empathy</b>			
6.	Speak directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone	0	0	4
7.	Look directly at the student, without glaring or staring	0	0	4
8.	Have a facial expression that is either neutral or positive	0	0	4
	<b>Respect</b>			
9.	Listen	0	0	4
10.	Make time for the person	0	1	3
11.	Ask for input	0	0	4
12.	Use positive humor	0	0	4
13.	Accentuate the positive	0	1	3
14.	Accept the person "as is," while helping him or her grow	0	0	4

15.	Learn and demonstrate an appreciation for each person's culture and background	0	0	4
16.	Provide the best (respectful tasks-everyone's work is equally important and equally engaging)	0	0	4
17.	Expect the best-always "teaching up"- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible	0	0	4
18.	Hold the person to a high standard	0	0	4
19.	Ensure a positive environment for growth	0	0	4
	<b>Listening</b>			
20.	Encourage : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and use other facial expressions.</li> <li>▪ Don't agree or disagree.</li> <li>▪ Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.</li> </ul>	0	0	4
21.	Restate or clarify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.</li> <li>▪ Clarify points.</li> <li>▪ Don't "fake listen"!</li> </ul>	0	0	4
22.	Reflect or paraphrase : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the other's basic feelings.</li> <li>▪ Respond to the other's main ideas</li> </ul>	0	0	4
23.	Summarize : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>	0	1	3

In the table above, of the twenty three descriptors for the four dialogue skills, four descriptors ranked as occurring never and/or sometimes in the classroom: In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement; make time for the person; accentuate the positive; and

summarize- restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings. The remaining nineteen descriptors were analyzed as occurring often in a typical classroom setting for each teacher.

In addition to collecting teacher surveys, the seventh grade student population was asked to complete an anonymous survey to indicate how often teachers demonstrated behaviors and statements as they related to the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening.

## STUDENT SURVEYS

Additional data was collected through fifty three student surveys. Each student in the seventh grade was asked to sign a consent form in order to be able to participate in a survey during the week of February 11-15, 2013. The survey was voluntary and anonymous, as well as similar to the teacher survey in that it asked the students how often during a typical classroom period the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening are demonstrated to support a caring classroom environment. The survey was condensed to 10 dialogue behaviors, and the students were asked to respond to how often the behaviors were demonstrated through a Likert scale of Never, Sometimes, and Often. Below table 4.3 lists the numerical results in terms of percentages and actual student population values of the students surveyed who felt their seventh grade teachers demonstrated the characteristics associated with the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening on a Likert scale of Never, Sometimes, or Often.

**Table 4.3 Student Survey Indicating How Often Teachers Demonstrate Dialogue Skills**

		Never	Sometimes	Often
	<b>Intonation</b>			
1.	Smiles at you	0	33 62.3%	20 37.7%
2.	When talking with you, the teacher will look you in the eyes	0	12 22.6%	41 77.4%
3.	Looks interested in what you have to say	0	27 50.9%	26 49.1%
	<b>Empathy</b>			
4.	Speaks directly to you in a calm and respectful tone	0	15 28.3%	38 71.7%
5.	Has a facial expression that is either neutral or positive	0	27 50.9%	26 49.1%
	<b>Respect</b>			
6.	Listens to you when you are speaking	1 1.9%	4 7.5%	48 90.6%
7.	Asks for your input	4 7.5%	38 71.7%	11 20.8%
8.	Holds you to a high standard	0	12 22.6%	41 77.4%
	<b>Listening</b>	Never	Sometimes	Often
9.	Encourages you by one or more of the following : ▪ Nod, smile, and/or other facial expressions.	0	22 41.5%	31 58.5%
10.	Restates or clarifies your points and/or ideas	3 5.7%	26 49.1%	24 45.3%

In summary of the table above, the highest percentage for the dialogue skill of intonation was the behavior of “when talking with you, the teacher will look you in the eyes.” The least percentage was “smiles at you.” The scale of sometimes and often was tied in the percentage ratings for “looks interested in what you have to say.” For the

dialogue skill of empathy, “speaks directly to you in a calm and respectful tone” scored higher on the scale of often more so than “has a facial expression that is either neutral or positive.” For the dialogue skill of respect, “listens to you when you are speaking” scored the highest percentage on the scale of often more so than the others. The next highest percentage was “holds you to a high standard.” For the dialogue skill of listening, the two descriptors “encourages you” and “restates or clarifies your points and/or ideas” ranked close in percentages; however, the highest percentage was “encourages you by one or more of the following: nod, smile, and/or other facial expressions.”

In addition to collecting teacher and student surveys, the researcher used the Feldman Method to guide the questions in four seventh grade student interviews. The interviews provided students the opportunity to describe, analyze, interpret, and judge their experiences with the seventh grade teachers (Kelehear, 2006).

## STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Four seventh grade students representing varying ethnicities and genders, as well as high and low achievers were interviewed individually after school. The researcher composed the questions below for the interview by using the Feldman Method of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment:

### **Describe**

Imagine I have never been in your school. Describe for me what I would see if I came with you to school for the first time.

1. Describe what your day looks like?
2. What types of things do you study?



3. Describe your content area classes this year. Which do you like the most? Which do you like the least?

4. Describe typical interactions with your teachers.

### **Analyze**

As we walked around your school on that first visit, tell me about some of the subjects you studied.

Tell me about certain teachers that were your favorites and tell me why they were your favorites?

5. How do you feel in the content area classes?

6. Describe what an ideal classroom where teachers respect his/her students would look, sound or feel like.

### **Interpretation**

Tell me how you feel during the day?

Do you feel differently with some teachers than others? Why was there a difference?

Tell me how you know a teacher is really listening to you?

7. Describe what your teachers do during class each day.

8. Tell me about the content area teacher with whom you have the best relationship with in seventh grade. What specific things about this relationship are most important to you?

9. Tell me how this teacher shows interest in what you have to say in class.

10. Tell me how this teacher shows concern for you during class.

11. Tell me how this teacher demonstrates respect for you during the class period.

12. Tell me how you know that your teacher really listens to what you have to say.

## **Judgment**

13. If you could be in charge for a day, what would you ask teachers to do more of? Less of?

The following categorizes actual quotes extracted from the student interview transcriptions paralleled by the researcher to the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening.

### **INTONATION**

The main signals of intonation make-up the mechanics of conversation and include pacing, pausing, loudness, and pitch. These signals help form or change the metamessage which is “what is communicated about relationships-attitudes toward each other, the occasion, and what we are saying” (Tannen, 1986, p.29).

#### **Student A-Intonation:**

The quotes below provide evidence for intonation being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the student feels the teachers have an interest in what she says and are concerned about her as a person academically and socially.

“Well you wouldn’t see violence or nothing like that. You would see more friendly people. The school isn’t bad because, to be honest, there are like a lot of good people here and we don’t associate... we don’t have that... thing in here. Everybody hangs around with everybody. I mean, we have our little groups like, smart people and everything, but we still hang out with them.”

“Well if we don’t understand something, they [teachers] come to my table and they help me out. They tell me what I don’t understand and they show you more and more so they can help you understand better and you won’t have problems learning it.”

“Um, they [teachers] smile at us, like, yeah, it’s just like a normal person like your mom or dad. They are like that but they are the teacher and they are helping you learn.”

“Well they [teachers] ask questions. Like if you’re telling them about your weekend, and something went wrong, and then they ask what went wrong. Like, they ask questions and will be like “oh wow” with that mysterious face or something.”

“Well everybody is like doing their thing and she [teacher] comes up to me and I like ask her a question, and she thinks about it for a minute, and then she looks back at you and tells you the answer and how it works and everything.”

“Because if I’m doing something wrong, she’s [teacher] like, “no, Rachel!,” and she’ll like show that face like “oh, my God- you’re doing it wrong,” but she’s there by your side and showing you what to do.”

Student B-Intonation:

The quotes below provide evidence for intonation being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the student feels the teachers have an interest in helping him to achieve his goals. In addition, this student conveyed that his teachers pay attention to him because they do not look away when speaking to him.

“Like they [teacher] would greet you with a smile, they would shake your hand, they would talk to you one-on-one if you needed help, they would just do whatever you needed to do to make you achieve your goals.”

“Like Mr. Williams, likes he’s sat down and he’s worked with me about problems – like if I have questions, I’ll go up to him and we’ll just talk about it until I get it. And if I still don’t get it, he’ll still work with me.”

“Like when they [teachers] sit there and they really like pay attention to what you’re saying instead of looking off and like yelling at, or getting on other students... they are more paying attention to what you have to say.”

“Like she’ll [teacher] listen to what I have to say and she’ll listen to other students but I feel like when she’s talking to me or if I’m talking to her, she’s like really paying attention, she’s thinking about what I have to say.”

“She’s [teacher] looking at me, she’s not like looking around, she’s looking at me and talking to me.”

#### Student C-Intonation:

The quotes below provide evidence for intonation being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the student believes the teachers have an interest in him because they look him in the eyes. The teachers are interested in helping him learn as indicated by the student’s description of the teacher getting “happy” about explaining some science content that he did not know.

“When they [teachers] look straight in your eyes and they know what you are talking about. They don’t look away or anything.”

“Like one day, I didn’t know what the circulatory system was until we learned it... and I was like, what’s the circulatory system? And she [teacher] just like got so happy and she explained everything.”

#### Student D-Intonation:

The quotes below provide evidence for intonation being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the student feels the teachers have pay attention to him, and he can tell when they are “intently” listening-they do not look at anyone else.

“Last year I think my favorite teacher was Mrs. Deegan because she was energetic and she was kind of funny and nice.”

“Just smiling, a little outgoing, stuff like that. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, my favorite teacher is Mrs. Hart.”

“Well, like my parents know her[teacher] and since I know her I can just tell that she would like talk to me if she saw me in the grocery store... stuff like that.”

“Well they [teachers] would treat all of the questions as equal – well not all of them because some of them are really dumb – but just treat the people equal, not have favorites. And then, look them in the eye instead of just looking off when someone is talking to you. And then, just to, not like get a little moody when you ask a question that has already been said... because that happens to me sometimes.”

*Teachers look you in the eye....*”Yeah, most of the time.”

“Umm, like if I was asking a question, if they [teachers] were intently listening and not paying attention to anyone else – unless like someone was misbehaving or something – but, like, look you in the eye, and intently listening and just... I can tell when they are listening and when they are not, really.”

“She [teacher] shows interest by intently listening and looking me in the eye and, umm, she doesn’t... unless somebody is misbehaving, she doesn’t really pay attention to anybody else – like she’ll get locked in on just you.”

“Like, you can tell when someone is just laying back and just kind of listening. When someone is intently listening, they [teachers] are kind of sitting up and really watching you. You can, I don’t know, you can just tell.”

“Well she [teacher] respects us by... she answers our questions with, like, you can know when she’s answering your question because she really locks in on just that thing that you are asking about. She doesn’t kind of wander off. And she respects us by really listening because if she didn’t really care about what you had to say, she wouldn’t [listen]... and you would know.”

## EMPATHY

The ability to “think someone else’s thoughts and feel someone else’s feelings are indispensable to dialogue” (Yankelovich, 1999, p. 43).

### Student A-Empathy:

The quotes below provide evidence for empathy being present in the classroom.

Specifically, one quote that stood out to the researcher was that the teachers are like “mom and dad.”

“Well, if we don’t understand something, they [teachers] come to my table and they help me out. They tell me what I don’t understand and they show you more and more so they can help you understand better and you won’t have problems learning it.”

“Um, they [teachers] smile at us, like, yeah, it’s just like a normal person like your mom or dad. They are like that but they are the teacher and they are helping you learn.”

“Well they [teachers] ask questions. Like if you’re telling them about your weekend, and something went wrong, and then they ask what went wrong. Like, they ask questions and will be like “oh, wow” with that mysterious face or something.”

“Well, everybody is like doing their thing and she [teacher] comes up to me and I like ask her a question, and she thinks about it for a minute, and then she looks back at you and tells you the answer and how it works and everything.”

Student B-Empathy:

The quotes below provide evidence for empathy being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers are willing to do whatever is needed to help students. It is important to note this student mentioned that if she has questions, the teacher will “talk to her until she gets it.”

“Like they [teachers] would greet you with a smile, they would shake your hand, they would talk to you one-on-one if you needed help, they would just do whatever you needed to do to make you achieve your goals.”

“Like Mr. Williams, likes he’s sat down and he’s worked with me about problems – like if I have questions, I’ll go up to him and we’ll just talk about it until I get it. And if I still don’t get it, he’ll still work with me.”

“Like when they [teachers] sit there and they really like pay attention to what you’re saying instead of looking off and like yelling at, or getting on other students... they are more paying attention to what you have to say.”

“Like she’ll [teacher] listen to what I have to say and she’ll listen to other students but I feel like when she’s talking to me or if I’m talking to her, she’s like really paying attention, she’s thinking about what I have to say.”

“She’s [teacher] looking at me, she’s not like looking around, she’s looking at me and talking to me.”

#### Student C-Empathy:

The quotes below provide evidence for empathy being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers actually sit down and talk with the students.

“Actually, [teachers] sitting down talking to them.”

“She [teacher] does the same for me, she explains it.”

#### Student D-Empathy:

The quotes below provide evidence for empathy being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers do not respond with mean reactions and the teachers care about their students.

“Umm, I don’t get any mean reactions if I say anything. It’s just kind of helpful and I mean, they [teachers] just help me along during class. Stuff like that.”

“I think she [teacher] is umm, she is fun; she is kind of funny sometimes. And I think she kind of cares about her students, kind of. And I like the way she teaches.”

“She [teacher] is caring.”

#### RESPECT

With a genuine respect comes a desire to know a person more fully, understand him or her more deeply, and connect with that person (Tomlinson, et. al, 2008).

#### Student A-Respect:

The quotes below provide evidence for respect being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers take time to get to know their students and the teachers have high expectations.



“We, umm, they [teachers] help us understand how it works more. More, more, like more information they are giving us because they could just say like ‘mass is this-and-this,’ but they take the time and tell us more information and how it is.”

“They [teachers] are pretty nice. I’m learning a lot this year and I think I’m getting more mature and more smarter because, um, like, in sixth grade I would sit down and talk and chat all the time and the teachers would be like, ‘don’t do that,’ but this year teachers are serious. They tell us one time and then we don’t do it.”

“Because they [teachers] weren’t as serious. They weren’t... this year they are really serious because they want us to learn.”

“Well he [teacher] shows videos but, at the same time, he tries to bring things from the world, like that have happened inside our study. Like examples from other places and he gives us more and more information at the same time. Yeah, he makes it really fun to learn, like I want to learn this.”

“They [teachers] give everybody a chance to learn, like if you have a question, and like if everybody is talking they make everybody stay quiet and let you talk. And that’s why they make you raise hands, so everybody has a chance to ask a question and won’t be lost. Because like in math, if you get lost one time you’re lost like forever and you will get bad grades. So they give opportunities for you to talk and if somebody’s talking, they’ll give them silence or something so that they will show more respect for the person who is talking.”

“Yeah, they [teachers] all want me to learn, but umm, they take a timeout – sometimes they take a timeout because they want to know you, to get to know you. And like, so they talk to us and everything.”

“They’d [teachers] be like hey Rachel, how are you doing? And you tell them everything. Like they make conversation.”

“Well they [teachers] have their ruler to point to stuff so that we know what they are talking about and won’t be confused. And when we learn it, he makes sure we learn it, and he gives you time to see what you are doing in your homework. So he gives you time to work on it and see what you are doing. Like if you’re doing it wrong, he’ll be like no you are doing it wrong, you need to do it again.”

“Umm, she [teacher] listens to everything I have to say. She gives me advice of things. Like she gives me advice about life, and she gives me advice about books. She’ll be like you should read this or that, and we share titles of books.”

“Well she [teacher] kind of shows respect because like if everybody has a question and they are all talking but I’m like raising my hand or something, she goes straight to me because I’m the only one raising my hand and everybody’s like shouting out. And like if someone’s talking, like, she makes everybody to be quiet because she thinks what you have to say might be really, really important and can help you out.”

“I don’t know. I like to read a lot, so I’d say spend 15 minutes in class reading. I think that reading helps you get smarter is what I’ve learned. ‘Cause like this year, Mrs. Reagan is the one that helped me, she motivated me to like read more because I couldn’t even finish a chapter book without getting bored and saying I don’t want to do this anymore but I’ve already read like five chapter books.”

“Well first of all, what started it, she’d [teacher] be like you should read more because you’ll get points to go out and play. So, I wanted to play and just started reading for that reason, and then she told me about this other book and that book. And she told

me about it. And she knows I'm really into war, like World War II, like that's why I love Social Studies. So she would like bring books up to me, bring me titles and say this is really good and tell me what it's about – because she knows what I like, so she'll pick books that were into World War II, so that's kind of what got me started. I wanted to read more and get more, so then she would bring different books, like stories from Anne Frank and all that, but yeah, if I didn't like the book I would read like to page 30 but then I'd just put it down and tell her that I didn't like this book so then she'd get me a better one.”

Student B-Respect:

The quotes below provide evidence for respect being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers make the students laugh and the teachers like to have a good time. This student explained that the teachers make the students feel they want the students there.

“You would love to meet the teachers; they are very nice and very polite to you. They would respect you and treat you with kindness.”

“Because in science you get to do a lot of hands-on stuff and you get to speak about what you think about that thing, and in English you get to speak and read, and interact with other students...”

“I have a great time with all my teachers, they make me laugh and they always have a good time in the class.”

“Well they [teachers] like, they'll tell you jokes – like Mr. Williams, he always tells you jokes about like what he's done in his past. Like in science, Mrs. Harrison will

let you raise your hand and tell stories about certain things we're talking about, like if you have anything that relates to that she'll let you speak about it."

"Umm, it feels like to me that they [teachers] want me to be there, they want me to learn and have fun at school and not just have to be strict about it and not have to make you just sit there and have to listen to it and stuff. You get to like interact."

"I feel wonderful. Sometimes in certain classes, like, I always have a good time with my fellow students and my teachers. They make us laugh and it's just a good time."

"Umm, it would probably have to be Mrs. Harrison because like she's known my sister, she knows my family... and like I can relate with her like with stories and stuff. I can relate to her stuff."

"Well she [teacher] pays attention for one. And she like works with me if I need help. She'll sit down with me and help me and not worry about other students at that time. Like if I really, really need help."

"She [teacher] likes to have a good time and that's my main thing. I like having a good time in class but also learning new things and getting the work done before the end of the day."

"Like at first she'll [teacher] start talking about it and she'll go off on a story about what her kids have done."

#### Student C-Respect:

The quotes below provide evidence for respect being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers make the students feel safe, and the teachers make learning fun. This student felt that the teachers "guide and prepare them

for life.” In addition, this student felt that the students and teachers “have a good relationship.”

“You would see a lot of people acting how they should be because we have teachers that do their job to make sure that our school is in safe hands.”

“They [teachers] prepare them for life.”

“The teacher, how he is good with the work, he demonstrates stuff, he helps the children out.”

“We [teachers and student] have a good relationship. I don’t talk back.”

“They [teachers] help me with the hard things that we’re learning now. They go through and show me what I need to know.”

“It was the surface area of a cylinder, I had to keep going through it, keep practicing it, and now I’ve got it.”

“Well teachers don’t always have an attitude when they come into work. They come into work ready to teach their students, not cranky all the time.”

“[Teachers] Help students out.”

“They [teachers] guide them.”

“She’s a teacher that, she’s fun, she teaches science like no other science teacher does.”

“She [teacher] always tells us to be careful while we’re doing our experiments, not to get hurt.”

“She [teacher] doesn’t have an attitude.”

“She [teacher] has the mindset that she wants to come to work and teach kids every day.”

“Umm, make the classes more funner because when I look around, I see most kids – their facial expressions show they get bored easily. I think if you make the classes more funner, they understand more.”

“The teachers are doing a good job helping the students.”

“By helping us, talking with us, we’re watching – in social studies, we are watching videos on the Roaring 20s and that really helps me because it gives a lot of information and facts.”

Student D-Respect:

The quotes below provide evidence for respect being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers acknowledge when students give correct answers. In addition, the teachers will try different ways of teaching if the students do not understand. Other particular highlights from the following quotes include that the teachers are funny and take an interest in the student’s life outside of school.

“I feel like if I get it wrong I wouldn’t exactly be put down, but if I get it right, it’d be yay, I got it right.”

“Well she’s [teacher] funny during classes sometimes, which is definitely a good thing.”

“Umm, just kind of the things she [teacher] says. I can’t explain what, but just sometimes she says something funny out of the blue. And she’s fun in classes also. Because we wrote an essay and we used like money with the vocabulary words. So we had .10 words, .25 words, and .50 words, and we had to get \$6.00 worth of vocabulary words at the end. And I thought it was creative and just more fun than a regular boring essay.”

“Sometimes I get a little bored but usually not really because I’m involved and umm, well I definitely feel safe. Nothing really like that.”

“Well I answer questions... like I’ve had a teacher say that it’s just me and someone else answering the questions so someone else needs to step up and answer some questions. Like, my hand is raised after a lot of questions and um, I... it’s like we’re not just sitting there listening to lectures the whole time.”

“Well, during the day, sometimes I get a little tired... I’m just being honest. But during the day I feel like I’m in a place where I can actually get stuff done and learn.”

“Well, if you don’t get it, I think she [teacher] knows, and she’ll try to expand a little more on what she is teaching. And I think she can teach it one way but if you don’t get it, she’ll try to do it a different way.”

“It’s like sometimes when you’re walking down the hall, they’ll [teachers] just ask you a question out of the blue about something you did, and since I play sports, they’ll ask you like what did you do at practice the other day? And I kind of like that because you know that they really care because if they didn’t they would just walk on.”

## LISTENING

“Listening may be the single most powerful creative act we perform; we listen and create reality based on what we hear in each moment. Without listening, dialogue cannot exist. In the absence of listening, the streams of meaning that move among a group of people become disconnected and often invisible” (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998, p. 99).

Student A-Listening:

The quote below provides evidence for listening being present in the classroom.

Specifically, the quote indicates that the teacher took an interest in what the student was reading by asking about the book and responding positively to the student.

“I’ll read a book and she’ll [teacher] be like ‘ooh is it good?’ And I’ll tell her it’s good and what it’s about and she’ll read it sometimes.”

Student B-Listening:

No codes for the dialogue skill, listening, were present in this student interview.

Student C-Listening:

The quotes below provide evidence for listening being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers respond to the students when they talk to them in class. It is important to note that this student notices that teachers do not do other things when the student is talking to the teachers.

“Like they [teachers] would actually sit down and go through everything, talk about it.”

“They [teachers] might say I agree, I understand.”

“She’s [teacher] not like, doing other things. She’s listening.”

“She [teacher] has the mindset that she wants to come to work and teach kids every day.”

“Umm... maybe less talking, like, no, maybe... if maybe we could get the students to stand up and tell what they know to help other students.”



### Student D-Listening:

The quotes below provide evidence for listening being present in the classroom. Specifically, the quotes indicate that the teachers take time to listen to the students' stories that take place outside of school, and the teachers take time to make connections with the students' stories. This student also noted he knows when teachers are listening by the facial expressions the teachers make.

“Yeah, by facial expressions.”

“Umm, I think Mrs. Harrison because we knew her the best before we came into 7<sup>th</sup> grade and she... I think she relates to me the most because she's a little outgoing and I'm outgoing. We're a little more related kind of because she talks a lot, I talk a lot...”

“Umm, well she [teacher] listens to what you have to say. And then she can kind of relate to that and tell you something. And just, I don't know.”

“Umm, well sometimes at the beginning of classes we can tell stories about what happened over the weekend or something. And sometimes I would say a story about something and like she [teacher] would... it's like she would listen to my story and then she would answer that with something she had done – like a story that she had that related.”

### SUMMARY

In summary, the results of the data gathered through classroom observations, teacher and student surveys, as well as student interviews were analyzed in order to determine if there was evidence in selected 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms that the elements of dialogue skills between teachers and students engendered a caring environment. The ethnographic research method of using classroom observations and student interviews

were triangulated and verified with the surveys given to the seventh grade students and teachers of Landrum Middle School.

Overall, there is rich evidence from the voice of the students to solidify there is a culture of care in the seventh grade at Landrum Middle School. As presented previously, there were numerous quotes that were extracted from the coding process to support how the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening support a caring environment. Examples of quotes include the following: "...and I kind of like that because you know that they really care because if they didn't they would just walk on"; "She [teacher] is caring"; "Um, they [teachers] smile at us, like, yeah, it's just like a normal person like your mom or dad. They are like that but they are the teacher and they are helping you learn"; "...she doesn't kind of wander off. And she respects us by really listening because if she didn't really care about what you had to say, she wouldn't [listen]..."; "She [teacher] has the mindset that she wants to come to work and teach kids every day"; and "The teachers are doing a good job helping the students."

In addition, the survey results provided evidence to describe the extent the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening were present to support a caring environment in the seventh grade classrooms at Landrum Middle School. For example, the results of the teacher survey indicated of the twenty three descriptors for the four dialogue skills (Appendix B), three descriptors ranked as occurring never and/or sometimes in the classroom: In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement; make time for the person; accentuate the positive; and summarize- restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings. The remaining nineteen descriptors (Appendix B) such as smile at students at

appropriate times, look interested in what students have to say, ask for input, hold the person to a high standard, and encourage were analyzed as occurring often in a typical classroom setting for each teacher.

Consequently, the results of the student survey indicated the highest percentage for the dialogue skill of intonation was the behavior of “when talking with you, the teacher will look you in the eyes.” For the dialogue skill of empathy, “speaks directly to you in a calm and respectful tone”. For the dialogue skill of respect, “listens to you when you are speaking” scored the highest percentage on the scale. For the dialogue skill of listening, two descriptors on the survey ranked close in percentages; however, the highest percentage was “encourages you by one or more of the following: nod, smile, and/or other facial expressions.

Moving forward, Chapter 5 will use the Feldman Method as an approach to provide a description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment with implications of the ethnographic research experience (Kelehear, 2006).

## CHAPTER 5

### DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, JUDGMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to use the Feldman Method as an approach to provide a description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment with implications of how the ethnographic research experience with the four dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening related and interacted to add and create meaning, specifically a caring environment (Kelehear, 2006).

#### DESCRIPTION

The study utilized the research designs of an ethnographic study as a vehicle for understanding to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment (Merriam, 2002). The purpose of this study was to determine if there was evidence in selected 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms that the elements of dialogue skills between teachers and students engender a positive relationship. In order to understand, four skills of dialogue were explored through the following research questions:

- To what extent is intonation present in the classroom?
- To what extent is empathy present in the classroom?
- To what extent is respect present in the classroom?
- To what extent is listening present in the classroom?

The site chosen for the study was Landrum Middle School located within Spartanburg County School District One in Landrum, South Carolina. Four, seventh grade middle school students with an age range of 12 to 13 years participated. The four

students represented varying ethnicities and genders, as well as high and low achievers. The students included the following: Student A is a Hispanic female, receives free lunch, and struggles academically. Student B is a white female, average middle class, and would be considered average in academics. Student C is an African American male, considered a medium to high achiever, and receives free lunch. Student D is a white male, high achiever, and would be considered to be middle class. The seventh grade population of 82 students consists of 44 females and 38 males. Of those 82 students, 66 are white, 11 are black, 3 are Hispanic, and 2 are Asian. In addition, four teachers that are representative of varying genders and who teach in different content areas were surveyed as well. All seventh grade teachers at Landrum Middle School are white in ethnicity. Four students and four teachers were chosen for the qualitative research in order to represent an equal voice of teachers and students.

## ANALYSIS

Data collection methods included interviews, observations, as well as teacher and student surveys of the participants involved. For this ethnographic study, the process of coding, to “put the data together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories to develop several main categories,” was utilized (Merriam, 2002, p. 149). Interviews with four students captured the voice of students and provided evidence as to what extent dialogue skills were present in the classroom. The quotes and anecdotes recorded and transcribed for each student interview were analyzed and coded using the characteristics associated with the dialogue skills (Appendix F). Observations were conducted at least once a week during the course of the four week data collection period in the classrooms of the four teacher participants by using an observational tool

(Appendix A) that focused on the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect and listening. Specific characteristics were identified and described for each dialogue skill listed on the observational tool. Once the classroom observations were completed, interpretations of the teachers' behaviors were coded and categorized according to the dialogue skill characteristics. In addition, a survey using a Likert scale of Never, Sometimes, and Often was provided to the four teachers and the entire seventh grade population participating in the research to determine how often certain behaviors of care were demonstrated by teachers during a typical classroom period (Appendices B, C). The results were given an empirical value in the form of percentages for the purpose of verification as a triangulation of data.

## INTERPRETATION

The researcher sought to determine if there was evidence in selected seventh grade classrooms at Landrum Middle School that the elements of dialogue skills between teachers and students supported a caring environment. The evidence, in turn, answered the research questions:

- To what extent is intonation present in the classroom?
- To what extent is empathy present in the classroom?
- To what extent is respect present in the classroom?
- To what extent is listening present in the classroom?

The impetus for the research was Noddings' proposal for future purposeful research: "to seek out situations in which educators are trying to establish settings more conducive to moral growth and study these attempts at some length..." (Noddings, p. 226, 1988).

## TO WHAT EXTENT IS INTONATION PRESENT IN THE CLASSROOM?

The dialogue skill of intonation during the classroom observations, as well as on the surveys and interviews, was interpreted using the following characteristics:

- Smile at students at appropriate times.
- In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement.
- When talking with students, look them in the eyes.
- When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space.
- Look interested in what students have to say (Marzano, 2007, p. 157).

As indicated by the teacher survey, of the twenty three descriptors for the four dialogue skills, four descriptors ranked as occurring never and/or sometimes in the classroom. One of those descriptors was associated with intonation: In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement. The remaining four descriptors were analyzed as occurring often in a typical classroom setting for each teacher.

In addition, as indicated by the fifty three student surveys, the highest percentage for the dialogue skill of intonation occurring in the typical classroom period was the behavior of "when talking with you, the teacher will look you in the eyes." The least percentage was "smiles at you." The Likert scale of sometimes and often was tied in the percentage ratings for "looks interested in what you have to say."

The student interviews provided evidence of intonation being present in the classroom. According to the voice of the students, repeated examples of teachers

exhibiting intonation included standing close, “by your side,” when helping students to understand; always smiling and being energetic; asking questions that indicate a show of interest; and teachers do not look away when students are talking to them-they “lock in” to what the students are saying.

In addition, there was evidence of intonation being present during the classroom observations. Examples included when teaching, the teachers would face the students and scan the classroom. When working with individual students or groups of students, observations included teachers kneeling down beside the students and becoming eye level. Also, if the students were responding during the class discussion or to a question, teachers would keep their eyes on the students and respond with phrases such as “oh, wow.”

#### TO WHAT EXTENT IS EMPATHY PRESENT IN THE CLASSROOM?

The dialogue skill of intonation during the classroom observations, as well as on the surveys and interviews, was interpreted using the following characteristics:

- Speaking directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone
- Looking directly at the student, without glaring or staring
- Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student
- Having a facial expression that is either neutral or positive (Marzano, 2007, p. 160)

As indicated by the teacher survey, the four descriptors for empathy were analyzed as occurring often in a typical classroom setting for each teacher.

In addition, as indicated by the fifty three student surveys, the highest percentage for the dialogue skill of empathy, “speaks directly to you in a calm and respectful tone”



scored higher on the scale of often more so than “has a facial expression that is either neutral or positive.”

The student interviews provided evidence of empathy being present in the classroom. Students were able to provide specific examples of how teachers demonstrate empathy. Repeated examples included the teachers were willing to come and help them if they didn’t understand something. One student quoted the following: “Well, if we don’t understand something, they [teachers] come to my table and they help me out. They tell me what I don’t understand and they show you more and more so they can help you understand better and you won’t have problems learning it.” Another student pointed out that teachers actually sit down to talk to them. The behavior that appeared to surface the most is that teachers were willing to help students, and the proximity of the teacher in regards to the student was noted by the students with descriptions such as “coming to my table”; “sitting down to talk”; and “... talking to you one-on-one if you needed help. They would just do whatever you needed to do to make you achieve your goals.”

Evidence of empathy was present during the classroom observations. Examples included speaking directly to the students in a calm and respectful tone when the teachers called on students to answer questions: “What do you think, Byron?” and “Wyatt, do you have a question?” Other examples included when students would walk into the room late, the teachers would address the student and provide a brief synopsis of what was currently taking place: “We’re just taking some notes.” Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student was also observed. When teachers were demonstrating, they would walk around the classroom. Also, if the students were working in groups or as

individuals on assignments, the teachers would walk around to check on progress. For example, teachers may say statements such as “Let me see, Rachel.”

#### TO WHAT EXTENT IS RESPECT PRESENT IN THE CLASSROOM?

The dialogue skill of respect during the classroom observations, as well as on the surveys and interviews, was interpreted using the following characteristics:

- Listening
- Asking for input
- Making time for the person
- Using positive humor
- Accentuating the positive
- Accepting the person “as is,” while helping him or her grow
- Learning and demonstrating an appreciation for each person’s culture and background
- Providing the best (respectful tasks-everyone’s work is equally important and equally engaging)
- Expecting the best-always “teaching up”- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible
- Holding the person to a high standard
- Ensuring a positive environment for growth (Tomlinson, et. al, 2008, p.3)

As indicated by the teacher survey, of the twenty three descriptors for the four dialogue skills, four descriptors ranked as occurring never and/or sometimes in the classroom. Two of the descriptors were associated with respect: make time for the person and accentuate the positive. The remaining nine descriptors for listening were analyzed as occurring often in a typical classroom setting for each teacher.

In addition, as indicated by the fifty three student surveys for the dialogue skill of respect, “listens to you when you are speaking” scored the highest percentage on the scale of often more so than the others. The next highest percentage was “holds you to a high standard.”

According to the student interviews, there were repeated examples of teachers exhibiting respect in the classroom. Students expressed that teachers make time for them by helping them expand on their learning or just getting to know them personally. Examples of student quotes and anecdotes include “We, umm, they [teachers] help us understand how it works more. More, more, like more information they are giving us because they could just say like ‘mass is this-and-this,’ but they take the time and tell us more information and how it is”; “Yeah, they [teachers] all want me to learn, but umm, they take a timeout – sometimes they take a timeout because they want to know you, to get to know you. And like, so they talk to us and everything”; “They’d [teachers] be like hey Rachel, how are you doing? And you tell them everything. Like they make conversation”; and “Well she [teacher] pays attention for one. And she like works with me if I need help. She’ll sit down with me and help me and not worry about other students at that time. Like if I really, really need help.”

Students also expressed that teachers demonstrate respect by giving advice and not allowing others to speak when someone else is talking. Students stated the following: “They [teachers] give everybody a chance to learn, like if you have a question, and like if everybody is talking they make everybody stay quiet and let you talk. And that’s why they make you raise hands, so everybody has a chance to ask a question and won’t be lost. Because like in math, if you get lost one time you’re lost like forever and you will

get bad grades. So they give opportunities for you to talk and if somebody's talking, they'll give them silent lunch or something so that they will show more respect for the person who is talking.”; “Well she [teacher] kind of shows respect because like if everybody has a question and they are all talking but I'm like raising my hand or something, she goes straight to me because I'm the only one raising my hand and everybody's like shouting out. And like if someone's talking, like, she makes everybody be quiet because she thinks what you have to say might be really, really important and can help you out.”; “Umm, she [teacher] listens to everything I have to say. She gives me advice of things. Like she gives me advice about life, and she gives me advice about books. She'll be like you should read this or that, and we share titles of books.”

In addition, using positive humor and ensuring a positive environment for growth were other examples of how the teachers demonstrate respect in the classroom. Students conveyed the following: “Well he [teacher] shows videos but, at the same time, he tries to bring things from the world, like that have happened inside our study. Like examples from other places and he gives us more and more information at the same time. Yeah, he makes it really fun to learn, like I want to learn this.”; “I have a great time with all my teachers, they make me laugh and they always have a good time in the class.”; “Well they [teachers] like, they'll tell you jokes – like Mr. Williams, he always tells you jokes about like what he's done in his past. Like in science, Mrs. Harrison will let you raise your hand and tell stories about certain things we're talking about, like if you have anything that relates to that she'll let you speak about it.”; “Umm it feels like to me that they [teachers] want me to be there, they want me to learn and have fun at school and not just have to be strict about it and not have to make you just sit there and have to listen to it

and stuff. You get to like interact.”; “She [teacher] has the mindset that she wants to come to work and teach kids every day.”; and “Well teachers don’t always have an attitude when they come into work. They come into work ready to teach their students, not cranky all the time.”

In addition, there was evidence of respect being present during the classroom observations. Examples included teachers making time for students when they would read over the student’s shoulder to help guide the student his/her reading; a teacher noticing a child who didn’t have a piece of paper and, without saying a word, put one on her desk; teachers sitting down at a table with a group of students to discuss what books they were reading; and if teachers were working with another student, they would acknowledge the other students who had their hands raised and would convey to the students, “I’m on my way.” Numerous examples of evidence for teachers asking for input were present in all teachers’ classrooms. The evidence resulted from the teachers asking groups of students, whole class, to individuals for their input. The following quotes from teachers are examples taken from the classroom observations: To the class: “Why do we organize anything we write”; “What do you think is the most important information in those notes, Harry?” and “Damien, what do you think?” In addition, the teachers would use positive humor by talking in funny voices to take on a different character to being able to use idioms or analogies such as “Allison, I hope you have your listening ears on because it’s going to blow your mind” and “When you see this it will knock your socks off.” Ensuring a positive environment for growth appeared to stand out in terms of the number of examples that were documented during the classroom observations. An overall sense of camaraderie between the teachers and students was gleaned from the classroom

observations. Examples included when the teachers would make statements such as “I want to help you break it down for yourself”; “You can do it in your own words”; “When you get to number 3, I’ll help you out.”; “Mr. Williams and I wanted to find something for you that had good quality resources.”; “Let’s look through and let me know some words you may have problems with.”; and “Let’s be honest-we did this together but how painful?”

#### TO WHAT EXTENT IS LISTENING PRESENT IN THE CLASSROOM?

The dialogue skill of listening during the classroom observations, as well as on the surveys and interviews, was interpreted using the following characteristics:

- Encourage
- Restate or clarify
- Reflect or paraphrase
- Summarize (Frey, et. al, 2009, p. 75)

As indicated by the teacher survey, of the twenty three descriptors for the four dialogue skills, four descriptors ranked as occurring never and/or sometimes in the classroom. One of those descriptors was associated with listening: summarize- restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings. The remaining three characteristics for listening were analyzed as occurring often in a typical classroom setting for each teacher.

In addition, as indicated by the fifty three student surveys for the dialogue skill of listening, the two descriptors encourages you and restates or clarifies your points and/or ideas on the survey ranked close in percentages; however, the highest percentage was encourages you by one or more of the following: nod, smile, and/or other facial expressions.

The student interviews provided evidence of listening being present in the classroom. According to the voice of the students, repeated examples of teachers “listening” included teachers stating “I agree. I understand”; the teachers not doing other things when the students are talking to them-they are “listening”; the teachers’ facial expressions indicate they are listening to the students; and the teachers can relate with what the student are telling them and can tell the students something in return. One student quoted: “Umm, well sometimes at the beginning of classes we can tell stories about what happened over the weekend or something. And sometimes I would say a story about something and like she [teacher] would... it’s like she would listen to my story and then she would answer with something she had done – like a story that she had that related.”

In addition, there was evidence of listening being present during the classroom observations. Examples included teachers using facial expressions such as smiling when students would respond with correct or insightful answers. On some occasions, teachers’ facial expressions may even be neutral when the potential of negative reaction could have transpired. For example, one event involved a student who had been given permission to go back and get his book from his locker. The teacher went to the door and made a statement of “Come on” to get the student to hurry to enter the classroom. Other examples included the teachers restating answers the students had given. For example, a student described a math problem that involved a diagram of a triangle. The teacher clarified by demonstrating with a tangible example of a triangle diagram. Other statements by teachers to clarify the students’ responses included “Madison summed it up really well.” In addition, teachers would restate the student responses and ask, “Is this

what you're saying?" Also, when students would respond with an opinion to an issue being studied in class, the teachers would respond to their ideas or feelings with statements such as "Ooh, that's an interesting perspective. Say that out loud"; "That's really a good point; it's really helpful"; "To expand on Byron's question..."; "Sounds like a pretty good summary-I like the facts you've used."

## JUDGMENT

This section will continue to transfer the Feldman Method, "a mechanism of critiquing art" to evaluate through judgment the elements of art: line, value, shape, form, space, color and texture (Kelehear, 2006). "These ways of thinking about some of the commonplaces of education could have profound consequences for redesigning the practice of teaching and reconceiving the context in which teaching occurs" (Eisner, p. xiii, 2002). The elements provide a metaphorical spectrum to provide conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research in regards to understanding to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment.

## LINE

"A long narrow mark or stroke made on or in a surface" (Kelehear, p.21, 2006). For a school perspective, this translates to "be[ing] clear about boundaries and parameters" (Kelehear, p. 23, 2006). The dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect and listening could be the nonnegotiables and expectations for what needs to occur in the classroom. The examples extracted from classroom observations, surveys and student interviews should be used by other teachers to emulate what needs to occur in their own classrooms to support a caring environment for the students.



## VALUE

“The lightness or darkness of a color or object” (Kelehear, p.25, 2006). For a school perspective, value represents what matters most (Kelehear, 2006). As we are reminded: “Relationships and instruction are not an either-or proposition, but are rather an incredible combination. Research tells us this combination will increase engagement, motivation, test scores, and grade point averages while decreasing absenteeism, dropout rates, and discipline issues” (Brown, 2010, p.10). Therefore, it is imperative that building relationships becomes the foundation for what matters most in schools. In order to build relationships, there must be a supportive, caring environment. The vehicle for a caring environment is dialogue in the classroom.

## SHAPE

“Two-dimensional area” (Kelehear, p. 27, 2006). For a school perspective, it is about the “shape of schooling” and how it appeals to the minds of those involved. It is not so much the instruction but the development of a capacity to help students learn. “How schools are organized, what is taught in them, the kind of norms they embrace, and the relationships they foster among adults and children all matter, for they all shape the experiences that students are likely to have and in the process influence who children will become (Eisner, p. 3, 2002). Shape is in the details of the management, scheduling, and community relations (Kelehear, 2006). Shape would be the result of the intentionality of implementing staff development for the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect and listening. The result of implementing the dialogue skills every day would be what the students would take away with them after exiting the classroom because they would have experienced a caring environment. As Noddings (2005, p. xv) describes extensively, it is

through moral education and the concept of providing a climate of care that “caring relationships might flourish” and “to be credited properly with the virtue of caring, one must regularly succeed in establish caring relations.”

## FORM

“Three dimensional structure or shape; geometric or free-form” (Kelehear, p. 30, 2006). For a school perspective, form helps us to seek empathy and the capacity to understand and feel another person’s perspective. Empathy allows us to hear both the content and the feelings in a message. Empathy can influence the behaviors of individuals when responding in dialogue; consequently, the behaviors we exhibit and the responses rendered require observational skills that are not easy to acquire in regards to empathy. Even though human beings are not accountable for how they feel, they are accountable for how they act. Therefore, teachers have the freedom and control to monitor their thoughts and emotions and, consequently, to behave in a way that communicates care to the students in the classroom (Marzano, 2007). The researcher has noted that even though empathy is not easy to observe, it is essential to being identified as one of the dialogue skills needed for forming a caring environment.

## SPACE

“Area around, between, above, below, or within an object” (Kelehear, p.33, 2006). For a school perspective, understanding space can help “create learning places that are at once challenging and supporting” (Kelehear, p.34, 2006). Both teachers and students learn best when learning is connected to them, and it can be challenging to balance giving enough space to grow in learning and not allowing anyone to feel alone (Kelehear, 2006). For students to feel connected, space needs to allow for interactions

among teachers and students. Therefore, the size of the school and the ratio of teacher to students impact the “space.” There is no denying that the small size of Landrum Middle School is instrumental in providing opportunities for students and teachers to interact and employ the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening in the classroom. Throwing a student into a large and impersonal middle school environment does not show much thought or sensitivity to helping adolescents grow and mature. Teachers in large middle schools are less likely to collaborate or personalize instruction to meet the needs of students (Armstrong, 2006).

## COLOR

“Property of objects coming from reflected light” (Kelehear, p. 34, 2006). For a school perspective, different teaching, learning, and personality styles, as well as gifts help teachers respond to different kinds and needs of students (Kelehear, 2006). Teachers need to be encouraged to collaborate through staff development to teach each other the variances of how the implementation of intonation, empathy, respect and listening can occur in the classroom as a vehicle to reach the ultimate goal: to build a caring environment for all.

## TEXTURE

“Feel or an appearance of an object or surface” (Kelehear, p. 37, 2006). For a school perspective, texture represents collegiality and collaboration. It is about bringing people together to create cohesion and a professional learning community. Staff development could begin with identifying the evidence of dialogue skills present in classrooms. Teachers must begin with identification and then build to how it can be emulated or created. By giving intentional effort to develop the skills of dialogue through

staff development and professional learning communities, a tapestry of people can work together to weave a caring environment (Kelehear, 2006).

## FUTURE RESEARCH

This research study was prompted with Noddings' proposal for future purposed research: "to seek out situations in which educators are trying to establish settings more conducive to moral growth and study these attempts at some length..." (Noddings, p. 226, 1988). Therefore, utilizing this research study as an impetus for transforming research into practice for professional development would prove valuable. In addition, Noddings' proposal for a model of caring encompassed four components: modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. This research study examined dialogue. Consequently, a recommendation for further research would be to examine the remaining three components from Noddings' model of caring: modeling, practice, and confirmation (Noddings, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research study was a qualitative inquiry that utilized the research designs of an ethnographic study to determine to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment. The craft of dialogue and the skills and principles needed to create it in order to establish and sustain relationships have been explored; and the core of dialogue can extend into the classroom as a method to build relationships, to create a caring atmosphere, and as a teaching device to engage students in the learning process (Yankelovich, 1999; Isaacs, 1999).

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APPENDIX A: INSTRUMENT FOR SYNTHESIS OF TEACHER AND STUDENT STATEMENTS AND BEHAVIORS PARALLELED TO DIALOGUE

Dialogue Skills		Observed Yes/No	Evidence (Interpret)
Intonation	Smile at students at appropriate times.		
	In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement.		
	When talking with students, look them in the eyes.		
	When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space.		
	Look interested in what students have to say		
Empathy	Speaking directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone		
	Looking directly at the student, without glaring or staring		
	Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student		

	Having a facial expression that is either neutral or positive		
Respect	Listening		
	Making time for the person		
	Asking for input		
	Using positive humor		
	Accentuating the positive		
	Accepting the person “as is,” while helping him or her grow		
	Learning and demonstrating an appreciation for each person’s culture and background		
	Providing the best (respectful tasks- everyone’s work is equally important and equally engaging)		
	Expecting the best- always “teaching up”- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible		
	Holding the person to a high standard		
	Ensuring a positive environment for growth		
Listening	Encourage : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and use other facial expressions.</li> <li>▪ Don't agree or disagree.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.</li> </ul>		
	<p>Restate or clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.</li> <li>▪ Clarify points.</li> <li>▪ Don't "fake listen"!</li> </ul>		
	<p>Reflect or paraphrase :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the other's basic feelings.</li> <li>▪ Respond to the other's main ideas</li> </ul>		
	<p>Summarize :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>		

## APPENDIX B: TEACHER SURVEY

Student and teacher relationships have an impact on student achievement. Dialogue between teachers and students is a component of building teacher and student relationships. Crystal McSwain is conducting a study in order to understand to what extent the role of dialogue supports a caring environment to build teacher and student relationships.

You are being asked to participate in a survey because you are in a classroom and interact with students every day. This survey is being given to help determine how often during a typical classroom period that dialogue skills such as intonation, empathy, respect, and listening are demonstrated to support a caring classroom environment.

This survey is voluntary and your responses to this survey will remain anonymous and confidential. Neither course credit nor payment is provided to those who participate in the study.

The survey will be conducted by Mrs. Crystal McSwain during the week of February 4-February 8, 2013. Once surveys have been completed, they will be collected by Crystal McSwain. Please remember the survey is anonymous.

If you have any questions, regarding the survey, please contact Crystal McSwain at 864-457-2629.

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Please indicate how often during a typical classroom period you exhibit the following behaviors during a dialogue:

		Never	Sometimes	Often
1.	Smile at students at appropriate times			
2.	In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement			
3.	When talking with students, look them in the eyes			

4.	When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space			
5.	Look interested in what students have to say			
6.	Speak directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone			
7.	Look directly at the student, without glaring or staring			
8.	Maintain an appropriate distance from the student			
9.	Have a facial expression that is either neutral or positive			
10	Listen			
11	Make time for the person			
12	Ask for input			
13	Use positive humor			
14	Accentuate the positive			
15	Accept the person “as is,” while helping him or her grow			
16	Learn and demonstrate an appreciation for each person’s culture and background			
17	Provide the best (respectful tasks-everyone’s work is equally important and equally engaging)			
18	Expect the best-always “teaching up”- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible			
19	Hold the person to a high standard			
20	Ensure a positive environment for growth			
21	Encourage : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and use other facial expressions.</li> <li>▪ Don't agree or disagree.</li> <li>▪ Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.</li> </ul>			
22	Restate or clarify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the basic ideas, emphasizing the</li> </ul>			

	<p>facts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarify points.</li> <li>▪ Don't "fake listen"!</li> </ul>			
23	<p>Reflect or paraphrase :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the other's basic feelings.</li> <li>▪ Respond to the other's main ideas</li> </ul>			
24	<p>Summarize :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>			

## APPENDIX C: STUDENT SURVEY

Student and teacher relationships have an impact on student achievement. Dialogue between teachers and students is a component of building teacher and student relationships. Crystal McSwain is conducting a study in order to understand to what extent the role of dialogue supports a caring environment to build teacher and student relationships.

You are being asked to participate in a survey because you are in a classroom and interact with teachers every day. This survey is being given to help determine how often during a typical classroom period that dialogue skills such as intonation, empathy, respect, and listening are demonstrated to support a caring classroom environment.

This survey is voluntary and your responses to this survey will remain anonymous and confidential. Neither course credit nor payment is provided to those who participate in the study.

The survey will be conducted by Mrs. Crystal McSwain during the last 15 minutes of a class period during the week of February 11-15, 2013. Once surveys have been completed, they will be collected by Crystal McSwain. Please remember the survey is anonymous.

If you have any questions, regarding the survey, please contact Crystal McSwain at 864-457-2629.

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Please indicate how often during a typical classroom period you see teachers demonstrate the following behaviors when speaking to you during class:

		Never	Sometimes	Often
1.	Smiles at you			
2.	When talking with you, the teacher will look you in the eyes			

3.	Looks interested in what you have to say			
4.	Speaks directly to you in a calm and respectful tone			
5.	Has a facial expression that is either neutral or positive			
6.	Listens to you when you are speaking			
7.	Asks for your input			
8.	Holds you to a high standard			
9.	Encourages you by one or more of the following : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and/or other facial expressions.</li> </ul>			
10.	Restates or clarifies your points and/or ideas			



## APPENDIX D: PARENT CONSENT FOR STUDENT SURVEY

Monday, February 4, 2013

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As a doctoral student in the department of Educational Leadership and Policies at the University of South Carolina, I am currently involved in the dissertation phase of my program. The title of my study is CARE AS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN TEACHER AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS: EXAMINING DIALOGUE AS A VEHICLE FOR BUILDING A CARING ENVIRONMENT.

Student and teacher relationships have an impact on student achievement. Dialogue between teachers and students is a component of building teacher and student relationships. I want to understand to what extent the role of dialogue supports a caring environment to build teacher and student relationships. Students are being asked to participate in this study because they are in a classroom and interact with teachers every day.

If you agree for your child to be in this study, I will ask him/her to participate in an anonymous survey to determine how often during a typical classroom period that dialogue skills such as intonation, empathy, respect, and listening are demonstrated to support a caring classroom environment. All participants' responses and observations for this survey will remain anonymous and confidential.

While I hope you will allow your child to participate in the survey, if you decide not to allow him/her to do so is entirely up to you. No one will make your child participate in this survey. **This is totally voluntary.**

You may ask any questions that you have about this survey by contacting Crystal McSwain at 864-457-2629. The survey will be administered during the last 15 minutes of a class period during the week of February 11-15, 2013.

Signing here means that you have read this paper and you are willing for your child to participate in the survey.

Signature of student participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Crystal McSwain  
Principal, Landrum Middle School

## APPENDIX E: PARENT CONSENT FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

February 13, 2013

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As a doctoral student in the department of Educational Leadership and Policies at the University of South Carolina, I am currently involved in the dissertation phase of my program. The focus and purpose of my research is to understand to what extent dialogue between teachers and students can support a caring environment.

The methodology or research design of this study will include interviews and classroom observations.

Several students will be asked to participate in an interview conducted by me during February 20-24 after school. It is totally voluntary and unconnected to regularly school activities. The purpose of this interview is to have a discussion on how teachers use the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening to support a caring classroom environment. The interview will include asking your child to explain how teachers show interest in what he/she has to say in class, explain how teachers show concern for him/her in class, explain how teachers demonstrate respect for him/her during class, and explain how he/she knows that his/her teacher really listens to what he/she has to say. Your child's responses and comments during the interview for this study will remain anonymous and any identifying information shared during interview sessions will not be disclosed.

If you would like any additional information concerning my research or your child's involvement in my study, please feel free to contact me at [crystal.mcswain@spart1.org](mailto:crystal.mcswain@spart1.org) or at (864) 457-2629. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Crystal McSwain

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I give my permission for my child to be involved in this research study.

\_\_\_\_ I do not give my permission for my child to be involved in this research study.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: DIALOGUE SKILLS

Dialogue Skills	
Intonation	Smile at students at appropriate times.
	In an appropriate manner and at appropriate times, place a hand on a student's shoulder as a form of encouragement.
	When talking with students, look them in the eyes.
	When talking with students, stand close enough to communicate a sense of concern but not too close to violate personal space.
	Look interested in what students have to say
Empathy	Speaking directly to the student in a calm and respectful tone
	Looking directly at the student, without glaring or staring
	Maintaining an appropriate distance from the student
	Having a facial expression that is either neutral or positive
Respect	Listening
	Making time for the person
	Asking for input
	Using positive humor
	Accentuating the positive
	Accepting the person "as is," while helping him or her grow
	Learning and demonstrating an appreciation for each person's culture and background
	Providing the best (respectful tasks-everyone's work is equally important and equally engaging)

	Expecting the best-always “teaching up”- pushing the student beyond where he or she believes achievement is possible
	Holding the person to a high standard
	Ensuring a positive environment for growth
Listening	<p>Encourage :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nod, smile, and use other facial expressions.</li> <li>▪ Don't agree or disagree.</li> <li>▪ Use noncommittal words with positive tone of voice.</li> </ul>
	<p>Restate or clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the basic ideas, emphasizing the facts.</li> <li>▪ Clarify points.</li> <li>▪ Don't "fake listen"!</li> </ul>
	<p>Reflect or paraphrase :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate the other's basic feelings.</li> <li>▪ Respond to the other's main ideas</li> </ul>
	<p>Summarize :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restate, reflect, and summarize major ideas and feelings.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX G: ASSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

February 13, 2013

### **CARE AS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN TEACHER AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS: EXAMINING DIALOGUE AS A VEHICLE FOR BUILDING A CARING ENVIRONMENT**

Student and teacher relationships have an impact on student achievement. Dialogue between teachers and students is a component of building teacher and student relationships. I want to understand to what extent the role of dialogue supports a caring environment to build teacher and student relationships. Because you are in a classroom every day, I have asked you to participate in this study.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in an interview after school. I will ask your thoughts about your classroom experience in regards to how teachers use the dialogue skills of intonation, empathy, respect, and listening to support a caring classroom environment. The discussion will include asking you to explain how teachers show interest in what you have to say in class, explain how teachers show concern for you in class, explain how teachers demonstrate respect for you during class, and explain how you know that your teachers really listen to what you have to say. There is not a right or wrong answer – I just want you to be honest.

All participants' responses and comments during the interview for this study will remain anonymous and any identifying information shared during the interview session will not be disclosed.

While I hope you will be a part of the entire study, if you decide not to be in this study that is entirely up to you. No one will make you participate in this study. This is totally voluntary and is unconnected to regular school activities.

You may ask any questions that you have about this study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can ask me then. Signing here means that you have read this paper or had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study. If you don't want to be in this study, don't sign. Remember, being in this study is up to you, and no one will be upset with you if you don't sign or even if you change your mind later.

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person explaining study: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H: TEACHER CONSENT FORM

### **CARE AS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN TEACHER AND STUDENT INTERACTIONS: EXAMINING DIALOGUE AS A VEHICLE FOR BUILDING A CARING ENVIRONMENT**

Student and teacher relationships have an impact on student achievement. Dialogue between teachers and students is a component of building teacher and student relationships. I want to understand to what extent the role of dialogue supports a caring environment to build teacher and student relationships. Because you teach in a classroom every day, I have asked you to participate in this study.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in a survey, as well as to allow me to conduct classroom observations to determine how often during a typical classroom period that dialogue skills such as intonation empathy, respect and listening are demonstrated to support a caring classroom environment.

All participants' responses and observations for this study will remain anonymous. While I hope you will be a part of the entire study, if you decide not to be in this study that is entirely up to you. No one will make you participate in this study. This is totally voluntary.

You may ask any questions that you have about this study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can ask me then. Signing here means that you have read this paper or had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study. If you do not want to be in this study, please do not sign.

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person explaining study: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_