The Perceptions of Care in an Urban New Zealand Secondary School

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful wife Desireé and our three daughters Hayley, Megan and Angela.

To my parents Jim and Wendy Clark who instilled a lifelong love of learning in me.

Acknowledgements

"Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini"
My success is not my own, but from many others
- whakatauki

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Abstract

This ethnographic case study explores how senior level students and teachers perceive care in classrooms in a large, urban, high decile secondary school in Auckland, New Zealand. While much research has been conducted in primary and intermediate schools, little research has been conducted in a secondary school environment. Data was collected from students and teachers at Miro secondary school[1]. Student and teacher participants engaged in semi-structured interviews based on the seminal work of researcher Nel Noddings. Interviews explored participants' perceptions of care they gave and received. The researcher was also interested in determining whether students and teachers could exercise any agency over the care they received. The findings of this study show that care in a secondary school is heavily dependent on communication and relationships. It is important that educational leaders understand the importance communication and relationships in developing an environment within school communities to ensure that both students and teachers are cared for. While there are some differences in the way teachers and students perceive care, participants felt able to exercise some agency in their care.

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[1] Pseudonym – The name of the school has been changed to ensure anonymity.

Introduction

Teaching is regarded by most as a caring profession and many people can cite a teacher as a major influence on their life pathway (Lumpkin, 2007; O'Connor, 2008). These powerful experiences are often defined by the teacher doing more than expected or caring when others did not. Equally as powerful and formative are events where children were affected by negative experiences that are often characterised by uncaring and indifferent behaviour by a teacher. This study endeavours to investigate student and teacher perceptions of care in a New Zealand urban secondary school and the implications that promoting a sense of care has for educational leaders. Most teachers regard themselves as caring, and most cite caring as a major reason for entering the profession (O'Connor, 2008). Students often cite their favourite teacher as the one who truly cared for them. Care is extremely important in education, however, definitions of care are highly personal and can often be linked to our sense of identity, gender and ethnicity (Barnes & Brannelly, 2015). This diverse understanding of a universal phenomenon is reflected in the academic understanding of care. Until recently there has been a lack of agreement on a single definition. This study will utilise the most widely recognised definitions of care that stem from the ethic of care philosophy developed by pioneers such as Nel Noddings, Joan Tronto and Carol Gilligan and are increasingly being utilised in nursing, medicine and aged care.

Studying perceptions of care in schools is important because students' perceptions of caring and uncaring behaviour have a significant impact on student achievement, sense of belonging and wellbeing (Perez, 2000). Recent research has suggested that applying an ethic of care within schools improves the academic and social outcomes for students who have traditionally been marginalised by mainstream education (Garza, 2013; Nelson & Bauch, 1997). While an ethic of care is vitally important for promoting a positive school experience for students, it can also have a significant impact on the wellbeing of teachers (Collier, 2005). In the New Zealand context, secondary schools are becoming increasingly performative with a greater emphasis being placed on academic achievement, particularly on the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). Within this environment, teachers are held increasingly accountable for their students' academic progress and achievement in Years 11 - 13 which correspond to NCEA Levels 1-3. NCEA courses typically contain internal and external assessments. Internal assessments are conducted throughout the year and are written, assessed and

moderated by secondary school teachers themselves. External assessments are mostly conducted at the end of the school year and are graded externally. The system of conducting internal assessments with students while preparing them for external assessments places additional pressure on secondary school teachers in New Zealand. A performative environment places greater emphasis on outcomes that are easily measurable. In secondary school education, the focus is on academic achievement outcomes (Ball, 2003). The blame for students' failure to perform or show improvement is often placed on the teachers (Day & Pope, 1990). Caring for students and more holistic and humanist gauges of education are no longer valued in a performative system, partly because they are not easily measured (Ball, 2000). According to Teven and McCroskey (1997), the perception of care is more important than the care itself: "It is not the caring that counts; it is the perception of caring that is critical. If a teacher cares deeply, but does not communicate that attribute, he or she might as well not care at all" (Teven & McCroskey, 1997, p. 3). It is therefore crucial to improve our understanding of how students and teachers perceive care in order to ensure that students and teachers feel secure and cared for within the school environment. By investigating student and teacher perceptions of care, this study seeks to establish whether there are major differences in the way students and teachers perceive care.

Central to the concept of care is the relationship between student and teacher. This relationship is the basis for care. Noddings (1984) bases her theory of care on the relationship between a mother and child. The relationship is initially asymmetrical as the teacher must assume the needs of the child. This relationship is not paternalistic or static, according to Noddings, but develops through dialogue as the care grows. Communication between students and teachers is important for the participants in the relationship to assist and exchange ideas. In the classroom context, what and how the material is taught are crucial to the development and perception of the caring relationship.

Care is equally important for students as well as teachers. In order for teachers to provide effective care, they need to be cared for. Noddings (1984) sees reciprocity as an important aspect of the caring relationship and is important for the carer to continue to care.

> The act of caring and being cared for forms a loop which provides needed support to enhance student growth, development and performance while refuelling teachers with experiences of gratification and appreciation, increasing satisfaction with teaching and commitment to teaching as a profession. (Collier, 2005, p. 358)

In order for teachers to care effectively for their students, they need to be cared for. As the old adage succinctly expresses it: 'You cannot pour from an empty cup.' Noddings (2012) defines the caring as the relationship between the 'one caring' and the 'cared for'. This individual dyad is an attempt to define the essence of the relationship in an academic sense. The reality of secondary school teaching is that this relationship between teacher and individual student is difficult to maintain. Secondary school teachers see students usually for an hour a day in a classroom setting that can contain thirty or more students. While catering for students' individual needs, teachers must build and maintain relationships while being pressured to maintain focus on subject curriculum through effective pedagogy. This conflict between care and curriculum is often at the heart of a teacher's frustration with their role.

Much research on the ethic of care has been focused on how students can benefit from an ethic of care being applied in schools (Bates, 2005; Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Cavanagh, Macfarlane, Glynn, & Macfarlane, 2012; Cothran & Ennis, 2000). Studies have shown that the ethic of care is related to students' sense of wellbeing and belonging in school, improved behaviour and attitude as well as improved engagement and achievement. "Theories of care have the potential of amplifying the foundations of many already widely accepted constructs in education" (Velasquez, West, Graham, & Osguthorpe, 2013, p. 184). The ethic of care cannot be 'colour blind' as the issue of race and ethnicity can affect how care is given, received and perceived (Villalpando, 2004). In order to understand how care can improve outcomes for students we need to consider care through a Critical Race Theory lens (Harris, Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 2012) in order to understand how care can improve the outcomes of those marginalised by traditional caring structures. Critical Race Theory is focused on "transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In order to fully understand the complexity of the perceptions of care we need to consider how caring relationships are affected by race and power. According to Villapando (2004) for students from minority groups "it is not their culture or race but the educational system that has placed them at the greatest disadvantage" (p.46), therefore it is important to consider the experience of those that have not received adequate care.

Although the body of research on the ethic of care in secondary schools is growing, less research has been conducted in secondary schools than in Primary or Intermediate schools. In order to fully understand the importance of this concept to holistic education, we need to understand how secondary school students and teachers conceptualise care. While caring is found in most schools and most teachers would describe themselves as caring, there remains a lack of literature that attempts to describe and analyse caring in secondary schools (DeFord, 1996; Garza, 2009).

A great deal of the research into the ethic of care has been conducted in the United States (Ferreira, 1995; Hayes, Ryan, & Zseller, 1994). Research conducted in the United States focuses on students who are marginalised or underachieving in mainstream schools, including Latino and African American students. In the United States some progress has been made in raising the achievement of students of Latino and African American backgrounds by applying an ethic of care (Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Garza & Huerta, 2014). How marginalised students perceive caring behaviour has significant implications for teachers in the way they develop relationships with students and shape their pedagogy to meet students' needs.

This research project intends to broaden our understanding of the ethic of care by investigating New Zealand senior secondary school teacher and student perceptions of the care they give and receive. Care is affected by context and investigating perceptions of care in a New Zealand secondary school will improve our understanding of how individuals in the New Zealand context conceptualise and actualise care. One of the major issues facing New Zealand secondary schools is the achievement of Māori and Pasifika students. Māori and Pasifika students are over represented in failure, drop out and under achievement rates. In 2006, 22 percent of Māori students left school without any formal qualification, which is double the national average (Education and Science Committee, 2008, p. 9). "42 percent of Māori, and 37 percent of Pasifika year 11 students gained an NCEA qualification"(Education and Science Committee, 2008, p. 9). Some practices of care align with the ethic of care from a Māori kaupapa perspective. These include whakawhānaungatanga[2] and manaakitanga (the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others) (Barnes & Brannelly, 2015). In order to fully

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[2] Māori term meaning reciprocal and responsive relationships. Further definitions for Māori terms are provided in parenthesis.

understand teacher and student perceptions of care, it is necessary to engage in in-depth discussions with individuals to ensure that student and teacher understanding of care are aligned. To increase the effectiveness of a teacher's ability to improve student outcomes and to ensure that students feel secure, valued and engaged in the classroom setting, whakawhānaungatanga and manaakitanga must be considered. By looking specifically at the New Zealand context, the researcher intends to identify the teacher behaviours that a sample of New Zealand students consider to be caring, as well as investigating if students' responses correlate with what their teachers consider to be caring behaviour. This study will increase our understanding of the perceptions of care in a local context but will also investigate the notion of whether individuals can improve the quality of care they receive.

Rather than investigating care as a binary construction of 'carer' and 'cared for', we also need to consider how power relationships influence care and those involved in caring (Barnes & Brannelly, 2015). In the case of teachers and students, the 'cared for' can act as both receivers and providers of care, and the 'carers' can also require care themselves (Barnes & Brannelly, 2015). The latest research (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016) suggests that the ethic of care is more evident in schools where students feel secure and cared for and achieve academically. Through semi-structured interviews and observation, researchers developed a more complex understanding of care in secondary schools. They identify care in three categories: aesthetic, authentic and hard care in order to further the knowledge of care. Aesthetic care is largely a façade of care where care is primarily focused on results and test scores. Authentic care is more focused on the relationship and mutual trust. Hard caring refers to teachers who have a personal and reciprocal relationship with students and their circumstances but have high expectations for their academic achievement. 'Soft' caring teachers may have a personal relationship with students but may pity them due to their personal circumstances and have a lowered expectation of their academic achievement (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016; Valenzuela, 2010). It is important that this study investigates these more complex understandings of care in the New Zealand context.

By investigating how students and teachers perceive care in a New Zealand secondary school, this study will identify specific behaviours that will provide recommendations to

teachers on how to better assist students in the classroom. The researcher will also investigate whether students and teachers can exercise agency in their care. This is particularly relevant for educational leaders. In order for teachers to provide adequate care they too must be cared for. The traditional understanding of care and education is of a patriarchal system of assumed needs. Noddings (2012; 2015) highlights this in her theory that care is based on reciprocity and engagement. In a truly caring relationship the 'cared for' can exercise the ability to question their care. The carer is also not a sacrificial character that has to care to his/her detriment. This study intends to reveal whether students and teachers can influence the quality of care that they receive. It is therefore important to consider whether individuals in an institutional context can exercise agency in these caring relationships. The study aims to identify if students and teachers can improve the care they are receiving when they are not satisfied. This is in contrast to a traditional view of a caring relationship based largely on paternalism. A traditional, often paternalistic, relationship the carer assumes the needs of the 'cared for' and therefore will only attempt to meet the assumed needs rather than considering the expressed needs.

The research was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do senior secondary school students perceive their subject teachers to demonstrate caring/uncaring behaviour in the classroom?
2. How do subject teachers perceive their own behaviour as caring/uncaring in the classroom?
3. To what extent do teachers and senior secondary students feel that they have agency in contributing to a classroom climate that embodies an ethic of care.

This dissertation will begin with a literature review on the importance of the ethic of care and how students and teachers perceive care in schools. The review focuses on research conducted in secondary schools. The methodology will constitute the next section of the document, outlining the research paradigms and research design. The findings for the first two research questions are explained under four sub-headings: relationships, communication, pedagogy and curriculum. The findings for the remaining question are separated and structured differently. The findings are then discussed, followed by the researcher's recommendations for practice and further research.

Literature Review

Introduction to Literature Review

The purpose of this review is to identify, analyse and synthesise the published literature relevant to student and teacher perceptions of care.   The ethic of care is not exclusively relevant to education, but is also widely utilised and increasingly influential in nursing (Bradshaw, 2009; Halldorsdottir, 1988), medical care (Curzer, 1993; Scott, Aiken, Mechanic, & Moravcsik, 1995) and aged care (Lloyd, 2006). Care has historically been difficult to define even though it is crucial to education. To begin with, this review of the literature will focus on the work of seminal researcher Nel Noddings. Noddings (1984; 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 2002) is a pioneer in the field and has published extensively on the ethic of care in education. A great deal of research has been conducted in the United States of America with less being conducted in New Zealand and Australia. Most of the literature on the ethic of care in education focuses on primary and intermediate schools and many researchers have commented on the lack of research conducted in secondary schools (Barber, 2002; Miller, 2008).   There is a growing body of work that does investigate care in the secondary school context and this will form the focus of this review (Garza, 2009; King, 2013). As care is strongly influenced by context, literature from the 1990's onwards has been selected to provide the most relevant material.

Overview of the Ethic of Care

In order to begin the discussion on care in secondary schools it is necessary to define key terms. The ethic of care is a feminist philosophy developed by researchers Nel Noddings, Carol Gilligan and Joan Tronto. The ethic of care, according to Noddings (1984), is a relational ethic that identifies the 'carer' and the 'cared for'. In the context of a school the 'carer' refers to the teacher and the 'cared for' the student. The ethic of care developed in opposition to a male dominated-construct based on rules and male hegemony (1984). Noddings bases her theory on the relationship between a mother and child. Although the ethic of care is a feminist theory it is not exclusively feminine.   The caring relationship is characterised by the elements of engrossment, commitment, and motivational shift. Noddings theorises that "engrossment is the basis for all caring" (1984, p. 17). Engrossment refers to the focus on the one cared for not on the carer. The engrossment does not need to be pervasive. In the classroom this would take the form of the teacher listening to the student and being responsive to their individual needs. If the one caring

is committed to caring, this leads to motivational displacement which is characterised by the carer's focus shifting to seeing care through the eyes of the cared for and by the carer's motivation to act for the cared for. Nodding's (1996; 2015) suggested that for teachers to care effectively for others they need to consider the situation from the point of view of the student. Once the teacher is able to consider the student's point of view, then the attention shifts to the student and not the concerns of the teacher. In a student/teacher relationship it is usually the teacher who holds the power. The issue of discipline and control are wielded by the teacher. In order to sustain this relationship, Noddings (1984; 1988, 1995a, 1995b) theorises that the cared for must show responsiveness or reciprocity to the carer. In order for care to develop and continue, the carer must feel or observe this response from the cared for. This receptive response is not universally accepted by others in the field (White, 2003). Further criticism has described the relationship where the carer almost assumes a sacrificial element or slave mentality (Davion, 1993; Pettersen, 2012). Noddings (2015a) pointed out that this is not a static relationship but as the relationship develops the cared for is encouraged to develop greater independence from the carer.

Mayeroff (1971) theorised that the role of caring was to help others care for themselves. Mayeroff's framework for caring is based on knowledge and growth which allows both the carer and cared for to develop as individuals. Caring teachers model caring behaviour through their actions but also through dialogue. Dialogue is essential as it involves talking and listening. Students should have a voice and not just be 'spoken to'. In the classroom context this is an essential element of caring that creates an environment where students have a voice, and can contribute and develop common understandings. This safe environment is also conducive to students themselves practicing caring and to show confirmation of caring behaviours. While most teachers enter the profession because they care about their students, this position can be difficult to maintain. "Tensions between caring and controlling are endemic to teaching" (McLaughlin, 1991, p. 192). What McLaughlin expresses here is that teachers struggle with the practical difficulties of caring when the expectations appear more to do with control. According to McLaughlin, care and control should not be seen as a dichotomy but must be seen as constantly changing and evolving. The dynamic nature of care is supported by Carol Gilligan (1982) who used the term 'mature care'. Mature care highlights the relationship of the carer and cared for having equal worth. This form of care guards against exploitation of the carer by developing competence of the cared for and for the carer to practice self -care

(Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1993). The concept of mature care is further explored by Pettersen (2012; 2011) and highlights the relational aspect of care that the cared for are not "passive receivers of care" but active participants (2012, p. 376). Carers are also not seen as self-sacrificing but of equal worth in the wider web of care. With mature care there is a greater focus on interaction, reciprocity, and context. The concept of mature care reduces the risk of paternalistic treatment of the cared for and exploitation of the carer. Mature care allows those involved in the relationship to reflect (Pettersen, 2008). This is particularly relevant to teaching where the teacher is dealing with the needs of multiple individuals simultaneously. The concept of mature care allows for the teacher to reflect and adjust to the needs of the individuals as well as the group dynamic without sacrificing her own self-worth or her own relationships such as family. Mature care is not to practice caring equally for everyone, or exchange equal quantities of the same ''commodity". The amount of care provided depends on the situation, and in some situations the right thing to do is to care for oneself. "A hallmark of a mature carer is her ability to judge the concrete situation, and allocate care accordingly" (Pettersen, 2012, p. 381). Mature care allows the student and teacher to conceptualise care as relational and reciprocal rather than as a mono-directional activity. This is a shift from traditional notions of caring which are often paternalistic and based on assumed needs rather than consideration of the type of care required and consideration of the needs of the carer.

Further developments in the ethic of care focus on looking at care beyond how Noddings has framed the mother child relationship, to a group dyad (Barnes, 2015). A key implication of recognising the significance of caring networks is that responsibilities for and to care need to be understood to operate within the network as a whole, rather than being solely in one direction – from care giver to care receiver. Barnes (2015) discusses a theory of care that is not just based on the exchange between two individuals but also considers care between groups: "Care that is often reciprocal, that emerges through frequent interactions among groups of people who often share similar characteristics or circumstances" (2015, p. 35). Barnes differentiates between the terms "collective care"; which refers to the care that is "generated through interactions involving a number of people" (2015, p. 35); as distinct from "caring networks", that focus on the needs of one individual. One of Barnes' key ideas was that care needs to be seen as personal and political. The care that is given and received in any system is an interplay between the collective care and networks of care. These systems must also consider the care that the

carers themselves receive. Scott, Aiken, Mechanic and Moravcsik (1995) studied the pressures that are placed on doctors. Caring for patients bears some similarities with the pressures teachers face in caring for students. Fiscal pressures place pressure on doctors to process patients and caring becomes difficult in organisational settings. According to Scott (et al.), doctors who feel they have less influence on the policies and decision making in their context have higher incidences of burnout and emotional exhaustion. One of Scott (et al.)'s major conclusions is that caring must be apparent in all levels of the organisation and modelled, not just by individuals but must be supported by the administrative procedures throughout the organisation. Caring must become a concern to everyone providing care to patients, whether directly or indirect. Care then is both an individual dyad and an organisational norm. This supports what Barnes (2015) discussed and Noddings that caring needs to be evident at all levels of an organisation

Gender

Gender plays an important aspect in our understanding of the ethic of care. Although the origins of care theory are feminist it is not exclusively feminine (Noddings, 1984).

Researchers such as Acker (1995) and Barber (2002) have noted differences between the way male and female teachers administer care. Although women appear to value and maintain caring relationships more than men (Noddings, 1984), this does not appear to remain constant over a lifetime. According to some research (Skoe, Pratt, Matthews, & Curror, 1996) gender differences in caring can be apparent in early adolescence, but not in young adulthood. According to Shan (1999) there appears to be less difference between the way male and female students interpret care; this is not supported by all research (See Garza & Huerta (2014)). These studies highlight the complexity of care. Teven (2001) theorises that not only by gender but other demographic factors such as age and experience influences student and teacher caring.

One way of expanding our understanding of care is by considering identity and intersectionality. This notion is discussed by Nicki Ward (2015) as she investigates the concept of 'otherness'. Ward proposed the idea that care ethics and identity can be a symbiotic relationship. According to Ward, the ethic of care and identity are both "relational ontologies" (p. 60). By considering our own identity we can develop an enhanced understanding of both ourselves and the care we give and receive. The theory of intersectionality suggests that our identity is not necessarily fixed but is fluid and can

change as we move through different contexts of time and space. By investigating our identity and seeing what makes us similar and different in relation to others has the potential to enhance the way we give and receive care.

The Importance of the Ethic of Care to Education

In her book *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, Noddings (2015) outlined the practical implications of applying the ethic of care to schools. While this text discusses a range of solutions to all levels of schooling she does highlight the key issue of the relationship of student and teacher. The relationship must be based on trust and mutual respect. Applying an ethic of care within a school environment has major benefits to both students and teachers. This is replicated in a number of studies at different levels such as primary school (Lewis, Schaps, & Watson, 1996), intermediate school (DeFord, 1996; Ferreira, 1995) and secondary schools (Miller, 2008)

Schools need to position themselves as communities to ensure that students feel part of this community and are able to give as well as receive care (Alder, 2002). Middle and upper class schools that feature in some studies (Jasin, 2010; King 2013) do not have to deal with cultural diversity and significant numbers of students at risk. Garret, Barr and Rothman's (2009) study investigated an ethnographically diverse middle and secondary school. These researchers identified six themes from the students' survey responses: academic support, the teacher's personality, taking a personal interest in the student, equity and use of rewards. Some of the findings suggested that as students move through the school system they become more focused on academic support and less on other aspects such as teacher personality. Students in this study mentioned these two aspects of caring teacher behaviour. The only other category that showed an increase between 6th and 9th grades was equity. This can be seen as an indicator that students become more focused on assistance with academic achievement rather than the teacher's caring personality as they move through the school. "Teachers may be seen by adolescents as the person that helps them academically, rather than socially or personally" (Garrett et al., 2009, p. 518). The older students get, the more they are assessed and the more importance the academic system places on these assessments. Students become more aligned with the concerns of their teachers so it is not surprising that academic achievement becomes more prevalent.

Perceptions of Care

Students and teachers have different perceptions of the care they give and receive (King, 2013). Many researchers have questioned students directly to gain an understanding of their perceptions of care (Teven, 2001; Ferreira & Bosworth, 2001). According to Teven and McCroskey: "It is not the caring that counts; it is the perception of caring that is critical. If a teacher cares deeply, but does not communicate that attribute, he or she might as well not care at all" (1997, p. 3). Student voices obviously are important to our understanding of care. According to Noddings (2005) it is the student that determines whether caring has occurred.

Students' perceptions of caring are complex and multi-layered. Ferreira and Bosworth (2000) investigated students' concepts of caring and, in particular, the barriers to caring. According to their study, students perceive little or no barriers to caring for themselves but the barriers increase the further away "the cared for" are positioned. For example, students showed a greater willingness to care for those closer to them such as close friends and family. Caring for acquaintances is particularly interesting as reciprocity plays a major role in the perception of these caring relationships. Students need to see or feel reciprocity in order for them to continue caring. The key findings regarding care in this study were that reciprocity is important to adolescence and continued care is dependent on receiving care and support for others.

Jasin (2010), found that school and classroom culture can both encourage caring and alter students' perceptions of care. This study raises another important issue of socio-economic class values. The students in this study were predominantly White and middle to upper class which the author suggests is the reason for the lack of variation in the data generated. While the author does postulate that the parenting and home values of students aligns closely with the school culture and values, Jasin does question what this school would feel like to someone from a different class or culture and how that would affect their perceptions of care. Jasin suggests that students who are not of the same class or culture will perceive care differently and that it is up to the teacher, who has a professional and moral obligation, to overcome these differences. According to Jasin (2010):

> Where there may be cultural discontinuity of any sort between students and educators, educators have an additional professional and moral responsibility to account for that cultural discontinuity so that they can better ensure that they are

effective in conveying caring to their students in the service of achievement. (2010, p. 100)

Where the values of students, families and teachers are closely aligned, care is perceived in a similar way. What Jasin is suggesting here is that the teachers have a moral obligation to ensure that cultural discontinuity is overcome to ensure that all students are able to perceive and receive care.

The Importance of the Ethic of Care to Overcoming Educational Disparity

Investigating student perceptions is an important element of ethic of care research and Rubén Garza has investigated the effect of ethnicity on caring by focussing more specifically on the caring perceptions of Latino students (Garza, 2009, 2013; Garza & Huerta, 2014).

Garza (2013) outlines the need to use the ethic of care in a culturally responsive way. According to the author, Latino students are often perceived by teachers to be different, challenging or not caring about school. Although this study only investigated one teacher and her students, the study did broaden our understanding of the complexity of caring relationships. Relationships were frequently mentioned but in the case of Latino students, according to the study, there needs to be a particular focus on establishing authentic relationships that do not reinforce racial prejudices and deterministic points of view. Latino students in this study identified five themes as important aspects of caring: provides scaffolding during a teaching episode; provides academic support in the classroom setting; shows a personal interest in the student's wellbeing inside and outside the classroom; is always available to the student; and is an empathic listener. Scaffolding and academic support are the two most important themes but these cannot be viewed in isolation as, in order to do these effectively, the teacher needs to have created an inclusive culture where students can contribute to the lesson and are listened to and supported.

This research was continued in Garza and Huerta (2014), in which Latino boys considered the teacher's attitude to making students feel comfortable as the most significant caring behaviour of teachers. Latino girls in the same study perceived that teachers assisting them preparing for tests as a more significant caring behaviour. To illustrate the complexity of these perceptions; when curriculum and assignments were out of alignment and caused unrealistic work expectations students perceived some of these actions were perceived as uncaring behaviour. Garza's research clearly shows

that teachers need to ensure their classes are not supporting a system where white middle class values and experiences are considered normal and that other lived experiences are abnormal or not valued. Teacher caring must be open to all cultural practices to ensure that all students feel that they belong. Lessons must be stimulating and ensure that the students are free to share their lived experiences and provide effective scaffolding for students to achieve (Garza & Huerta, 2014).

While a teacher in an individual class can ensure that students of all races and ethnicities can feel cared for and included if they teach in a culturally inclusive way it is important that the institution itself supports these practices in order to normalise this aspect of care. Tichnor Wagner and Allen's (2016) study continues this work by investigating care at two high performing and two low performing schools, as well as investigating both teacher and student perceptions of care. The study developed a more sophisticated rubric for assessing care, as opposed to a binary understanding of caring and uncaring behaviours that is used in earlier studies. The conceptual framework to assess care distinguishes three categories of care: aesthetic, authentic, and hard caring. Aesthetic caring is identified a*s* "focuses attention on things and ideas, such as test scores, grades, and appearances" (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016, p. 3). This reflected a greater concern by teachers for students' uniform, test scores and a lack of connection and relationships with students. Authentic Care was based more on trust relationships and reciprocity. This category of caring reflects many of Noddings' (Noddings, 1984, 2015) ideals of mutual respect and reciprocal relationships that are not simply based on assumed needs but where teachers "have awareness of the social, cultural, and political contexts of their students, and incorporate that awareness into their teaching" (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016, p. 5). The third category is that of hard caring, which is characterised by teachers caring for the emotional wellbeing of students but having high expectations for their students. Hard caring teachers do not take pity on their students and make excuses for them but care for them and have high expectations for their personal development and academic success. Hard caring teachers leverage their positive relationships to focus students on their futures to ensure successful outcomes. These teachers are also referred to as "warm demanders" (2016, p. 6). Tichnor-Wagner and Alan also identified the context as being important. In order to be effective carers, teachers need to be in a context where a sense of community exists between leaders, administrators, teachers and students. If caring is a core value of a school and these values are supported by processes and procedures and leadership

within the school then hard caring can be widespread and not just exist in pockets. Tichnore-Wagner and Alan's study identified high performing schools as ones that facilitated extended contact between students and teachers through "looping" (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, p. 8), which involves teachers having students for more than one year. Noddings (2015) confirms this proposal to foster and develop relationships between students and teachers to increase teachers' responsibility for student learning beyond one year cycles. A recommendation of this study is that school leaders hold themselves and their faculties accountable not just for test scores and academic progress but also through their caring practices. The report suggests that this needs to be undertaken in two ways: firstly developing and maintaining strong relationships through all levels and setting high expectations for students. These are well supported ideas (Noddings, 2015) and the study is particularly apt as it is conducted in ethnically diverse schools where the ethic of care is utilised to ensure that students overcome disparities.

Cothran and Ennis (2000), found that there were no differences in how different ethnicities perceived care. There were differences in the way students from different ethnicities ranked these behaviours. Regardless of ethnicity, all students rated academic support as the most important of the identified caring behaviours. Latino students in this study mentioned academic support most frequently. Teachers taking a personal interest in students was mentioned far less frequently than by Caucasian students. African American students were the least likely to mention equity in their responses. An alternative interpretation of the data could suggest that this is an example of white privilege (Pennington, Brock, & Ndura, 2012) that the school subconsciously normalises whiteness and does not take into account the ethnic differences of sub-groups within the student population. The researchers hypothesised that some of these differences between ethnicities was due to Latinos being Spanish speaking and therefore requiring greater support. Another factor they raised was that many are from illegal immigrant backgrounds and therefore wish to share less information with authority figures for fear of getting into trouble. While students in this study responded to an open ended survey question, which allowed the participants to present their perceptions, there was potential to develop a deeper understanding of student perceptions by encouraging students to speak about their experiences rather than writing about them as this may limit the quality of responses.

While the aforementioned studies offer a different context from New Zealand there are a number of similarities worthy of discussion. Latinos and African American students have higher drop-out rates from school and are overly represented in some crime statistics relative to their Caucasian peers. Schools in America are generally dominated by White middle class values and cultural norms (Pennington et al., 2012). These norms and values can be unwelcoming to minorities and contribute to educational disparities. Obviously these circumstances are generalised but students would feel some similarities with Māori and Pasifika students in mainstream New Zealand secondary schools.

Cavanagh, Macfarlane, Glynn, and Macfarlane (2012) discussed the plight of ethnic minority students within the New Zealand context. This paper proposes a two pronged approach, namely applying an ethic of care culture as well as culturally responsive pedagogy (Cavanagh et al., 2012, p. 444). The research was conducted at an area school, which typically combines primary and secondary classes. The school philosophy was heavily influenced by Māori tikanga.[3] The study identified Whakawhānaungatanga (building and maintaining relationships) and Manaakitanga (exercising holistic care) as important elements in a culture of care as well as culturally responsive pedagogy. Irrespective whether teachers were Māori or non-Māori, the determining factor appeared to be that teachers "accept the cultural connectedness and collective responsibilities involved" (Cavanagh et al., 2012, p. 450). This study highlights the importance of culturally responsive practice as well as holistic care for students, not just academic results. This clearly links to the concept of mature care as the carer and the cared for are considered equals in the relationship.

The use of Māori tikanga allows for differing views to be included to ensure that students are cared for. This form of care is not a 'soft' option in that students' well-being and academic progress are considered. "Students at Brady Area School readily understood that the construct of holistic care, within a culture of care, was no easy option, because such 'wrap around' caring for both learning and wellbeing" (Cavanagh et al., 2012, p. 450). The links between the ethic of care and Māori tikanga have also been investigated in mental health care (Brannelly, Boulton, & te Hiini, 2013). Participants in this study discussed how Māori ways of knowing enhanced their nursing skills. By considering whakapapa (ancestral links) and whanaungatanga (relationships) nurses felt that they

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[3] Māori tikanga refers to the general behaviour guidelines for daily life according to Māori culture, custom and protocols.

could provide more authentic and effective care as an "enactment of cultural knowledge" (p. 420).

The Complexity of Care in Curriculum Subjects

In order to fully understand the complexity of care, not just the relationships between students and teachers need to be considered but also the relationships students have with individual curriculum subjects. This area of research where perceptions of care are considered in specific curriculum subjects is in its infancy, but could play a role in establishing a clearer understanding of how student perceptions of care can vary between curriculum subjects. Larson's (2006) study investigated student perceptions of care in the subject specific context of physical education. In New Zealand, students are taught Physical Education (PE) and Health as a single subject, which encompasses more than physical education and can include themes such as relationships and sexuality. The New Zealand Ministry of Education consider this to be part of the solution to improve student wellbeing and to counter stress from ongoing assessment by focusing on the subject of Physical Education and Health, (Education Review Office, 2016). In many schools, Health and PE are not offered as subjects throughout students' schooling experience. Although this study reflected very specific behaviours in a physical education class environment, which include attending to injuries and focusing on skills, the findings do support other more generalised research such as Cothran and Ennis (2000). The most significant of these is the need to focus simultaneously on academic support and relationships building. Similar theories are expressed in English teaching and literacy (White, 2003) and music (Edgar, 2014).

Summary

The ethic of care is highly dependent on the relationship between the carer and the cared for. In the educational context the ethic of care has benefits for both the student and the teacher. Perception plays a key role in the relationship as caring only occurs if the student believes caring has occurred. Teachers feelings and perceptions need to be considered as they are providers of care but need to feel that they are cared for in order to provide effective care. What is clearly evident from the research is that the ethic of care cannot be considered in isolation. Just as the successful educational relationship

must be accompanied with high expectations; so to must the ethic of care be considered alongside culturally responsive pedagogy in order to overcome educational disparities. In the New Zealand context the use of Māori tikanga is essential.

Care is a complex phenomenon and many factors need to be considered in the secondary school context. The age, gender and ethnicity of both the carer and cared for need to be closely examined in order to provide effective care. While the individual relationship is at the core of care; the group dyad must also be considered when investigating perceptions of care in a specific context. The institutional habitus of an institution will directly influence affect how care is given and received. The complex nature of care is further highlighted by research into individual curriculum subjects. Students' perceptions are often affected by their relationships with individual subjects and these subject specific teachers.

 The focus of this dissertation now shifts to the research methodology employed for this investigation.

Research Methodology

Aims

This research project investigates teacher and student perceptions of care within a New Zealand secondary school. In order to focus the research on student and teacher perceptions, it needs to be acknowledged that individual perceptions, as well as the phenomena of care itself, are complex and contextual. The context where care occurs is also an important factor and contributes to the complexity of understanding care.

Post-Structural Paradigm

The research design needs to reflect the complex nature of individual perceptions of a complex phenomenon. The researcher has utilised the ethic of care as both the focus and the theoretical construct of this study's research methodology. The construct of the 'carer' and the 'cared for' proposed by Nel Noddings (1984, 2015) is an attempt to simplify a complex phenomenology. The care of multiple individuals in an institutional setting is difficult to understand and is also not always clearly visible to observe (Velasquez, West, Graham, & Osguthorpe, 2013). As care takes place between a teacher and student, there is often a power imbalance evident where the teacher holds all the power (Pettersen & Hem, 2011). Secondly, is the group vs individual dynamic, while individuals expect individualised care, the care takes place largely in a classroom environment where the cared for, assists a group of students. Thirdly, while caring relationships are defined by engrossment (Noddings, 2012), it needs to be acknowledged that these caring encounters often take place under the scrutiny of others. A teacher assisting another student who is experiencing difficulties, can be interpreted by students as the teacher playing favourites at the expense of others. In order to better understand and investigate the phenomenon of caring, traditional dichotomies such as caring vs uncaring or spectrums are of limited value (Barnes, 2015). As care is influenced and affected by multiple influences in time and space, this research design incorporates multiple frameworks and paradigms to understand the complexity of care. These include Post-Structuralism, critical theory, and the ethic of care itself.

The researcher has adopted a Post-Structural paradigm as a result of the complex nature of caring and the secondary school environment. The Post-Structural paradigm can be defined as an extension of Post-Modernism. Post-Modernism and Post-Structuralism are

often associated terms that are highly contested (Humes & Bryce, 2003, p. 176). Some believe they cannot be separated (Agger, 1991). Post-Structuralism developed initially from the field of linguistics through the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (Humes & Bryce, 2003) and was further developed by Michel Foucault. Foucault is particularly relevant because of his work focused on knowledge, power and discourse. Post structuralism acknowledges that complexities and contradictions cannot be simplified or ignored (Grant & Giddings, 2002).   Care in schools is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon which is affected by social and political structures (Hartas, 2010). The plurality of meaning can be effectively tied to the concept of 'care'. Through a Post-Structural lens, language is not transparent and contested (Rhedding-Jones, 1996). Noddings (2015) has identified that the language of education is in itself important and contested, by stating that "Policymakers and too many educators have adopted the language of business, and its use has corrupted public education" (2015, p. 154). As the research is concerned with perceptions of care, the researcher does not intend to develop an 'absolute truth' or a singular answer, but rather to explore and deepen our understanding of the complex phenomenon of care.

Post-Structuralist theorists can present multiple 'truths' without establishing hierarchies (Peters & Burbules, 2004) . In the context of a classroom, a teacher can provide care but if the student does not perceive the actions to be caring the student may perceive that they are not receiving care.   This is a good example of how multiple truths can impact on learning. Post-Structuralism takes into account the power relationship that exists in a traditional classroom where a teacher is in control and care is often based on assumed needs rather than expressed needs (Noddings, 2015). Teachers may also feel disempowered in that only student results are considered as a measure of success rather than a more holistic gauge of students' success and overall wellbeing. The epistemological beliefs of Post-Structuralism are clearly evident here as there can be multiple ways of knowing (Cresswell, 2014).

Post-Structuralism researchers gain knowledge through dialogue. Some criticisms levelled at Post-Structuralist writers is that they address problems "but resolved none of them" (Humes & Bryce, 2003, p. 186). The purpose of this research study is to highlight the perceptions of care in a New Zealand secondary school context and some of the issues around care. The study makes no attempt to solve problems with care or a lack of care

within a secondary school. The study does aim to develop a deeper and more complex understanding of multiple perceptions of care which could result in changes in the field. Suggestions will be offered, particularly regarding educational leadership, hopefully avoiding the "Post-Structuralist paralysis" (p. 182), which characterises some research in this field that develops few practical solutions.

Post-Structuralism also considers the underlying structures of society, not just the obvious forces at play (Peters & Burbules, 2004). In caring for students, there also appears to be a political agenda at play in ensuring that the educational disparities that exist, are overcome by directing some students to 'lower tier' solutions such as vocational pathways. Just as students should not necessarily all be directed to tertiary study at university, so too should students who come from minority or disadvantaged backgrounds should not be coerced into practical courses. The education system should provide additional assistance to students who are disadvantaged or transform the institutions to ensure that they succeed. A Post-Structural lens allows the researcher to investigate potential harm that education can inflict on groups and individuals. "Feminists and others representing disadvantaged groups use post-structural critiques of language, particularly deconstruction, to make visible how language operates to produce very real, material, and damaging structures in the world" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 481). Post-Structuralism also falls under the umbrella of critical theory and is often closely linked with feminist and emancipatory practises. The ethic of care philosophy attempts to reassert the importance of care to society.

Research Design

In order to gain an understanding of individualised understandings of care through the eyes of both students and teachers, the researcher conducted an ethnographic case study. Case study research is an excellent method to gain understanding of a complex issue or add detail to what is already established in earlier research (Dooley, 2002) and is ideally suited to examining contemporary events (Yin, 2013). By utilising case study methodology investigating senior student and senior level teacher perceptions of care within a single institution, the researcher was able to generate data that is unique to the context of the school organisation being researched.

The ethic of care is widely understood to incorporate: attentiveness responsibility, competence, responsiveness and trust (Ward & Gahagan, 2010). These are incorporated

into the methodology of the research where the subjects of the research are partners in the research rather than purely subjects. By selecting individual interviews with teachers and students, the researcher is demonstrating care by emphasising that the voice of students and teachers are equally valid and both need to be considered in detail. Some thought was given to conducting focus groups but this was problematic as care is highly personal and participants may not have wished to express their perceptions in front of others. The semi-structured interview was considered the most effective way to generate accurate data from participants.

The semi-structured interview allowed the researcher and participant to co-construct the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to deviate from the script of questions in order to fully explore and understand the individual's perceptions of care. This also enabled the participants in the study to develop the interview in a number of directions, not simply focused on the needs of the researcher. This allowed the interviewee to ask and answer questions. Transcripts of interviews were supplied to participants to confirm that the transcripts truly reflected their thoughts and ideas expressed in the interview. Privacy was protected by the participants selecting pseudonyms for themselves and for other individuals mentioned in the interviews in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

Setting

The chosen context for this research was Miro Secondary school. Miro Secondary school is a large (N=1900) high decile[4] (7) secondary school, located in the outer suburbs of Auckland, New Zealand. It is a culturally diverse school with significant groups of New Zealand Pākehā (Non-Māori or person of European ancestry)(35%), Chinese (15%), and Māori, Pasifika, Indian and international students (all no more than 10%)[5]. The school prides itself on providing a high quality education in a caring environment. This school has a good record of pastoral care and this was reinforced with supporting statements in Education Review Office report. The importance of relationships between students and teachers is mentioned in a number of documents and the school offers excellent

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[4] Deciles are ratings used by the Ministry of Education to determine some of the funding a school. Decile ratings are based on Census data for households with school-aged children in each school's catchment area. The data uses household measures such as income, parents on a benefit, occupation, education, and household crowding. Deciles are ratings used by the Ministry of Education to determine some of the funding a school (Ministry of Education, 2016).
[5] Data from Education Review Office Report 2013

opportunities for students to achieve academic success in NCEA[6], while also emphasising Education outside of the classroom (EOTC) and co-curricular activities through sport, culture and environmental programmes.

The school was chosen as the site for the research due to its geographic location and the similarities to the school where the researcher currently teaches. After obtaining permission from the Senior Leadership of the school, posters were placed for students and teachers to be recruited for the study. A total of eight participants (four teachers and four senior students) were selected from the respondents. An effort was made to select teachers with a range of experience and from a range of faculties. Senior-level students were randomly selected from Year 12 and Year 13 classes. These students were busy completing their final or penultimate year of secondary school (NCEA Level Two or Three).

Student participants

Four students were randomly selected from the list of respondents. Academically, all participants were planning on continuing their studies at tertiary institutions and were planning on leaving school at the end of Year 13. All participants were considered by the researcher to be optimistic about their education and enjoyment of school. All students considered themselves to be successful at the studies and spoke of achieving Merit and Excellence grades at NCEA. The selection of students represented a limited sample as they were all engaged in their education. Socially, the students all described themselves as having a circle of friends. Student participants spoke highly of teachers in the school and had experienced little difficulties in their relationships with teachers. All participants were involved with co-curricular activities. The sample was reflective of the diversity of the school as it contained New Zealand Pākehā, Māori and Indian students. Student participants are identified by their pseudonyms and their year level in this dissertation: James (Year 13), Hannah (Year 12), Emma (Year 13) and Raj (Year 12).

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[6] National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the official secondary school qualification in New Zealand

Teacher participants

 All teachers that were selected for the study are experienced; experience ranged from 9 to 26 years. Three teachers were trained in New Zealand and one abroad. All teacher participants had travelled extensively and taught abroad. All regarded themselves as caring teachers.

The researcher has chosen not to reveal specific biographical details of each individual such as ethnicity and specific curriculum classes in the study in order to respect privacy and does not influence results. Biographical details and the subjects they teach could easily reveal the participant's identity. For instance, the specific subject that a teacher teaches or that student mentions may be only taught in one class and therefore potentially identify specific individuals.   The participants are therefore identified by their pseudonyms as well as their broader faculty, rather than the specific senior subject: David[7] (Science), Betty (Science), Columbus (Social Sciences) and Francis (Technology).

Semi-structured interviews of students and teachers were conducted in the third term of the four term school year, during the month of September. This was a busy time for students and teachers. Many students were involved in school examination in preparation for NCEA external assessment. During this time of the year students are preparing for external examinations. Examinations place a greater strain on both students and teachers. For teachers there is additional stress of marking work and preparing students for the examinations and providing feedback. In addition, the New Zealand Secondary School's Winter Sports Tournament Week [8]was also held during this period. The timing of conducting research relevant to this study's focus on the ethic of care is crucial. Early in the year students may not have established relationships and routines with their teachers. The timing of interviews also resulted in very current examples that students and teachers offered to support their perceptions were clearly focused on assessments due to the backdrop of the upcoming school examinations. Given the aforementioned factors, this was a good time to conduct the research; yet, the timing may have also served as a barrier for participant participation due to multiple activities and deadlines that occur during this part of the school year.

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[7] David is a female teacher who chose a male psuedonym
[8] New Zealand Secondary Schools Sports Council organised sports fixtures

Posters (Appendices I & II) were placed around the school and respondents contacted the researcher via email. As student participants were all over sixteen years of age parental permissions were not required. All participants completed Participants Consent Forms (Appendices III & IV) and were contacted via email. Interviews were scheduled during or at the end of the school day. To minimise disruption of the student's academic programme, one hour was set aside to conduct these interviews. Semi-structured interview questions were based on Noddings' (1984; 2015) framework of modelling, dialogue, practice and confirmation (Appendix VII). One crucial element of the interview was a line of enquiry about the agency of caring and what individuals felt they could do if they felt they were not being cared for.

Prior to asking the interview questions, participants were engaged in conversation to ensure they fully understood the process but also for the researcher to attempt to develop some rapport. At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to select their own pseudonym to protect privacy. Participants were also asked to use pseudonyms when discussing other individuals.

All interviews were electronically recorded and then transcribed. Transcripts were sent to participants to check and, if necessary, clarify statements made in the interviews. Transcripts from the interviews were initially coded into broad categories using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Thereafter, responses were recoded and checked.

Limitations of the study

Due to the random selection of participants, the selection of students represented a limited sample and does not reflect a cross section of the student population. This must be considered as a limitation as all students were positive, optimistic and engaged in their learning. None of the student participants described themselves as disengaged or at risk. None of the student participants discussed any significant discipline or learning difficulties at school. Both teacher and student participants mentioned other students attending the school that were not engaged in their learning or at risk but none of the students interviewed reflected this sub-group. While student participants did mention problems with individual teachers and had examples of uncaring behaviours by teachers, these were limited, and some students had to reflect on examples from junior years at the secondary school.

Teacher participants also represented a limited sample. All teacher participants were experienced educators and had lived and worked in other countries. They had a healthy regard for ethnic diversity and reflected a heightened awareness of the difficulties that language and cultural differences can play in education. All teachers referenced aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy in their interviews. Although one teacher had been at the school for less than a year, the others had been at Miro Secondary school for over five years. None of the teachers appeared to have any issues related to their identity as a teacher and each discussed a wide range of pedagogical approaches and insight into their practice.

Results

Findings were grouped by the three research sub-questions guiding this study:

1. How do senior secondary school students perceive their subject teachers to demonstrate caring/uncaring behaviour in the classroom?

2. Likewise, how do subject teachers perceive their own behaviour as caring/uncaring in the classroom?

3. To what extent do teachers and senior secondary students feel that they have agency in contributing to a classroom climate that embodies an ethic of care?

For the first two sub-questions, data was then coded into four main categories: relationships, communication, pedagogy and curriculum. These categories reflect the basic structure of a caring relationship proposed and developed by Noddings (1984; 2012; 2015). Care is a complex phenomenon and these categories are not necessarily distinct. An obvious example is how communication plays a significant part in all categories and it would be almost impossible to discuss any category without mentioning the importance of communication. While these categories serve a purpose to discuss the findings; they are interrelated and overlapping. The results are also discussed in two distinct sections in order to address the first sub-questions. Findings to the third sub-question are coded separately on relating to student and teacher agency regarding the care they receive.

How do senior secondary school students perceive their subject teachers to demonstrate caring/uncaring behaviour in the classroom?

Relationships and Student Perception

According to this study's participants, the teacher-student relationship is crucial for student perceptions of caring. Without a strong relationship between teacher and student, students find it difficult to perceive the teacher as caring. James (Year 13) stated that:

> *"I think the relationship part is really important when referring to caring teachers and when referring to uncaring teachers. I don't see them wanting to have any sort of relationship with their students."*

A student needs to know that the teacher cares about them as an individual and as a student in order to conceptualise behaviour as caring. If this care is not built on a relationship, James perceived the teacher to be caring about the subject and not about himself as an individual. "*A lot of my teachers have just been quite… they're there for the subject and*

nothing else." Students make judgements on teacher behaviours not just on how the teacher interacts with them but also their interactions with other individuals and groupings within the class.

> *"I don't personally feel that I have that sort of connection. Some teachers I don't see… of course I don't know what they're like with all the classes, it's just my personal thing with them."* James (Year13)

James felt that in order to develop a relationship between students and teachers, there needs to be individualised attention.

> *"I think taking time to have genuine conversations that aren't necessarily work related."* James (Year13)

When the teacher took an interest in the student's life outside of school James felt that this was a clear example of care for students.

Students interviewed in this study needed to feel that they are being treated as people first rather than as subservient students. Students also noted a change in the relationship from when they are junior students to when they become seniors. Hannah (Year12), noted that there was a major shift from junior to senior years "…*whereas this year they're talking to you as if you're nearly equal to them [Teachers]"*. According to Emma and Hannah, teachers were more willing to engage with them as individuals and as young adults. Here, Emma (Year 13) discusses a major difference with her junior year of secondary school: "*As juniors you are all shoved into one class and they just teach from the front of the class instead of getting to know you as an individual and seeing what motivates you. I guess that's the difference [between junior and senior].*" Emma identified caring teachers as ones who developed individual relationships with students and showed an interest in students' lives rather than just giving the whole class instruction: "*as you get older the teachers become a little more personal with you and become a lot more interested in your life and stuff*".

The relationships between teachers and students was built up over time and not restricted to a single school year. James felt more comfortable with a teacher he had had for two years and also felt that he still had a relationship with some teachers from previous years "*I see my last year's English teacher around school we stop and we chat and we still have that connection.*"

Student participants all discussed relationships with teachers as being important to their perceptions of teachers as caring.

Communication

Students' perceptions of care are strongly influenced by communication. Important aspects of how teachers communicate with students that often influence caring perceptions that were identified include: individual and group communication, feedback and questioning.

The individual and group dynamic plays an important role in the perception of caring. Students need individual and frequent communication with the teacher to feel cared for. Emma (Year 13) spoke about a teacher she considered to be a good teacher who cared for her: *"We had a really, really strong teacher in one of my subjects and he pretty much would always come over, see how you are doing."* Similarly, Raj (Year 12) stated: *"[The teacher] can actually have a proper conversation they will come and approach you and give the time."* He is expressing the need for students to have some individualised communication from the teacher. Class sizes may impact on the ability of teachers to communicate effectively with individual students. Students appear to have regard for the impact on class sizes as to how that may affect a teacher's ability to conduct individual conversations, but still have expectations of individual communication. Teachers who are perceived as uncaring will speak mostly to the entire class and not individualise instruction or not give enough regular individualised attention. Emma's (Year 13) perceptions of an uncaring teacher are strongly influenced by a lack of individualised attention: *"I'm not a massive fan of his [teacher], but it's because he will stand in front of the class and talk to the class as a whole. He won't come and talk to you individually."*

Communication by a caring teacher is categorised by a willingness to accept feedback from students and to allow an exchange of ideas. Speaking down to students is a literal as well as a figurative concept in student perceptions. Students prefer teachers to sit beside them rather than standing over them or instructing from the front of the class.

James (Year 13) expresses the need for teachers to communicate individually but also to sit beside students rather than speaking down to them:

> *"This might be a bit specific, but when they actually come and sit down next to you. One of my teachers this year, he gives his feedback standing in front of the whole class and no one really appreciates that because he gives your individual*

feedback but everyone can hear it and no one really wants that to happen. But when I have teachers who actually come right next to me and sit next to me and get on the same level and talk to me, that's one way that I'm more comfortable discussing it."

By being on the same level, James feels that he is being spoken to as an individual and addressed as someone who is not necessarily subservient to the teacher. Students are aware of the implication of class sizes and how this affects teacher communication on an individual basis and will also observe teachers' interactions with others as an indicator of caring. A teacher that may not show individualised attention may be perceived as caring when they assist students doing group work. Raj, (Year 12) felt that in large classes, teachers couldn't necessarily give individualised attention but could demonstrate care by addressing members of a group.

> *"So you're in a class now with 30 other students, the teacher doesn't necessarily talk directly to you, might talk to your group, but you can tell that they care by the fact that they're engaging the group."*

Hannah (Year 12) explains that a caring teacher speaks directly to individuals, but this is also effective in smaller groups. While the information might not be directly focused on her, because she is in a smaller group, she is able to gain some benefit*:*

> *"She [the teacher] would just come down and she would sit with us and even if she was talking to someone else on my table that information might relate to me so I'd always listen as well. I think it's just the sitting down part and just talking to us about just life as well."*

Hannah's perceptions about the caring teacher are clear here as she is able to communicate with the teacher not just about her learning in this way, but also about more social aspects. Caring teachers also asked questions about students' interests and co-curricular activities. This is a good example of the importance of both communication and establishing and maintaining relationships.

A key part of communication based on the students' perceptions of caring was questioning. Students perceived teachers that question students as caring if the questions facilitate students developing a deeper understanding of the subject.

> *"If we had a question he would always come and sit down and he would fully go into detail and he would give us basically more than we needed, which is good.*

>*He'd answer a second question and third question so that was really good"*
>(Hannah, Year 12).

How teachers answer questions was also closely observed by students. Students appreciated teachers who answered questions in a way that assisted students as an important aspect of caring in the classroom. Depending on the relationship that is established between the teacher and student, questioning techniques will influence how questioning is interpreted. For a teacher perceived as caring, this is regarded as evidence that the teacher cares enough to deepen the students understanding of the subject. This identical behaviour displayed by a teacher regarded as uncaring is seen as the teacher not bothering to assist or even as a teacher's lack of understanding about the curriculum.

>*"The difference is when you ask a teacher that cares a question they will give you*
>*an answer back. Whereas when you ask a teacher that doesn't care they will just*
>*ask you another question that makes you question the question"* (Emma, Year 13).

This example clearly shows the importance of student perception. The teacher may have been attempting to develop the student's critical skills, but without any clear indication of what the teacher is trying to achieve Emma has perceived this to be uncaring behaviour.

The students in this study also regarded asking and answering questions as a way of demonstrating care for a teacher: *"If a student asks questions then that shows that they're interested"* (Raj, Year 12). Asking and answering questions demonstrates that a student cares about the subject and, by proxy, the teacher. This is a sentiment expressed here by Hannah (Year 12):

>*"I think by us asking questions, they have said before, that shows them that we're*
>*serious about our education and so they enjoy that a lot. I think that shows that*
>*we have care for them in our education."*

James (Year 13) indicated a similar sentiment here*: "So sometimes I ask a question just to know that they know at least someone's listening."* Students regarded their questions as an indicator that they care about the subject and/or the teacher but this was not mentioned by teachers interviewed in this study.

Negative perceptions of teachers was based on verbal aggression. James expresses here why he does not regard a particular teacher as caring and would not seek assistance from him:

"He gets quite angry, visibly angry. That makes him a bit unapproachable and if he deals with it in that way, that he deals with it by getting angry and yelling, you're not going to want to go up to them and speak about anything."

James clearly felt that he was not able to establish an effective relationship with this teacher because of perceived verbal aggression. James provides a clear example of how the quality of communication affects perceptions of caring. This incident James discussed was related to a teacher providing feedback after a test, so it also encompasses the categories of curriculum and pedagogy.

Pedagogy

While the term pedagogy was never used by participants during the student interviews, it identifies students' perceptions of how they are taught. There is further complexity here as students can perceive pedagogy as an extension of teacher personality and do not always distinguish between their feelings for a teacher and the way they teach. Students either immediately feel comfortable with a teacher's style of teaching or not. If the classroom atmosphere is conducive to providing feedback, they can be encouraged to provide feedback to the teacher to alter programmes. Where students perceive that they are not being listened to or cared for, they will withdraw and disengage to varying degrees. Students' perceptions of teacher caring behaviour was strongly influenced by whether the teachers were enthusiastic about their subject and teaching.

"I guess when a teacher does care about you then you just put in the time back, like you ask more questions" (Emma, Year 13). Students found it easier to perceive being cared for when teachers were enthusiastic about their teaching and passionate about the subject or topic. A lack of perceived enthusiasm or passion was seen as an indicator of a lack of caring. *"…if the teacher doesn't seem to come across as passionate about the subject or the students then that's when they don't seem to care and that's definitely the teacher that I am not a fan of"* (Emma, Year 13). Students are critical of a teacher's lack of enthusiasm, which is clearly interpreted as a lack of caring. In the absence of explicit communication students will very quickly develop their own perceptions and reinforce them. It then becomes increasingly difficult to alter these perceptions. When Emma (Year 13) was asked what she would do if a particular caring teacher said the same thing that a particular uncaring teacher had said, she could not even allow for the possibility that the

teacher could say that. *"The type of person she is you would never get a comment like that out of her."* There was clearly evidence that perceptions of teachers as caring or uncaring became entrenched in students' mental models and it was difficult for students to alter these perceptions.

Students found it was easier to perceive teachers as caring who were enthusiastic about their teaching and passionate about the subject or topic. A lack of perceived enthusiasm or passion was seen as an indicator of a lack of caring. This is also supported by Teven and McCroskey (1997).

The students in this study displayed a strong sense of the need for teaching to be adapted to them and displayed impatience with the way certain teachers teach. Student perceptions are strongly influenced by the way a subject is taught. This may also be influenced by the 'instititional habitas' in that students expect teachers in a school to teach in a certain way.

Different styles of teaching can influence how students regard a teacher. In this example, James (Year 13) explained how the class responded to the teacher when his teacher requested feedback from the class and changed the way a subject was taught:

> *"We were honest with her and said we'd rather not [use powerpoints] and so she did a lot more hands-on speaking sort of thing from that point on. That showed that she wanted to teach us in a way that we wanted to be taught, that worked for us and that she was open to that."*

James' words "We were honest with her" are revealing as students can offer tacit approval when requested to respond to surveys for fear of upsetting the teacher or if they feel that the feedback will not be listened to. Other students believed that these situations could only be resolved if there were a number of students involved. According to student Raj (Year 12), you could only alter the teaching if there were a number of students who felt the same way. While incidents of discussions with teachers to improve the quality of teachers were discussed, students are often reluctant to address these issues with teachers and seldom do so if they feel isolated in that particular class.

There is an unusual variance of student perception in how they can influence pedagogy. Students can feel powerless to influence pedagogy if they feel the teacher does not listen to feedback or may be reluctant to engage in a process because this may have serious consequences for the teacher. Emma (Year 13) offered what she felt was a complex

situation that she had experienced when the teacher was a Head of Department. She felt unable to influence the way she was being taught because the teacher would not respond and the fact that teacher was a Head of Department she would be unable to speak to another teacher about the problem. What this example may reveal is that students may have an over and understated understanding of the impact of how school processes (e.g., appraisal) can influence teachers and pedagogy. While Emma felt that she could not effect change by approaching the teacher; when some other potential approaches were suggested via a Deputy Principal or Dean she stated: *"You don't want him to end up jobless even though he is a crap teacher."* James and Raj did feel they could approach teachers to improve the quality of teaching but appeared to only offer opinions when asked.

Pedagogical approaches vary between teachers and between curriculum subjects. Students interviewed had greater tolerance for subjects that they more interesting or engaging. An example of this would be Raj's assertion that in Drama it was easier to relate to the subject matter and develop insight into the curriculum. In Economics, it was more difficult for Raj to relate to the subject matter. He felt that Economics *"wouldn't be really as personal or connecting"*. While the link was not clearly evident to Raj, he did state that *"it's that mind set of how a student approaches each subject."* How students felt about the subject appeared to influence how they perceived teacher caring. Although students chose their subjects in senior years, some of these choices appear to be based on necessity, such as taking science-based subjects to gain university entrance. Some of the students in the study appeared to be influenced by teacher preferences 'like the way they teach' or 'made the learning fun'.

Students had a higher expectation to be engaged in a subject that a student really enjoyed and perceived as exciting. Emma (Year 13) stated that Drama was one of her favourite subjects and she appeared to have higher expectations on the teacher. Her teacher the previous year had been very energetic and engaging. When her current teacher did not show the same energy and engagement, Emma stated that she began to disengage and at the end of the year was deliberately going to fail a standard in external assessment because she felt that she had not been cared for by the teacher. Emma had heightened expectations of a subject that she had enjoyed the previous year and this directly influenced her perception of the teacher as uncaring. Emma's concept of caring was influenced by multiple factors, which included: the subject, her classmates, the teacher and previous

teachers in that subject. This complex perception of care was reflected in discussions with James, Hannah and Raj to varying degrees.

Curriculum

To be perceived as caring, teachers must ensure that they demonstrate mastery of the curriculum (Teven & McCrosky, 1997). Textbooks, in particular, can be a barrier to learning if students perceive the teacher is too reliant on or follows a textbook too closely. For Hannah (Year 12), the most significant example of uncaring behaviour was when teachers presented information directly from textbooks. She perceived teachers as uncaring if they only taught from textbooks and didn't appear to adapt the subject matter to students' interests or relate it to their own personal experience.

> *"I think it's just about the teachers, they don't have to talk a lot or anything but it's just showing… showing they care is giving us work to do that's not from the book. If I feel like a teacher is just giving us work to do from the book I don't feel like they care, that's the number one thing actually. So if they explain more and they talk from their knowledge a bit more, I feel like they know what they're doing because if they just give us a book to do I don't think they're teaching correctly."*

During the student interviews, the majority of discussion on curriculum was focused on NCEA and on assessments in particular. NCEA assessments present important opportunities for teachers to demonstrate care towards their students.

"they would kind of just give us a book and expect us to learn out of it or give us a website and expect us to just research" (Hannah, Year 12). In this study, teachers who adapted the curriculum for the interests and needs of the students were seen as extremely caring. Allowing sufficient or extra time for students to complete tasks was seen as significant by students. Students perceived teachers that provided extra assistance towards assessment as very caring and appreciated the extra time and effort teachers placed on providing what they saw as extra assistance to ensure that students succeeded. At Miro secondary school, teachers provide multiple forms of feedback as an important aspect of their success. Caring teachers also developed narratives around aspects of topics to ensure that students could see real world applications about what they were learning. *"A lot of my teachers have just been quite…[pause]… they're there for the subject and nothing*

else" (James, Year 13). The sentiment that is expressed here by James is that teachers that appear to care only about their subject are perceived as uncaring.

Career advice and motivation for tertiary study were other teacher behaviours that students perceived as caring. Hannah (Year 13) explained how she was more motivated in Chemistry and Biology as the teachers had related some of the information to her future tertiary studies in Health Science. Another important aspect to inform students' positive perceptions was their teacher's ability to alleviate stress for students. *"I've been really busy and stressed with school stuff I think I can go to her class… I could go and talk to if I needed it."* James (Year 13). According to the students in this study, they felt teachers cared about their learning when teachers were able to reduce stress by allowing more time to complete assignments and manage clashes where multiple assessments were due at the same time. By allowing some flexibility with the curriculum, students felt that teachers were able to offer more opportunity for them to succeed. Flexibility was an important attribute for students to be perceive their teachers as caring. Teachers that were inflexible and didn't appear to be sympathetic for the plight of students were perceived as uncaring.

Summary

Students who had established a good relationship with a teacher generally regarded that teacher's behaviour as caring. Where there was no established, individualised relationship, teachers' behaviours were not easily considered as caring. Closely linked to the relationship is how teachers communicate with students. Students appreciated being treated respectfully as mature individuals. Teachers willing to sit beside students and engage with them was a significant behaviour in this context. Students had a limited understanding of pedagogy and related more to some extent on the extension of teacher personality. Students did see a clear difference in the way they were taught in junior years (9&10) to senior years (Years 11, 12 & 13) of secondary school. Students were conscious of the lengths that teachers would go to in order to present information in a way that enabled them to understand the curriculum with clarity. While students' perceptions of individual subject matter influenced their expectations of the subject and the teacher, students reported that the teacher's enthusiasm and passion were greater determining factors in fostering student success. Curriculum highlights the complexities of care at this age. Teachers could influence students' perception of curriculum subjects by their caring and flexibility but could also be perceived as uncaring due to students expectations

based largely on pedagogical approaches of previous teachers. Students showed little awareness of any distinction between the curriculum and NCEA.

How do subject teachers perceive their own behaviour to demonstrate caring/uncaring behaviour in the classroom?

Teachers did share common perceptions of care with those conveyed by the students participating in this study. They gave powerful and detailed examples of caring for students where they had allocated extra time or designed additional tasks for students. However, the significant focus of teacher discussion was on routines and frequent behaviour that demonstrated care on a more consistent basis.

Relationships

Like students, teachers placed greater emphasis on the relationship as an important aspect to demonstrate caring. Teachers reported taking time to address students as individuals. Teachers regarded important routines as demonstrations of caring such as using student names, eye contact, smiling, body language and engaging students in individual conversations about their lives. Here, David[9] (Science) discusses how she makes an effort to demonstrate care on a daily basis:

> *"Making eye contact, smiling, there's that sort of body language, and just taking the time to interact with them one-on-one or even in a small group."*

Columbus (Social Science) discussed the need to develop the relationship through individual conversations and showing respect for students as individuals: "*I think it's just having those quiet conversations with students and also showing students respect."* Betty (Science) reported developing the relationship everyday:

> *"I think every student in my class would identify that I have connected with them everyday".*

Betty did not necessarily speak to every student, but believed that connecting with every student through eye contact, facial expression and gesture offered some form of acknowledgement to students. The teachers in this study were focused on these routines as a means to establish that they cared for students. Teachers were also willing to develop the relationships with students by setting aside extra time, such as lunch or times after

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[9] David is a female teacher.

school or during holidays to assist students with their learning or co-curricular activities. Columbus (Social Science) described helping students in his subject class on a co-curricular project:

> *"I'll come in and be with a group of about 23 students for the day. So I think that demonstrates the fact that I engage with what they are getting involved with as well."*

Although Columbus was approached by students in this example all other incidents discussed were initiated by the teacher. While teachers give up their time to assist students in activities there was an element of reciprocity in these examples. Betty (Science) describes the satisfaction she gains from assisting a dance group after school: *"The kids that I've taught, so see them so focused on something and a goal and working together in a team, I find it incredibly powerful."* Both teachers and students regarded spending time with each other as significant, but only teachers discussed this as a means of developing the relationship. Both male and female teachers discussed real value in spending time to develop these relationships. Forging close relationships is equally important to students and teachers, although both groups perceive the importance slightly differently.

Communication

Teachers also placed high importance on how they communicated with students. As David (Science) observed

> *"just make a point of at least every lesson just going and speaking to them about something, whether it be the learning or whether it be something else."*

Discussions reflected strong similarities with student interviews around the need for teachers to establish a personal connection with students. David noted that sharing personal information was important:

> *"I think showing something of who I am shows that sort of vulnerability that they think that I care."*

By sharing personal information, teachers attempt to connect with students on a personal level.

A common theme discussed by teachers was seeking feedback from students about their learning and progress. All teachers in this study discussed actively seeking feedback from students and the importance of altering teaching on the basis of the feedback to cater for

individual student needs. Betty (Science) explained that feedback was an important aspect of her teaching:

> *"So for me it's about knowing that what I'm doing with them meets their needs and if it's not changing how I'm doing things because if it's not working for them then we're all just going around in circles."*

Betty believed that the importance she placed on feedback ensured that her teaching was effective. Betty also felt that students perceived that she cared enough about her students to make changes in her teaching practice to be more effective. She encouraged feedback directly from students but also through third parties as part of her appraisal. Betty reported that her appraiser had made the following statement from her students: *"Tell her [Betty] to stop asking us that because she's actually great."* This demonstrates the inter-connectedness of the relationships and communication. In this instance, Betty's students had a genuine caring relationship with her and may have been cautious about offering feedback in order to protect that relationship.

Teachers' comments on communication also highlighted the reflective nature of teaching in that communication is not always successful and "doesn't always work". Francis (Technology) experienced a difficult encounter with a student who was experiencing challenges in her home life. This situation highlighted the need for educational leaders to be aware of the quality of communication at all levels of school. Information had been passed on to Francis and when this was discussed with the student, the student became defensive and found the discussion intrusive. None of the information that Francis attempted to discuss with the student was necessarily revealed by the student to Francis. This eventually became a cause of tension between Francis and the student. This is an example of teacher communication failing to be interpreted as caring. Even though Francis was attempting to demonstrate care, it was not interpreted as caring by the student, possibly due to the information not being supplied directly from the student.

Communication between the teacher and students' families is another important aspect of improving perceptions of teachers as caring. Teachers cited this as a valuable partnership to enhance student learning. Francis (Technology) described how he was able to connect with parents at a meeting: *"[the parents] were so relieved and the Mum started to cry a, and say 'Oh my God, thanks for saying that can we talk'. So we had a good chat and they were able to upskill me on what was going on."* Teachers saw whānau (family) as an important ally in developing student learning. Ensuring that parents and caregivers are

informed about what was happening at school was something that teachers were also prepared to put time into. Communicating with family and developing this relationship was an important aspect of caring to teachers. Students do not appear to value this contact highly and parent or family communication was only mentioned in relation to parent teacher conferences. Teachers identified the contact with whānau as an indicator of caring, but this may in fact be that this may be related to a controlling mechanism.

Pedagogy

Due to their years of experience, teacher participants appeared to have a secure understanding of pedagogy and did not appear to have any major concern about their teaching practice. Teachers who reported monitoring how their teaching was received by their students discussed making adjustments to ensure that students succeeded in their subjects.

> *"With the [Year] 12's this year I've been very, very deliberate and slow paced with them. I'm trying to ensure that we don't move on until I'm confident that they're comfortable with what they know. It's taken a long time but we're starting to see some pay off now, which is great."* (Betty, Science)

Betty explains how her approach to every senior class is adjusted according to students' ability. Teachers gave significant examples of caring behaviour which centred around allocating extra or additional tuition to enhance student understanding of the subject. As with students, teachers discussed these as an example of caring for students, but their perceptions of these events were more complex and nuanced. Teachers' perceptions of these events were usually focused on these events being out of the ordinary. While students did appreciate these extra or unusual lessons for the time and effort that teachers expended on them, teachers were more focused on how the pedagogical implications affected students. Throughout the interviews, teachers discussed these events as not just as an opportunity to enhance the relationship between student and teacher but also to enhance inter-student relationships. These encounters also led to developing a deeper understanding for the subject being taught. Teachers perceived these situations as worthwhile encounters that allowed students to demonstrate or enhance caring for others that were not only related to the subject taught but also to developing students as people and providing more holistic education. In significant examples shared by teachers, they

empowered students to take a lead in instructing others. Francis (Technology) set up workshops to assist his non-English speaking background students and got another student to assist with translation:

> *"I set up some little workshops recently and I asked one of my tutor students, who is Chinese, although I actually think he is born here, he speaks Chinese. He could ask the students in their own language, they've then got the option to answer me in English or if they really wanted to make sure that they give me the best answer they can."*

This example demonstrated Francis' willingness to assist and adapt the curriculum to ensure students were successful. Francis also elicited support from a student to assist in translation and instruct with this process. This example demonstrated his willingness to encourage students to show care for each other and for the teacher. Betty (Science) cited a similar example where her class had provided Science instruction to a primary school class. She felt this event improved her relationship with some of her students who were empowered to teach aspects of the curriculum and also to demonstrate care to primary school students.

Curriculum

The teachers interviewed were all experienced practitioners and had taught courses over a number of years and, in some cases, designed the courses that they were teaching.

> *"During that time I have started two new subjects, initially senior science because there were a whole lot of student that wanted to do general science and we didn't do that at that point. Then that gradually morphed into [subject], which is what I mainly teach now. So I teach that and I also teach some very low achieving Year 12's doing an internals only course. I've got a department of about twenty staff and that keeps me busy, to put it mildly."* (Betty, Science)

Betty is describing some of her departmental responsibilities and how she has developed her department to better cater for students. This provided them with a degree of confidence and comfort with the curriculum to enable them to develop tasks and material to facilitate student understanding of topics. There was a difference between teachers with middle management responsibilities and those without. Two of the teachers interviewed held middle management positions (Betty and Columbus). These teachers mostly felt they had sufficient flexibility to adjust their teaching and assessment in the best interests of their students. Teachers not holding positions of authority (David and

Francis) felt restricted by NCEA or the school system and felt they were doing students a disservice with the timing and nature of some assessments. Middle management teachers had a broader overview of their departments and believed that adjustments to curriculum needed to be more carefully considered.

Relationships definitely influence the quality of delivery of the curriculum. Middle managers felt a greater connection with colleagues and felt they could talk through issues. The realities of teaching within the NCEA system was the cause of frustration to teachers but not a significant barrier to caring. Teacher participants felt they were mostly able to adapt curriculum to meet the needs of their students.

To what extent do teachers and senior secondary students feel that they have agency in contributing to a classroom climate that embodies an ethic of care?

Student Agency

The most common solution that students exercised when they felt that they were experiencing uncaring behaviour from a teacher appeared to be moving classes. Students' perceptions of uncaring behaviour appeared to be closely aligned with what they regarded as 'bad' teachers or teachers who did not teach in a style that suited them and did not appear to be flexible or value student opinion. Teachers and students mentioned these situations occurred frequently at the beginning of the year.

> *"Certain teachers don't really work for me, so at the beginning of this year I did have another Chemistry teacher and I had him in the past and I just couldn't understand him, understand his kind of teaching, so I did just move classes. That's my solution basically but that was at the beginning of the year so we can do that."*

Here Hannah (Year 12) expresses what many students feel about their teachers at the beginning of the year when they are getting to know them and how they teach. This is an interesting example as Hannah had had the teacher in the past and demonstrates the ability to change her situation by moving classes. This may be an indicator that senior students have greater agency to make changes for the sake of their learning.

According to Emma (Year 13), moving students to another class is not always possible as some subjects may only be taught in one class making a move impossible. According to Emma (Year 13) and Raj (Year 12) were also less inclined to seek assistance when the teacher was a Dean or a head of department themselves and when the students were not

aware of other avenues they could pursue to remedy the situation. The following quote from James reflects the sentiment expressed by students that they cannot improve their situation in classes where they are not satisfied with the care they receive: *"A lot of the time you just put up with it. If you get a vibe than that's just how they are you just learn to live with it."* (James, Year 13)

Beyond moving classes students appeared to have a limited understanding of school procedures or means of resolving conflicts between students and teachers.…

In this study, students who felt they were not cared for as individuals rather than the class or groupings within the class became disengaged and felt that they underperformed in that subject or even deliberately underperformed. If they perceived a teacher to be uncaring, students often approached other teachers from previous years to seek assistance rather than engage with their current teacher.

Despite students being in their last two years of study students perceived that they had little agency to effect the care that they received. Where teachers requested feedback students felt that they could affect positive changes to their learning. Where the teachers was in a Head of Department role students did not feel they could seek assistance.

Teacher Agency

There was a difference between experienced teachers in positions of middle management and teachers that did not hold middle management positions. Teachers who did not hold positions of responsibility within the school felt stronger that they were not well cared for and had little agency to effect changes to their circumstances. *"We get pushed pretty hard"* (Francis, Technology). Francis felt that no one had asked him how he was enjoying his teaching at Miro secondary school.   In a response very similar to some student responses he said:

> *"It's now term 3, near the end of it, right into assessment mode -I haven't had anyone come and sit down and say "How is it all going "- everyone is just not even there. That would be nice to have Head of Faculty, maybe one of the DP's.[10]"*

In Francis's case this was exacerbated by being new to the school. Francis felt the lack of care for himself was evidenced by the fact that no one had ever sat down with him in the

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[10] Deputy Principal

staffroom and asked him how he was doing. While he felt that the care for the students throughout the school was good, his perception of care for teachers was low.

> *"I think this school's culture is so focused on offering so much for the kids and having so much support for them and so many opportunities and options to get them to go from here to there with their learning that they have completely forgotten about the teachers."* (Francis, Technology)

Middle managers felt they had greater agency regarding their care as individuals. Middle managers perceived a higher degree of care from colleagues in similar positions. For instance, Columbus (Social Science), valued being able to discuss and share experiences. Middle managers did comment on a lack of care from senior leadership. The ability to discuss issues and "blow off steam" with a colleague was appreciated.

> *"A lot of what I deal with I can't just discuss with everybody, there's a lot of confidentiality around issues, but with someone in a similar position to I am and the heads of faculties in school, we do get on pretty well. Sometimes it's just having a conversation with one of those colleagues and you just offload and it just brings your stress levels down a little bit and similarly they offload as well. I think we're pretty well looked after here."* (Columbus, Social Studies)

Betty felt teachers received some care but it was largely superficial: *"I think SLT [Senior Leadership Team] think they look after us, but I don't think they do a particularly good job of it."* Being asked how they were doing was a question frequently asked but the responses were often felt ignored. While teachers perceived different levels of care within the school they did discuss how this could be remedied by people in management positions being prepared to listen to concerns. "*Yes, I'd say that would be a huge thing or what's worse than that is for someone to say 'how's it going?' and walk away"* (Betty, Science). The teachers interviewed were aware where and how they could seek assistance. There did appear to be some disparity and inconsistency about how care for staff was administered across the school.

Summary

Teachers and student participants in the study expressed varying levels of agency over their circumstances. Educational leaders need to be aware that both students and teachers perceive a lack of agency regarding care. Students can feel isolated in certain classes and the process of seeking assistance with problems regarding their teachers needs to be more explicit. Processes and procedures for dealing with conflict were not clearly understood

by students. Students perceived that they had greater agency as senior students within the school, so it is important that these processes be highlighted to ensure that students are empowered to resolve issues rather than moving classes. The problems that students face from a perceived lack of care may be subverted by their perceptions or lack of knowledge for solving these issues. Teachers in middle management feel pressure to care for their students as well as staff. Betty describes the effect here:

> *"[..]for me that comes through with things like as a Head of Faculty I have to get this done now, 'no I'm sorry I haven't marked your work', and that can drag on because I'll get home and I'll just be too completely shattered. Yes we're all tired at the end of term but it just feels almost insurmountable at times."*

It is important that senior leaders particularly consider their role of caring for middle managers as this example shows this can have a direct impact on the care that students receive.

Discussion

School leaders and administrators need to ensure that greater attention and focus is directed to care in New Zealand secondary schools. The ethic of care can have a marked effect on student achievement (Hattie, 2008; Shann, 1999) and on teacher and student wellbeing (Collier, 2005). Students that feel that they are cared for at school will achieve better results academically and will be more able to cope when difficulties occur (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The themes that emerged in the results of this study are closely interlinked and provide an important understanding for teachers and educational leaders of the complexity of providing care in a secondary school.

Relationships

The ability to develop and maintain relationships in schools needs to be considered as important as subject knowledge and pedagogy (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1998). Relationships between students and teachers are a key component of most modern secondary school philosophies but more may need to be done to ensure that all students are able to build strong and ongoing relationships. To establish and reinforce effective relationships in the senior secondary school, the environment must be conducive to trust and respect between students and teachers (King & Chan, 2011). If the environment is not conducive to these types of relationships, the care will occur only in isolated pockets. If people involved in all levels of a school can foster an environment that develops mutual understanding of care and justice, then caring becomes more widespread and normalised. Rather than just occurring in pockets, it becomes widespread and distributed across the school community where it is most needed. According to Acker (1995), "The teacher-pupil relationships could not be taken for granted; they had constantly to be negotiated and renegotiated" (p. 32). These relationships are not a static construct but need to be constantly nurtured. This is clearly evident from the student and teacher participants in this study. Teachers Betty (Science) and Francis (Technology) questioned students constantly about their learning needs and responded to these needs. Students Hannah (Year 12) and James (Year 13) stated that they appreciated it when teachers responded in this way. This was also reflected in the perception of uncaring teachers. Teachers that did not appear to respond to student needs were perceived as uncaring. All stakeholders in the secondary school environment need to be aware of the need to constantly develop these relationships for the benefit of all participants.

One aspect that needs to be addressed is the relationship between less outgoing and introverted students and their teachers. Outgoing and confident students are able to seek assistance from teachers and, failing that, will seek assistance from other teachers such as those from previous years. This is more challenging for students that are not as well socially connected. Greater effort needs to be made to ensure that these students are able to connect with peers and teachers. According to the buffering hypothesis (Cohen & Wills, 1985), students that are well connected by strong relationships are more protected or 'buffered' from the effects of stress. All student participants in this study were confident and outgoing and spoke about their circle of friends. They felt that they had good relationships with the majority of their teachers. Some, however, did not appear to have the confidence or strategies to deal with situations where they did not have productive relationships with particular teachers. Emma (Year 13) was deliberately going to fail an external assessment to "send the teacher a message" that she was not happy with the way the teacher had taught her and Hannah, simply moved class at the beginning of the year because she was not satisfied with the way that she was being taught. Both these students were considered by the researcher to be outgoing and confident, but could not see a way or process to overcome these problems. The concept of relationships, therefore, needs to be more explicitly discussed in schools to ensure that students develop these necessary people skills. Students need to be made more aware of the power aspects in relationships to ensure that they are conscious of the processes to deal with interpersonal difficulties and disputes. Overcoming these difficulties is an important aspect of social development that transcends school and can assist in more harmonious relationships when students enter the workforce. Ensuring that students are connected with their peers is also significant as peers can be used as a bridge to form relationships with teachers, but also to act as a buffer against stressful events that they experience. Getting students to develop relationships and ensure that they are part of a web of care, may ensure that introverted and less outgoing students are cared for effectively. Creating communities of care and building a sense of community are important aspects of learning and the benefits have been explored by a number of researchers (Larrivee, 2000; Lewis et al., 1996)

School leaders need to pay closer attention to situations where classes are taught by a Head of Department or Head of Learning Area and/or where a subject is only taught in one class. These classroom situations have potentially larger power imbalances than

regular classes as students may not feel as comfortable approaching teachers in positions of authority. This was clearly evident in the encounter Emma (Year 13) had with a subject teacher that was a Head of Department and felt that she could not seek any assistance to remedy a situation. Teachers in these positions are usually experienced but may not be fully aware of the dynamics at play here. Teachers and leaders need to ensure that these classroom environments encourage and support a strong student voice. Students' perceptions are crucial in these situations as they may believe that feedback is not listened to by the teacher/Head of Department. For all students, the procedure for dealing with disputes must be well-publicised and normalised to ensure that both students and teachers are confident in navigating processes that encourage mutual understandings. This was highlighted by Emma (Year 13) who, despite being a confident and high achieving student, was not fully aware of a process to address this situation:

> *"I guess the thing is there is no known way of doing it. You couldn't just go and complain about a teacher[…] It's not really a known way of actually making you opinion heard."*

While this study did find that some outwardly confident students struggled to make themselves heard in these situations, it is even more important to consider introverted students, students at risk and marginalised students in these situations. Students and staff need to be better informed about how to negotiate these power imbalances or how to implement more robust systems to ensure equity in these situations. Every classroom should have processes or procedures that allow for open and ongoing dialogue (Larrivee, 2000).

 Students in this study, to some degree, regarded requesting a move or moving classes as normal. The normalisation of moving students, especially earlier in the year, without a thorough process may rob students and teachers of opportunities to increase agency, negotiate power, develop relationships and enhance teaching practice for the benefit of all students.

Moving students to another class appears to be a common solution at Miro secondary school and this would be the case at the school where the researcher is employed. For the student, a restorative process can be affirmation of the fact that the teacher perceived as uncaring or unwilling to change does in fact care enough to make adjustments or

allowances for the student. In the case of the teacher, it can lead to a greater awareness of the student's requirements within their class and potentially lead to improvements in teacher practices (Noddings, 1996). Classroom environments are dynamic and can change from year to year and even from one day to another. By not simply moving students to another class, middle and senior leadership can demonstrate mature care for all parties by following a process that is considerate of both the student and the teacher. While the researcher did not interview a teacher who had gone through this process, Columbus (Social Science) did outline in detail how he followed a similar process to resolve a dispute between a teacher and a student. His description outlined a detailed dispute resolution process that respected the dignity of the students and teacher. Although the process itself was time-consuming and challenging, Columbus could see positive outcomes for all parties. When dealt with sensitively and with respect for all parties involved, these processes can ensure that all parties reach an improved understanding. Problems occur when parties feel that they are not being listened to. Emma (Year 13) had no faith in the school's process to resolve issues and firmly believed that students would not be listened to. David (Science) also felt that these types of policies were not applied consistently across the school and did not feel that she had been listened to when a student had been moved into her class without any consultation and she was offered little support when the student frequently disrupted the learning of others. This perception is a good example of how school policies and procedures need to be as transparent as possible, explicitly discussed and applied with some degree of consistency across a school. School leaders have a responsibility to ensure that these policies and procedures are cleary understood by students and teachers. These policies and procedures must be applied in such a way that both students and teachers feel that they are being cared for. School leaders have a responsibility to ensure that teachers and students are able to build positive relationships and that relationships are linked to a web of care (Barber, 2002).

While schools profess to treating relationships as important, student-teacher relationships are generally subservient to school structures (Noddings, 2015). As students move through their secondary school careers, they are often taught by five different teachers for each subject. School structures generally take little account of relationships established the previous year. Noddings (2015) argues for continuity, to ensure that students develop an ongoing relationship with the teacher. This would entail having a single teacher guide students through their secondary school years. The most often voiced objection to this

continuity is the possibility of the student being stuck with a 'bad' teacher. Noddings dismisses this with the retort that a student should not have a 'bad' teacher for even one year. Teaching students beyond a calendar year can force teachers to take greater responsibility for students' learning in that subject. Teachers are increasingly rated by the results students achieve. In the researcher's experience, teachers will often explain these as related to the particular cohort as a 'good' or 'bad' year. This can insulate the teacher from taking responsibility for their quality and technique of the instruction. Leaders must also be aware of the opportunity for growth when students have difficulties with a particular teacher. Continuity with subject teachers and ensuring a process is followed, rather than simply moving students could possibly highlight the division within a school between the curriculum area and pastoral care systems. By explicitly discussing care and closely aligning pastoral and curriculum structures, can lead to a more effective environment. This is not a new idea. In many schools, relationships are developed over multiple years in tutor classes, mentor groups and with Deans or Whānau Leaders. Tichnor-Wagner and Allen (2016) observed that getting students to remain with teachers that they have established relationships with is referred to as 'looping' and is a successful strategy employed to ensure that students experience greater stability within the school. Maintaining the relationship over multiple years enabled the relationship and curriculum knowledge to develop over time. Subject teachers would benefit from these multi-year associations with students (Noddings, 2015). These long-term relationships enable the teacher to develop closer connections with students to improve classroom management and may reduce stress for teachers.

Relationships between students and teachers need to support the emotional health of students as well as their academic needs. Teachers must have high expectations for students and provide them with the necessary emotional and practical support to enable them to succeed (Garza, 2009, 2013). Building effective relationships between students and teachers are important because teachers support students academically as well as emotionally. By providing emotional caring, teachers can increase opportunities for students to improve their wellbeing and level of school success.

Communication

Communication between students and teachers is vital for effective and caring relationships to flourish. One of the benefits of open communication is that it allows the caring relationship to progress from assumed needs and for the student to care for the teacher and other students in a more structured and effective way. In this study teachers cited examples where they requested help from students with tasks, instruction and translation. This gave students and teachers the chance to engage with each other in a different way. For example, Betty engaged students in assisting primary students with science equipment. By making the students responsible some of the instructional materials, the teacher created an opportunity to discuss curriculum and pedagogy with her students. Students were instructed on how to engage with younger students. In the teacher's perception, this has led to students being more aware of the needs of others and becoming more engaged in the learning programme (Caldwell & Sholtis, 2008). From the teacher's perspective, this has improved the relationship with the students in this class by observing their caring and compassion in action. The evidence for the success of this series of lessons Betty gave was that some of the students that had struggled in the course, gained confidence as they became expert in some techniques and were called on to assist the teacher in subsequent lessons. While the lesson was described as out of the ordinary, Betty acknowledged that this was why she got into teaching to see the impact of her teaching. While there are many factors that insured that this set of lessons was successful, it is reasonable to conclude that communication and discussing care and reflecting on it as part of the subject of the lesson, had an impact. Hattie asserts that learning becomes visible when teachers see the learning through the eyes of their students (Hattie, 2008). The reverse can be equally as powerful. According to Bosworth (1995), adolescents need more people to be involved in their circle of caring. Widening the circle of caring can be further enhanced if the initiative is student-led (Noddings, 2002).

How senior leaders address teacher concerns are as important as how teachers address student concerns in the classroom environment. Care must be normalised across all levels and ensure that power relationships do not negatively impact these relationships. This is outlined by Tichnor-Wagner and Allen (2016) who suggest that the context of care is important to create a sense of community that exists between all members of the school. If caring behaviours are highlighted as a core value of the organisation and supported by effective processes and procedures, care can exist throughout the organisation. To establish and grow, this community of care requires mutual understandings of care. The

dean that moves a student that is having difficulties with a teacher at the beginning of the year, may feel that she is caring for the students' needs, may need to re-evaluate actions if a more developed understanding of care is applied. The action of the dean can be questioned as to whether this is a form of aesthetic care as the Dean is acting in the best interest of the student. Moving the student may be due to the student and the dean having an established relationship, but could be at the expense of the relationship with another teacher. Allowing the student to move away from the teacher may fail to consider a number of other factors. These could include underlying issues in the class that are affecting a number of students in the class or that the move overlooks the possibility of an issue with the student's learning, in that the student has an assumed need to move away from the teacher. This could take the form of the more complex idea of mature care and looking at everyone involved in this encounter, namely the teacher who has a student removed from their class and the teacher that has another student placed in their class. The dean would need to consider following a process of meeting with the student and potentially a group of students and the teacher to discuss the issues that are occurring in the class. Once again this needs to be a process that is sensitive to the needs of all parties to demonstrate something beyond aesthetic care to ensure that all parties perceive that they are being cared for. This could be regarded as a demonstration of mature care (Tronto, 1993), where a leader can demonstrate the ability to communicate, collect and distribute information and deal with the situation competently to create a caring community.

The findings of student perceptions of care clearly show the importance of communication. Students need to be spoken to with respect and listened to. "Reciprocal dialogue entails active listening to one another as equal moral agents; it implies respect and empowerment. Students value talking with teachers and being heard by them" (Alder, 2002, p. 22). Teachers who were perceived as uncaring spoke down to students. This was a literal as well as physical perception. Students felt that a teacher's willingness to sit beside them and discuss issues vastly improved the encounter as opposed to the teacher standing over them and lecturing them. A teacher's ability to create an environment that respects students and facilitates communication is important.

While students and teachers at Miro secondary school did not discuss in great detail about disruptive or non-compliant students, other studies have highlighted an important aspect of care as being classroom management. Teachers demonstrate care through clear lines

of communication and establishing a mutually agreed environment that supports learning. While there did appear to be a lack of serious disruptions, there were incidents that students felt the teachers did not manage well. Emma (Year 13) mentioned an incident that occurred in her class where a teacher did nothing other than stand between two students who had become physically aggressive. In the student's perception, this was akin to the teacher doing nothing. Ultimately the teacher had literally stepped in to prevent a fight but because the incident was not discussed or mentioned thereafter by the teacher, the student interpreted this as uncaring behaviour. With more explicit communication, such as discussing how the lesson had been disrupted, whether the teacher had dealt with the students after class, what had caused the conflict and other possibilities, Emma's perception was that the teacher didn't care enough to do anything. An incident such as this can be important in developing and maintaining a classroom environment that demonstrates caring. According to Cavanaugh (2012) three elements need to exist in a caring community: "1. Being in relationships by building healthy relationships. 2. Living in relationships by creating a sense of belonging or community. 3. Learning in relationships through routines, practices, and customs" (Cavanagh et al., 2012, p. 22). A lack or poor communication can inhibit the development of the relationships and the environment. By incorporating elements of care and justice, both the environment and student perceptions can be improved. Showing and modelling caring may not be enough to establish or challenge pre-existing perceptions of caring.

How students communicate with teachers is also highlighted in the findings of the study. Students need to be more aware of how they show caring to others. Incorporating a curriculum of care into lessons can improve the quality of communication between students and teachers. "True dialogue is seen as a shifting of student/teacher interactive relationships away from the view of teachers as sole expert authority and into interactive relationships in which the students' voice is heard and recognized as wholly valuable" (Alder, 2002, p. 244).

With care at the centre of encounters communication can be improved between all levels of an organisation. Where care is discussed explicitly communication can improve between students and teachers, students and students, teachers and teachers, teachers and managers. For middle managers and senior leaders, care should extend to building strong relationships with all members of the school community and ensure that the processes that are administered at all levels are mutually agreed and consistently applied. Practical

examples of mature care need to be freely discussed and analysed and information needs to disseminated in mutually agreed forms that support care (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997). Like the classroom environment the relationship between middle and senior leaders and teachers, need to be mutually agreed. Sitting beside people to talk about issues was as important to Francis (Technology) as it was to students Emma and James.

While this research has focused on care in a specific context, care needs to be applied broadly included into the secondary school construct as both givers and receivers of care in order to develop the concept of a caring community. This should include the senior leaders and administrators of the school, ensuring that the Ministry of Education has the interests and care of the entire community at heart, and policies and procedures that are external to the school support and enhance what occurs within the school context.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy needs to be discussed in the classroom and in the staffroom. Students in the study appeared to have limited appreciation of teaching and how this affected their learning. Students in this study could appreciate the effort that teachers put into providing lessons and activities for them. There was an appreciation of technologies such as apps and software that were utilised, but students demonstrated little understanding of the benefit of using different approaches. This perception appeared to be largely driven by adolescent self-centeredness and that these provided a variety of approaches. Teachers need to make students more aware of both what they are being taught and how they are being taught to fully interpret the actions of teachers (Bulach, Brown, & Potter, 1998). Explicitly communicating about pedagogy as well as subject material ensures that students are able to broaden their understanding beyond binary constructions of good and bad; and caring and uncaring teachers. What, why and how teaching is being conducted may ensure that student and teacher perceptions may be more closely aligned.

As students perceive the extra lessons and effort that teachers put in as a significant examples of caring behaviour, there is a danger that teachers who do not appear to do extra, may be considered less caring. Explicit discussion about care needs to occur more frequently. Noddings (2012) outlines the importance of a curriculum of care as pedagogy. By communicating more explicitly about care, awareness can be raised about how

teachers show caring for students through their teaching and how students can show that they care for the teacher. This can lead to significant changes in the classroom environment.

Being more transparent about pedagogy may ensure that all students feel comfortable in a school (Lewis et al., 1996). While the school may have a 'institutional habitas' in the sense that care may be done in a certain way and that teachers care in a particular way, it may not accommodate students that do not form part of the majority or dominant culture of a school. Teachers may be immersed in this and not be able to see differences. "While these orientations are embedded within a broader societal habitus, they are known through the teacher's immersion in the school's unique institutional habitus, expressed in terms of what 'the kids at this school' are like, and what they need from their teachers" (Barber, 2002, p. 393).

Curriculum

While students had a clear understanding of the NCEA system, there appeared to be less awareness of what they were being taught. The NCEA system appears to be firmly embedded in the students' mind set. The students participating in this study demonstrated effective knowledge of accumulating credits in assessments and were aware of entry requirements for university courses. Students also demonstrated knowledge of the misalignment of school and NZQA requirements. The majority of secondary schools in New Zealand offer NCEA and interviewed students showed little awareness of learning outside of the NCEA System. Students did mention teacher support for their co-curricular activities and career objectives as an example of caring behaviour but showed little awareness of a more holistic education aims. Teacher examples of care often centred on experiences that were not directly related to teaching to the curriculum.

NCEA places a significant focus on students working towards credits and pursuing grades to achieve progress along pathways. Student perceptions of teacher care, according to the findings, were largely focused on improving achievement outcomes or providing students assistance with assessments. While teachers interviewed in this study perceived that NCEA placed some restriction on their ability to care for students, the students themselves perceived that assistance that teachers provided them with NCEA assessment demonstrated care. Care perceived by students included unpacking tasks and scaffolding

work to ensure that students fully understand what they are learning. There is a danger, however, of this developing into aesthetic caring (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016) in that the teacher is perceived only to care about the academic success presented by the grades and not the personal and emotional development of the student. In healthcare, Bradshaw (2009) referred to this as 'the McDonaldisation of Care'. What she is referring to is a façade of care that is largely superficial and provided by a set formula. The opposite was true for this study, in which a more authentic level of caring was developed by both students and teachers. This reflected some deep emotional connections where students were inspired to pursue careers in areas that they had not considered after being inspired by their teachers.

Teacher criticism of NCEA was largely muted and criticisms were more focused on school policy or procedures not being followed consistently. Francis (Technology) expressed disappointment that school and NZQA policy held that students be assessed when they were ready but the difficulties his non-English speaking students faced meant they were not ready when they were assessed. While this situation was frustrating for Francis, this did provide him an opportunity to adapt the curriculum and provide extra tuition for his students. This incident, although borne out of frustration enabled Francis to demonstrate caring for his students and to get other students to assist students which ultimately led to improved performance in assessment.

According to the Education Council and the Ministry of Education, Māori tikanga is increasingly being applied in schools (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007) but there was limited evidence of this in student or teacher interviews that these form part of the curriculum. Concepts such as Whānaungatanga and Maanakitanga align closely with the ethic of care (Brannelly et al., 2013) but were only mentioned in passing. These concepts need to be more thoroughly explored at the school and classroom level (Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman, 2007). By actually teaching care as part of the curriculum has the potential to transform the way care is perceived in schools and ensuring that authentic care is provided for every student in a classroom. This is clearly of benefit to Māori students but other students can benefit from an improved understanding of the importance of culture and ethnicity.

Agency

Student voice needs to be closely monitored in secondary schools. Despite students being in their last two years of their secondary school education, students did not feel that they have much influence in classes where they did not feel cared for. Outgoing and confident students were mostly able to seek assistance and get a resolution to ensure that they were cared for when they had a negative relationship with the teacher. Less confident and outgoing students may feel unable to effect change. Circumstances may be exacerbated when the teacher holds a position of authority within the school. Emma felt that they were unable to affect change because the uncaring teacher was head of faculty and the student felt that they had no one to address the issue to *"Because he's the Head of Department it makes it harder. I guess the thing is there is no known way of doing it* (Emma, Year 13). Teachers need to make students more aware of processes and procedures that students can follow to resolve conflicts between students and teachers. Tronto (2010) is clear on the need for there to be "a well conceived space to resolve conflict". Students may not have confidence in the systems that are in place to ensure that student disputes with their teachers are fair and equitable. Educational leaders need to ensure that teachers and students need to have confidence in these systems in order to fully engage with these systems.

The questions of agency, and voice are important aspects of the secondary school environment. In order to develop a community of care within a school, teachers and students need to feel that they are able to have agency to exercise some control over their circumstances. Student Emma (Year 13) and teacher David (Science) at times felt that they had limited control and lacked agency in classroom situations. For student, Emma the issue was around the way she was being taught in a particular subject. For David it was the lack of support and communication she received for a challenging student. The question of care can potentially be an important means of strengthening student voice but also in creating a more harmonious work environment for teachers (Collier, 2005). By creating a stronger sense of community in a classroom can ensure that students have a stronger sense of agency (Larrivee, 2000). Students perceive the extraordinary acts of caring that teachers do to be caring and may overlook the day-to-day aspects of care. The potential result of teachers doing more to show that they care for students, can lead to teacher burnout and the proliferation of the super teacher that is not sustainable in the profession (Barber, 2002; Teven, 2007).

For students, agency would be to operate in a classroom and school environment that encourages them to voice opinions about the quality of care and instruction they receive. For teachers, this would be apparent by their ability to exercise control in their classroom (Noddings, 2015). While control should extend to managing the behaviour of students; this should not be at the expense of student voice but rather in a mutually agreed environment that supports student and teacher wellbeing (McLaughlin, 1991). Teachers need to deal with issues of defiance and disruptive behaviours themselves. This is an aspect of care that was not discussed by participants in depth, but one that reflects on the quality of care that teachers exercise. Teachers need to have some level of agency to ensure that the students within their care are succeeding (Collier, 2005).

Recommendation for Further Study

Further research needs to be conducted into the support that is offered to teachers to ensure that they are able to administer care to their students. How can teachers benefit from more structured forms of care? Teachers are generally supported by their Departments or faculties, however this may not be sufficient and more support may need to be offered by teachers with similar or greater experience to support teachers who experience challenges. Some research has been conducted on teachers preparing to enter the profession but greater focus need to be on how experienced teachers are supported by students and leaders (Falkenberg, 2009; Rogers & Webb, 1991).

Teachers should be empowered to provide more holistic care for students. Caring does extend beyond the realm of the subject classroom, but ensuring that this is part of a network of care needs to be further investigated. In order for teachers to administer care for students; teachers themselves must feel that they are cared for. Students that are emotionally and academically supported can improve their performance. According to Collier (2005) teachers can receive similar benefits from integrating the ethic of care in a school.

Further research is needed into specific student populations in secondary schools. These populations could include specific student populations: students with specific learning difficulties such as autism and dyslexia, academically gifted students, non-English speaking background students and students in alternative courses. The students interviewed in this study were academically able and well integrated into the school and

suffered some problems dealing with issues where they perceived they were not receiving adequate care. Further research is therefore justified to investigate if there are differences in the way that students from more marginalised backgrounds conceptualise care.

Research focused on specific subject areas or faculties would benefit our understanding of student perceptions of care. In this study there was some variance in the way students perceived different subjects. Studies have been conducted into the ethic of care in specific subject areas, such as Physical Education (Larson, 2006) and Music (Allsup, 2003). There is definitely further investigation required into how students perceive care and how teachers administer care in different subjects. Students in this study demonstrated heightened or lowered expectations of some subjects. Student Raj had higher expectations for Drama classes to be more engaging and lower expectations for Economics classes. Raj expected Drama classes to be creative and interesting while a subject such as Economics was expected to be taught more conservatively. These expectations were influenced by previous teachers, but may also be influenced by the subject itself. Investigating how students perceive certain subjects is therefore worthy of further investigation.

Finally, repeating this study in a different school would be useful to confirm the validity and accuracy of these results. By investigating care in another school would broaden understanding of how secondary students and teacher perceive care, particularly in the New Zealand context.

Conclusion

This dissertation investigated perceptions of care in a New Zealand secondary school. While there was significant overlap in the way students and teachers perceived care there were also significant differences. Results showed that relationships, communication, pedagogy and curriculum form important aspects of caring. The nature of the relationship between a student and a teacher is a significant factor in whether students perceived teacher behaviours as caring and whether a teacher is able to get a student to respond to caring behaviours. Communication plays a key role in any relationship, to ensure that a relationship is perceived as caring. Communication needs to be reciprocal between students and teachers and cannot be based on paternalistic expectations and attitudes from teachers (Noddings, 1984; 1988). Students must feel free to communicate with teachers

to ensure that their expectations regarding pedagogy are being met and that they feel sufficiently supported in their understanding of the curriculum and assessments. The researcher's concern about the performative nature of modern secondary schools was not widely shared by the participants. This could potentially be defined as 'aesthetic care' (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016), as the care is directed at achieving grades and credits, however the students themselves felt that they were well cared for. The teachers interviewed demonstrated a deep understanding of student needs beyond NCEA assessment. Francis (Technology) and David (Science) both expressed concerns for the way NCEA assessments were administered to their students and the care exhibited aligned more with mature care. The NCEA system provides teachers numerous opportunities to demonstrate care on an ongoing basis and students valued the time and effort that teachers put into their learning.

Relationships are central to student perceptions of caring (Perez, 2000). Teachers need to establish good relationships with students that are based on mutual respect and understanding. The relationship needs to be created between individual students and teachers. Students in this study who had a sound relationship with a teacher had realistic expectations regarding class sizes and the pressures teachers face. Where there is an existing relationship with a teacher, students will make allowances for teachers even if they are administering care through groups, rather than individually. If students have an individual relationship with a teacher they will perceive care administered to class groupings as care. In the absence of individual relationships, students regarded teacher similar teacher behaviour as uncaring. Student perceptions of caring or uncaring behaviour may build up over time and it becomes harder for teachers to alter established perceptions. Teacher-student relationships allow for an exchange of information that is both personal and curriculum-based. Students value information that teachers pass on about their personal lives. Teachers must not only offer emotional support for students but must also set high expectations for student achievement. These two aspects of emotional support and high expectation must occur simultaneously to be effective (Tichnor-Wagner & Allen, 2016; Valenzuela, 2010). Teachers must communicate these expectations to ensure that students are aware of them.

Closely linked to relationships is communication. The dialogue that occurs between students and teachers is vital to ensure that actions are perceived as caring. Teachers need to ensure that students feel comfortable in subject classes. If students do not feel that they

are listened to, teacher behaviours are easily perceived as uncaring. Teachers must ensure that they take the time to address students as individuals. There may also be a benefit for teachers to highlighting how routines and procedures support care in the classroom. Leaders must ensure that communication of policies and procedures within the school context are made consistently and that they support caring behaviours. Institutions themselves cannot care, but the stakeholders in an institution can create an environment that supports caring at all levels (Noddings, 1988). The basic principles of caring can be applied to communication at all levels of the organisation (Collier, 2005). Ensuring that teachers are well supported and embedded in a community of care ensures that mature care is applied across all levels of a school.

Teachers and students interviewed for this study all felt a sense of connection to each other and were engaged in their studies in most subjects. There are opportunities for growth to ensure that students develop a greater awareness of pedagogy. In the same light, teachers may need to develop increased flexibility to adapt to student needs. Teachers who held middle management responsibilities felt they had greater flexibility to adapt curricula and assessment to student needs. Teachers David (Science) and Francis (Technology) expressed frustration due to the way assessment regimes were structured. Columbus (Social Studies) and Betty (Science) felt they had greater control over the assessments and could make changes for the benefit off students. Teachers that did not hold middle management responsibilities felt that they were restricted by aspects of curriculum and assessment schedules. Greater consideration may need to be given to empowering teachers without middle management responsibilities to ensure that they do not feel restricted by assessment. Teachers need to have discussions to promote transparency and ensure that students understand how they are being taught.

The curriculum that is taught needs to be assessed through an ethic of care lens (Noddings, 2002). Students interviewed for this study all planned to attend university and had either already achieved university entrance or were working towards that aim. Students who are not intending to attend university may require different forms of care. Greater care may be necessary in subjects where not all students are intending to attend a university or tertiary institution. Teachers are not just responsible for teaching a subject specific curriculum but must also be prepared to offer career advice. Making students aware of the career opportunities within a specific subject is important, as well as teachers

discussing various career options with students. The more a teacher knows a student's reality the better they are able to offer guidance.

Educational leaders must take particular note of the need for students to have a strong voice within the classroom. Teachers must ensure that they care for colleagues and ensure that they are supported by middle managers and senior leaders. Teachers can experience a complete lack of care or a sense of aesthetic care when they are asked: *"How are you doing?"* as a rhetorical question. Like students, teachers need to give and receive care to those around them. In the same way that learning can be differentiated for students, care needs to be taken to provide individualised care to staff. Teachers that are well supported and cared for may be less susceptible to teacher burnout and stress (Collier, 2005). Teacher identity may influence how individual teachers give and receive care (Zembylas, 2003). The concept of intersectionality needs to be explored in relation to the teachers' role within a school. A teacher's experience, subject and level they teach at, newness to the school will all influence how a teacher is able to give and receive care. Care is complex and personal but if schools are prepared to develop an ethic of care the benefits can be far reaching for individuals and institutions (Noddings, 2015). If care becomes widespread and connected throughout an institution, it has the potential to transform not just relationships but academic outcomes.

In closing, I refer to discussion I had with my ten-year-old daughter at the dinner table during this project. She asked me why I was visiting another school and what I was doing there. In attempting to explain that I was looking at how students and teachers were cared for within a school, she was a little confused. So I tried again to explain it in the context of her school and how teachers care for her or possibly do not care. She was adamant on the last point that all the teachers in her school cared for her. I rephrased the question and asked her if she had ever been told off or made to feel bad by a teacher, perhaps by a teacher she did not know? Her response was simple: *"That never happens- They love all of us." "They love all of us"* is possibly a naïve assertion in a secondary school – but, a secondary school where every student felt loved and cared for would certainly be a great school. In a world where people feel increasingly isolated from each other, schools can play an even more important role to connect us in a more meaningful way. "The school is perhaps the only remaining social institution that reaches members of all the diverse groups represented in our society" (Battistich et al., 1997, p. 148). In addition to ensuring that students achieve good academic outcomes

would that not be a great barometer of a school if every student felt loved by all the teachers?

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Appendices

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

YEAR 12 & YEAR 13 STUDENTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study of how students and teachers think about how they are cared for in curriculum classes. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to discuss how you perceive care in your classes.

Your participation would involve an interview which will last for no more than 60 minutes.

If you wish to volunteer for this study please read the information sheet and fill out a consent form and place in the collection box

or contact the researcher via email.

If you require further information please contact:

Jonathan Clark

phone: 021 2433204 email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Andrés P. Santamaría   email: asantama@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16 August 2016, AUTEC Reference number 16/250

Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	Research email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz	

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

YEAR 12 & YEAR 13 TEACHERS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study about the implications for school leaders regarding the perceptions of care in a New Zealand secondary school

The research project will be looking at how students and teachers perceive care in curriculum classes and what the implications of these perceptions could have for school leaders. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to discuss how you perceive care in your senior classes.

Your participation would involve an interview which will last for no more than 60 minutes.

If you wish to volunteer for this study please read the information sheet and fill out a consent form and place in the collection box or contact the researcher via email.

If you require further information please contact:

Jonathan Clark

phone: 021 2433204 email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Andrés P. Santamaría   email: asantama@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16 August 2016, AUTEC Reference number 16/250

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Appendix III: Student Consent Form

Student Consent Form

Project title: **How students and teachers think about care in secondary school classrooms**

Project Supervisor: **Andrés P. Santamaría**

Researcher: **Jonathan Clark**

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 19 July 2016.

○   I am 16 years or older

○   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○   I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○   I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○   I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○   I agree to take part in this research.

○   I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○   No○

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....   Year Level : ....

Participant's Contact Details:

Email :   ....

Phone :   ....

Mailing Address : ....

....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16 August 2016,
AUTEC Reference number 16/250**

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

Teacher Consent Form

AUT
TE WANANGA ARONUI
O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Project title: **Students and teachers' perceptions of care in secondary school classrooms**

Project Supervisor: **Andrés P. Santamaría**

Researcher: **Jonathan Clark**

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 19 July 2016.

○   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○   I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○   I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○   I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○   I agree to take part in this research.

○   I wish to receive an executive summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○   No○

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Teaching subjects   ....

Participant's Contact Details:

Email :   ....

Phone :   ....

Mailing Address : ....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 16 August 2016, AUTEC Reference number 16/250

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

2 July 2015   page 1 of 1   This version was last edited in June 2016

Appendix V: Teacher Information Sheet

Teacher Information Sheet

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced: 19 July 2016.

Project Title: Students and teachers' perceptions of care in secondary school classrooms

An Invitation:

My name is Jonathan Clark. I am currently doing research towards a Masters in Educational Leadership at AUT. I am conducting research into the ethic of care at high school. I would be grateful if you would consider participating in this research project. Participation in this project is completely voluntary and participating will offer you no advantage or disadvantage.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to improve understanding of how students and teachers perceive care in curriculum classes and what the implications of these perceptions could have for school leaders. Overseas studies have shown that the care that students receive can improve their sense of wellbeing, academic achievement and motivation. Little research regarding care has been conducted in New Zealand schools. I am interested in investigating how you feel about the care you receive in your classes. The results will be published in a thesis and a journal article.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified and invited to participate in this study as a result of your response to this study's advertisement that was posted in your school's staff lounge. Only Year 12 and Year 13 teachers will be selected for this study. If more than the required number of senior level teachers agree to participate they will be divided according to gender. Teachers of each gender will be randomly selected. Year 12 and Year 13 students will be selected for the study in an almost identical process.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. You can volunteer for this study by emailing the researcher or filling in a consent form and placing them in the collection box.

What will happen in this research?

If you are selected to participate in the research, I will contact you to set up an interview time at school. I will meet with you at the agreed time to do an interview. The interview is semi-structured so you will be able to ask as well as answer questions. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. You will be emailed or shown a copy of your interview transcript to check that it accurately reflects what you have said. The total amount of your time that is needed to participate in this study (the interview and the checking of your interview transcript) is approximately one hour. All the interviews from students and teachers will be analysed to look for similarities and differences. A dissertation will be written based on the research findin

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no perceived physical risks associated with this research. As you will be asked to discuss your feelings of care there is a possibility of you feeling some emotional discomfort.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of the interview, please alert the researcher. You can choose to answer all or only some of the questions being asked of you by the researcher, and you are free to leave at any stage during the interview. You can also contact Lifeline at 0800 543 354 or Youthline at 0800 376 633 for counselling support at any time should you feel any discomfort as a result of participating in this study.

What are the benefits?

The potential benefits of this study are to provide an increased awareness of caring in high schools. Several researchers have noted a lack of research on care in high schools. Some people find talking about care to be therapeutic and empowering. This research will assist teachers and students to better understand how students and teachers think about care. For the wider community and teachers, in particular, detailed information on how students perceive care will have significant benefits in ensuring that sufficient care is being provided. This research will also help me to complete my Master of Educational Leadership degree

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How will my privacy be protected?

During the interview you will be given the opportunity to select your own pseudonym that will be used throughout the writing of the dissertation. Any identifiable information that may potentially reveal your identity will be removed from the transcripts and pseudonyms will be used during the writing of my dissertation to protect your privacy.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs involved in this research

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have one week to consider participating in the study.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive an executive summary of the research if you request it on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Andrés P. Santamaría phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 6753   email: asantama@aut.ac.nz*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Jonathan Clark   email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Andrés P. Santamaría   email: asantama@aut.ac.nz

Appendix VI: Student Information Sheet

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI
O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

Student Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced: 19 July 2016.

Project Title: How students and teachers think about care in secondary school classrooms

An Invitation:

My name is Jonathan Clark. I am currently doing research towards a Masters in Educational Leadership at AUT. I am conducting research into the ethic of care at high school. I would be grateful if you would consider participating in this research project. Participation in this project is completely voluntary and participating will offer you no advantage or disadvantage.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to improve understanding of how students and teachers perceive care in curriculum classes and what the implications of these perceptions could have for school leaders. Overseas studies have shown that the care that students receive can improve their sense of wellbeing, academic achievement and motivation. Little research regarding care has been conducted in New Zealand schools. I am interested in investigating how you feel about the care you receive in your classes. The results will be published in a thesis and a journal article.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified and invited to participate in this study as a result of your response to this study's advertisement that was posted on your school's noticeboard. Only Year 12 and Year 13 students who are 16 years and older will be selected for this study. If more than the required number of senior level students agree to participate they will be divided according to gender and year level (Year 12 and Year 13). One student from each gender and year level will be randomly selected.
Year 12 and Year 13 teachers will be selected for the study in an almost identical process.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. You can volunteer for this study by emailing the researcher or filling in a consent form and placing them in the collection box.

What will happen in this research?

If you are selected to participate in the research, I will contact you to set up an interview time at school. I will meet with you at the agreed time to do an interview. The interview is semi-structured so you will be able to ask as well as answer questions. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. You will be emailed or shown a copy of your interview transcript to check that it accurately reflects what you have said. The total amount of your time that is needed to participate in this study (the interview and the checking of your interview transcript) is approximately one hour. All the interviews from students and teachers will be analysed to look for similarities and differences. A dissertation will be written based on the research findings.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no perceived physical risks associated with this research. As you will be asked to discuss your feelings of care there is a possibility of you feeling some emotional discomfort. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of the interview, please alert the researcher. You can choose to answer all or only some of the questions being asked of you by the researcher, and you are free to leave at any stage during the the interview. You can see a school counsellor if you feel upset by anything that is discussed in the interview. You can also contact Lifeline at 0800 543 354 or Youthline at 0800 376 633 for counselling support at any time should you feel any discomfort as a result of participating in this study.

What are the benefits?

The potential benefits of this study are to provide an increased awareness of caring in high schools. Several researchers have noted a lack of research on care in high schools. Some people find talking about care to be therapeutic and empowering. This research will assist teachers and students to better understand how students

and teachers think about care. For the wider community and teachers, in particular, detailed information on how students perceive care will have significant benefits in ensuring that sufficient care is being provided. This research will also help me to complete my Master of Educational Leadership degree

How will my privacy be protected?

During the interview you will be given the opportunity to select your own pseudonym that will be used throughout the writing of the dissertation. Any identifiable information that may potentially reveal your identity will be removed from the transcripts and pseudonyms will be used during the writing of my dissertation to protect your privacy.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no costs involved in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

You have one week to consider participating in the study.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will receive an executive summary of the research if you request it on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Andrés P. Santamaría phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 6753   email: asantama@aut.ac.nz*

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Jonathan Clark   email: ppv7883@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Andrés P. Santamaría   email: asantama@aut.ac.nz

Appendix VII: Interview questions

Project Title: The Perceptions of Care in an Urban New Zealand Secondary School

Researcher: Jonathan Clark

Supervisor: Andrés P. Santamaría

Indicative Teacher Interview Questions

Kia ora. My name is Jonathan Clark and I am conducting research into the ethic of care at this school.

1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Do you have any questions before we begin?
2. Could you provide me with some information regarding your background and teaching career. Feel free to include information about: Where you grew up? Training and teaching experience, etc.
3. How would you describe your teaching style? What would you think someone observing your class would see?

As the research is focused on the ethic of care we will now focus on care in your Year 12 and Y13 classes.

4. Would you describe yourself as a caring teacher? What aspects of caring for your students is particularly important to you?
5. Can you give me a recent example where you demonstrated care to a senior student that you teach?
6. Is it possible for you to describe an incident between you and a student where your caring was misinterpreted or rejected?
7. Are you aware of any aspects of your behaviour that shows students that you care for them?
8. How do you communicate with students to show them that you care?
   Can you give me an example where you have had to prioritise the curriculum over caring for students?
9. Are you aware of any student behaviours that show that students are aware that you care for them. Are you aware that students care about you?

10. In your opinion are there any significant barriers to caring for students.
11. Do you feel that you receive sufficient care as a teacher?

Is there anything that you would like to clarify or return to.

Thank you for giving up your time to assist me in my research. I appreciate your comments.

Indicative Student Interview Questions

Kia Ora.

1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Do you have any questions before we begin?
2. Please can we begin by some information regarding your family background. Feel free to provide information on: Where you grew up/what you enjoy about school/your favourite subjects/career ambitions, etc.

As the research is focused on the ethic of care we will focus on care in your Year 12 and Year 13 classes.

3. How would you describe yourself as a student? How do you behave in your classes? Does your behaviour change in different classes? If someone observed you in class how would they describe how you were learning?
4. Can you give me a recent example where a teacher showed you that they care about you.
5. Are you aware of any aspects of teacher behaviour that shows that they care for you?
6. How do teachers talk to you to show them that you care?
7. Can you give me an example where a teacher has helped you in a particular way that shows that they care for you
8. (Confirmation) Do you show teachers that you care about them?
9. Can you give an indication of what a caring teacher looks and behaves like. Can you give me a list of attributes that characterise a caring teacher?(Are any of these attributes more important than others?)
10. Can we do the same for an uncaring teacher?
11. What do/can you do when think a teacher does not care about you?

Is there anything that you would like to clarify or return to.

Thank you for giving up your time to assist me in my research. I appreciate your comments.