**REFRAMING THE ASSESSMENT OF SAFE, CARING AND WELCOMING
SCHOOLS**

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my daughters, Ella and Hannah, for their unending support, love and patience during this process. Thank you for inspiring me to research care; it is your well-being in this world that made care so very interesting to me. Thank you for bringing me snacks, hugs and encouragement while I worked. Most importantly, thank you for understanding when I missed out on important events and fun occasions. I will not be missing any more.

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Abstract

A theoretical construct of junior and senior high students' perceptions of safe, caring and welcoming schools was developed to allow administrators and teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of how their students perceive care. The construct of care is highly subjective and will vary from school-to-school but with the use of the multi-modal assessment tool developed, students will be able to not only communicate their needs for care, they will also be able to show how they have received care, learn about caring relations and staff members will be able to critically analyze how they care for their students. The assessment-as-research tool, consisting of a quantitative survey, monthly student response journals, staff self-assessments, safe and caring project showcase and longitudinal narrative inquiry, would allow emerging data to be triangulated resulting in a robust analysis that could be used to drive school programming, address changing demographics and inform policy development at the senior administration level. The assessment plan was designed to "measure performance, but also to change it, by encouraging teachers and students to modify their practice" (Pellegrinno et al., 2001, p. 39) providing a recursive feedback loop for schools to respond to changing demographics and staffing. To accurately and comprehensively understand students' perceptions of safe, caring and welcoming schools, we need to understand and respectfully assess the dynamic construct of care.

Preface

Critically examining the complex interplay of curriculum and the goal of students becoming ethical and engaged citizens allowed me to examine the role of caring relations in our educational system. Understanding that the primary needs of our students must be achieved before they can learn led me to hypothesize that students must feel cared for before they can feel safe enough to engage in cognitive dissonance, necessary for outcome mastery, critical and creative thinking and higher-order problem solving.

One of my primary goals as an administrator was to ensure that my students felt safe, welcomed and cared for at school. Currently students, parents and teaching staff complete Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar Survey and upon analysis, programming decisions are made to try and improve the *safe and caring* construct results each year. When my administrative team and I had our annual Alberta Education Report on Results meeting with central office senior administration, I could not articulate causal factors as to what drove the results for the safe and caring marker. Every year, my administrative team and I endeavored to provide a safe, caring and welcoming environment for my students; my staff was provided with direction and professional development opportunities to improve our safe and caring schools programs and our student leadership team continually provided programming for our students to avoid bullying and promote tolerance and understanding of everyone. Annually results changed, but the questions that always came to mind were *what factors are driving these changes*, *how can we improve these results* and *is the level of safe and caring schools directly correlated to student achievement.* The inability to articulate the causal factors of the Alberta Education accountability results for safe and caring schools to my senior

administration team became a haunting problem for me; whether the results improved or declined, I wanted to be able to explain the results to not only communicate that I had an understanding of my school culture but of my students' expressed needs. I concluded that the amorphous nature of the safe and caring schools deserved further research to give credence to programming implementation that resulted from data analysis.

I began by working backwards to identify a supporting educational framework that would encourage critical thinking, caring and democratic young citizens. I became enthralled with Nodding's work on care, implementing her work as one pillar of the framework. Intrigued by Doll's (1993) *currere* (p. 278) and Aoki's (1990) "inspirited curriculum" (p. 18), I posited the importance of care in relation to chaos and self-organization. Threading all of the research together caused me to believe that grounding our curriculum in care would effectively result in critical, collaborative students who cared for themselves and worldly others, capable of independent and interdependent thinking with the greater good in mind. This prompted me to question the degree to which care is already embedded in our curriculum and existing educational framework.

To my knowledge, a construct of care that delineated the knowledge, skills and dispositions that students value as caring relations from their teachers does not exist. School administrators and teachers are trying to demonstrate care without knowing what students expressed needs of care. Ideally, each school would develop their own construct of care that is directly responsive to their students' demographics and expressed needs. In an effort to narrow the target construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools, I decided to research the theoretical construct of students' perceptions of safe and caring schools, believing that students who feel safe and cared for are willing to stretch into cognitive

dissonance to embrace becoming critical, creative thinkers capable of meeting Alberta Education's (2016) "Engaged Thinkers and Ethical Citizens with an Entrepreneurial Spirit, who contribute to a strong and prosperous economy and society" (p. 2).

Huot (2002) and Slomp (2016) posited assessment should be an important component of research and an integral part of administrative programming leading me to develop a multi-modal assessment program that was designed to ensure students and teachers were able to assess the construct of safe and caring schools but also use the assessment as a means of growth. A dynamic, robust assessment plan was developed to capture students' needs for caring relations. Each assessment was blueprinted to the construct to address construct representation, construct irrelevant variance, construct underrepresentation and consequential validity. Administrators could use the assessment data to drive future programming and inform senior administration of the changing needs of the student population, which could further student achievement. Although Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar Survey does assess safe and caring schools, it would be beneficial to school administrators to have an assessment tool specific to each school's needs. Rather than merely changing programming, I am proposing a "second-order change" (Cuban, 1988, p. 342) that reforms the existing educational framework by grounding programming in care ethics to meet the goals of 21st century learners.

It is my hope that the construct of safe and caring schools will be used to inform programming for junior and senior high schools and that the accompanying multi-modal assessment tool will identify the needs of care. The assessments should be used in conjunction with the data derived from Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar Survey. Regression analysis of both sets of data should provide valuable insight to the

effectiveness of the proposed levels of care in the both the micro- (student and teachers) and macrosystems (students, teachers and administrators) of the schools (Bronfenbrenner, 2006).

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Introduction

"Care is embedded in the act of teaching; it is not something that is

simply added on after the fact" (Wilde, 2013, p. 29).

The inclination to compare and compete is embedded in humans. We are taught, perhaps unknowingly, from an early age to improve our results, whether it is test scores, race times or job titles. Schools are not immune from competition and comparison. Historically, school leadership teams have been held accountable to Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar Survey results by senior administration and school board authorities. The Accountability Pillar Survey collected data from students, teachers, administrators and parents to inform areas that needed improvement, illustrate how schools were performing and set goals for future growth. The bimodal nature of the data provided school board authorities with both the local school results and provincial results, which provided an opportunity for comparison and discussion of factors driving the results.

In my role as administrator, I was particularly interested in the Accountability Pillar Survey results' first marker, "Safe and Caring Schools" (Alberta Government, 2015, p. 3), that consisted of only one sub-construct also labeled "Safe and Caring" (p. 3). My staff and I knew very little about the knowledge, skills and dispositions that our students valued in our programming, their peers or us. Without a solid and robust construct of students' perceptions of care, I did not know how to provide targeted and specific professional development for my staff to improve caring relations in our school or which programs needed to be implemented to support and improve our safe, caring and welcoming school environment. Valid and reliable assessment of safe, caring and

welcoming schools should have originated with a rich and robust construct designed from student voices in order for accurate interpretations of the results to occur.

The assessment questions in Alberta Education's Accountability Pillar Survey and The Learning Bar (The Learning Bar website, 2016) Survey represented the *general* construct of safe and caring schools, as it would be very difficult to accurately capture specific data for each school from a provincial survey. A robust construct of safe and caring schools developed from student voices would allow school authorities to accurately meet students' needs of care and implement appropriate programming for staff and students' expressed needs. The purpose of this project was to develop a construct of safe and caring schools and a multi-modal assessment tool to measure safe, caring and welcoming schools.

Context

My goal was to precisely articulate causal factors of the results from the safe and caring schools marker in the Accountability Pillar Survey. However, the safe and caring construct was highly subjective, open to different perceptions by each student, primarily because of their bioecological factors, which made it difficult to identify the elements that influenced the results (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Understanding students' developmental needs from a bioecological context meant that I needed to study and understand my students' needs based on the actual environment that they were raised in and how they lived their lives. Further to that, Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated students' bioecological factors were based on their proximal processes (primary mechanisms that resulted in human development), which varied based on characteristics of the developing person, environmental contexts and the time periods in which the proximal processes were taking

place. Bronfenbrenner also posited that in order to have a clear understanding of students'

needs, their bioecological factors had to be thoroughly investigated as "both objective

and subjective elements are posited as driving the course of human development"

(p. 797); neither of these dynamic forces alone can accurately explain human

development. The subjectivity of safe, caring and welcoming schools continued to shift

as staff brought in their narratives, interpretations of care, knowledge of the school and

students and knowledge of their subject to the school.

Bronfenbrenner's (2006) bioecological model postulated that "development is

defined as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological

characteristics of human beings, both as individuals and as groups" (p. 793), calling for

research in students' actual environments, focusing on proximal processes, characteristics

of the person, contextual environment and time periods in which the proximal processes

took place. Bronfenbrenner (1999) also stated "human development takes place through

processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active,

evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its

immediate external environment" (p. 5), which caused me to believe that in order to

specify the construct of safe and caring schools, I would need to take into account

students' cultural backgrounds, social and familial contexts and socioeconomic factors.

Due to the reciprocity of this complex relationship, the attributes of the person create, and

are also the creation of, the end product; each is dependent and the limit on the other.

My construct of safe and caring schools was a combination of staff and students'

micro-systems (their patterns of activities, roles and interactions in a face-to-face setting)

and their meso-systems (their relationships between two or more settings)

(Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Bronfenbrenner stated the ecological environment was "a set of nested systems ranging from the 'micro' to the 'macro'" (p. 11), which were dependent upon each other, with no one system eclipsing the other. An example of a micro-system included students engaged in caring relations with a teacher; an example of a meso-system included students interacting with a teacher and an administrator or a family member. I believed that the layers of bioecological systems of the students, as well as the staff, all contributed to the dynamic and ambivalent nature of the safe and caring schools construct and by clearly identifying the importance of the students' values and needs, we could begin to narrow the moving construct target.

The assessment tools that administrative teams and senior administration used to measure the level of safe, caring and welcoming schools were the quantitative surveys in Alberta Government's Accountability Pillar Survey and The Learning Bar Survey (formally known as "Tell Them From Me" (Tell Them From Me, n.d.)). Within those surveys, two percent of the survey questions were directly correlated to the safe and caring schools category and eight percent of them may have related to the safe and caring schools marker, although there was no definitive way of knowing. I blueprinted each of the questions from the Accountability Pillar Survey and The Learning Bar Survey to the proposed construct of care confirming construct underrepresentation in both surveys.

Loss of Care in Education

"Every human life starts in relation and it is through relations that a

human individual emerges" (Noddings, 2012, p. 771).

Noddings (2005) offered a comprehensive definition of care that is provided here to anchor care in the framework of education:

The desire to be cared for is almost certainly a universal human characteristic …

In school, all kids want to be cared for in this sense. They do not want to be

treated 'like numbers', by recipe-no matter how sweet the recipe may be for some

consumers. When we understand that everyone wants to be cared for and that

there is no recipe for caring, we see how important engrossment (or attention) is.

In order to respond as a genuine carer, one does have to empty the soul of its own

contents … Care is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors.

(p. 17)

Wilde (2013) stated "the loss of care in education is a sign of a deeper social

malaise" calling for acts of care so we can begin to heal ourselves and the world that our

children live in. Bronfenbrenner (2006) posited concern as to what prospect lies ahead for

the future development of our species, calling upon the developmental sciences to

communicate knowledge discovered:

In the United States it is now possible for a youth, female as well as male, to

graduate from high school, or university, without ever caring for a baby; without

ever looking after someone who was ill, old or lonely; or without comforting or

assisting another human being who really needed help. The developmental

consequences of such a deprivation of human experience have not as yet been

scientifically researched. But the possible social implications are obvious, for –

sooner or later, and usually sooner – all of us suffer illness, loneliness, and the

need for help, comfort and companionship. No society can long sustain itself

unless its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations and skills involved

in assisting and caring for other human beings. (p. 825)

Exploring the social fabric in which our children were developed, Bronfenbrenner (1986) identified disconnectedness brought about by the diminishing soul of the family, community, peer groups and school and a disconnectedness resulting from the diminished soul of each person resulting in feelings of alienation. Bronfenbrenner further expressed concern that schools were becoming "academies of alienation" (p. 436) and suggested that we transform education, making care a primary goal of the curriculum. He also stated that students would not only learn to care, but should engage in caring relations with the elderly and the sick. Students would become caring ambassadors capable of stepping in to care for others in cases of emergencies. Bronfenbrenner believed that schools were the institution best suited for care education as "the school is the only place in which all children gather every day" (p. 436) guaranteeing the core care curriculum would be delivered to all students. This would not only benefit the community but also the school, as students would be effective learners, receptive to their teachers' pedagogy and lessons.

Grounding our curriculum in care ethics would allow our students to see care modeled by their teachers; they would know that they were cared for and would learn to care for others. Students and staff would know the difference between empathy and sympathy and how to read the feelings of their friends and classmates, teachers and parents, siblings and neighbours. Care ethics have always been foundational to teaching and should be the anchoring framework of each school culture and thread through to teachers' pedagogy and assessment, administrators program implementations and senior administrations policy decisions.

Noddings (2008) stated that German philosopher Heidegger "described care as the very Being of human life" (p. 222), which indicated that as human beings, we were

immersed in care. Care was the ultimate reality of living. More specifically, Heidegger was referring to caring relations, which, in their most basic form, are connections between two people – a carer (giving care) and the recipient of care, the cared-for. In order for this to truly be a caring relation, both parties were called to contribute towards the encounter and feel care in the relation. Therefore, it was imperative to understand that in terms of teaching, if the students did not receive the caring behaviours, teachers would not be able to make a connection and students consequently would not feel cared-for (Noddings, 2008).

Tracing back to the seventeenth century when all 'true' assumptions were based in mathematical and scientific proofs, Heidegger demonstrated the dominance of the Cartesian perspective, "subject-object dualistic structure" (Woo, 2012, p. 570), resulted in the loss of the question of Heidegger's 'Being', primarily because Being was based on care and you cannot measure care mathematically or scientifically. Overcoming the Cartesian dualism allowed deep study of all aspects of lived experiences in relationships resulting in the growth and nurturing of Being. The concept of care and Being were complex but demanded attention as both were being taken for granted to detrimental effects of our children and society. Wilde (2013) stated "it is important that we acknowledge the existence of the phenomenon of care because it is at risk within a Cartesian understanding of teaching" (p. 18) as seen by the lack of care curriculum in our schools.

Caring relations, although imperative to school culture and student wellness, were often pushed to the side as teachers experienced pressure to teach every outcome in the curriculum, assess students multiple times and produce high achievement scores on

standardized exams. Noddings (1987) iterated "grades, honors, competitions, summative evaluations, rankings, the authority of hierarchical position all tend to introduce artificial separations that cripple caring relations and maintain the human heart in ignorance" (p. 27) further deteriorating society as students carry their competitive edge into their occupations. Many teachers had the desire to teach deep, complex, critical inquiry projects but surrendered to the pressure of high exam results. Educational institutions across the world were experiencing the loss of care "as pressures to de-emphasize the less countable" (Wilde, 2013, p. 22) but far more meaningful, interpersonal aspects of relationships were pushed aside to improve test scores, sometimes driven by the economic interests of the corporations whose tax dollars funded the education system. Teachers needed to have the freedom to exercise reasonable judgment and by removing "competitive grading and reduce[ing] the amount of testing that we do" (Noddings, 1995, p. 368) teachers began to define expertise more broadly, accepting the challenge to care by teaching the concepts that students want to learn.

The Cartesian tendency to equate existence with listable, measurable characteristics was known as making something "present-at-hand" (Wilde, 2013, p. 22), which sadly reduced experiences and narrowed understanding. The Cartesian perspective towards caring perhaps encouraged thinkers to negate the ontological meaning primarily because it could not be measured resulting in low status within the teaching profession. Within our accountability systems, "*achievement tests, learning outcomes, performance indicators* and *accountability* are terms that carry a great deal of weight in our school systems" (emphasis in original, Wilde, 2013, p. 23), all of which reduced the experiences of our students and the depth of their learning. They diminished the potential, complex

experiences to make them present-at-hand, replacing important, meaningful learning with rote lessons designed to improve test scores. The act of care could not be quantified with any certainty and was therefore easily dismissed in favour of measurable achievement and characteristics of effective schools. The caring actions of teachers needed to be encouraged and celebrated even though they were difficult to measure in terms of Classical Test Theory (Parkes, 2007).

Power inequities in schools and school systems resulted in systems that did not value the rich, meaningful learning that encouraged the development of both mind and soul. The hierarchical systems in education organizations have historically rewarded successful 'academic' students but sadly abandoned less successful students, perpetuating an insidious cycle of failure that inevitably affected society as a whole (Wilde, 2013). Without intention, "educators perpetuate[d] a system that create[d] strangers, rivals, and enemies" (Noddings, 1987, p. 25), which perhaps unintentionally supported the ideology of individualism rather than global cooperation. This calculated preparation for competitive life introduced artificial separations that crippled necessary caring relations in students.

Establishing a curriculum of care ethics would create a deeply meaningful and personalized program for every student with participatory action from each staff member. A curriculum of care moves from a linear, transmissive curriculum to an open matrix, responsive to students' expressed needs. Care curriculum would allow teachers freedom in planning and pedagogy, resulting in deep critical thinkers working on creative, innovative projects and learning outcomes. As educators, our goal should be for students to lead good, ethical lives and by guiding them through their education that is

personalized in a caring climate, each human individual would emerge, as relations would be constantly built and reinforced.

Authentic Care and Curriculum of Complexity

"To be different … students need to feel safe and supported;

thereby they can be adventurous" (Luo, 2004, p. 35).

In an effort to move away from an educational system that alienated students, Aoki (1990) postulated that "education must be transformed by moving toward a reclaiming of the fullness of body and soul" (p. 18) toward an inspirited curriculum that influenced students in engaging methods attuned to their worlds. Emphasizing learning from lived experiences, Aoki asserted that schools should encourage the development of human beings, and by schools asserting the togetherness of *doing* and *being*, students could fully explore *becoming*. This would accentuate the reflective relational assessment of self and the world. To inspirit the curriculum meant to open it to the fullness of all possibilities within that situation through relations with the world.

Grounding curriculum in care continued a foundational relationship that our young people have had since birth. It was "through relations that a human individual emerge[d]" (Noddings, 2012, p. 771) and nurturing and modeling this caring relationship through education prepared our students to be creative citizens who contributed to their local and global community. Macmurray (2012) advocated that we teach caring and learning to be human *through* education because "school is a community; and we learn to live in community only by living in a community" (p. 671), naming the school as the vessel through which caring relations should be taught. When the climate of care was established and maintained and students and staff were responding empathically towards

each others needs, feelings and experiences, everything else in the school should flow, creating an environment for students to not only learn but to thrive.

Doll (2002) encouraged us to think of curriculum as Dewey did, curriculum that was "intimately connected to the child" (p. 40) thus making learning personal and meaningful to the student. By being their own limits, the curriculum and the learner not only defined the entire process but also determined its level of success. Noddings (2012) iterated that it should be the hope of all "caring teachers that their students will enter the adult world prepared to care" (p. 780) and by grounding our curriculum in care, we are not only hoping for it, we are actively teaching our students to be *carers*.

Cartesian assumptions were affable, especially in the digital and industrial world, primarily because they were quantifiable. Any number of relationships could have been identified and supported with data, which provided acceptable proof for proposed planning, grant requests or policy implementation. Pedagogy modeled after Cartesian-modernist separation reflected copy-model theories, or more advanced with discovery pedagogies. Cartesian assumptions that separated the mind and body, the student from the school system, caused extraneous harm not only to the students' experience in school but also to society as students' competitive drive leeched into society. Doll (1993) stated that subject and object "exist independently and in isolation" (p. 290). However, care needed to be qualified with characteristics delineated by students so teachers could strive to demonstrate caring relations allowing students to thrive and succeed both in school and society. Wilde (2013) stated "nonquantifiable qualities such as caring, beauty, wonder, generosity, happiness and so on are placed in the realm of subjectivity, mere additions to the 'real', objective world" (p. 11) but educators and policy makers should consider

accepting the nonquantifiable characteristics as the framework for the creation of school systems.

Moving away from Descartes' Cartesian assumption that mind and body are fragmented brought educators to the post-modern "*currere* view [that] makes mind 'a verb'" (Doll, 1993, p. 278), where the mind and its surrounding environment functioned together with results dependent on each other. Doll's postulation saw the mind as actively involved in meaning-seeking and meaning-making. Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) bioecological model confirmed "both objective and subjective elements are posited as driving the course of human development" (p. 797) where neither alone was sufficient. This drastic shift from the mind being a vessel to be filled with pre-determined knowledge, to an active organism engaged in reciprocal interactions with its immediate environment through proximal processes moved education into the post-modern era.

Doll (1993) postulated "the post-modern complexity theory shows the collapse of simple, linear, present order does not necessarily lead to *disruptive chaos*" (p. 278) but rather resulted in productive chaos and self-organization where new learning occurred. Post-modernists viewed the world as interactive, diverse and connected. The open, recursive nature of the postmodern curriculum framework asked for "alternatives and relationships" (Luo, 2004, p. 33), which would emphasize the entrenched dynamic connections. A postmodernist curriculum, characterized by students interacting with the curriculum intuitively and where diversity and multiple perspectives were celebrated, allowed students freedom to explore critical thinking skills. Luo believed a "post-modernist curriculum is a *verb, a movement*" (p. 34) characterized by Doll's (1993) four R's: richness, recursion, relations and rigor. This complex, nonlinear order encouraged

the learner to be a creator of knowledge rather than a passive recipient of a sequential, linear curriculum. Moving away from a curriculum based on "transmission, linearity and measurement" (p. 279) towards a curriculum rich with creation, transformation and nonlinearity resulted in students demonstrating deep learning and creativity.

Doll (1993) further stated "the making of meaning requires, but is not guaranteed by an open, indeterminate system" (p. 283) with indeterminacy only possible to the degree self-organization is allowed. Students that only experienced a linear, transmissive curriculum would be devoid of opportunities to make essential meanings. In terms of curriculum, Doll (1993) further stated there needed to be "*just enough* perturbation, disturbance, disequilibrium (Piaget) or dissipation (Prigogine) built in so that self-organization will be stimulated" (p. 284) and in order to do that, a curriculum grounded in a framework of safe and caring relations was necessary to allow students to push into cognitive dissonance. The teachers' challenge was to understand how to coax their students into the challenging, chaotic space so that "self-organization can be encouraged" (p. 284) and celebrated. A school with a solid framework for safe, caring relations informed by robust assessments of students' expressed needs would allow teachers to fully understand how they could provide care to their students allowing students to be coaxed into disequilibrium where deep, critical thinking can occur.

Through advances in micro- and macro-biology, quantum physics, astrophysics and organic chemistry, it was evident that nature rejected simplicity in favour of complexity. Doll (2012) stated "complexity theory, allied with chaos theory through the utilization both make of nonlinear processes (especially iteration and fractal dimensions), came later in the century with the realization that nature itself is fractaled and self-

organizing" (p. 18) and it was these two concepts that characterized complexity. Doll (2002) proposed that "it is time for curriculum itself to adopt this shift and embrace, not reject, complexity" (p. 45), which encouraged self-organization and emergence, the central activities around which new learning emerged. To employ the *currere* view where "mind [was seen as] 'a verb'" (Doll, 1993, p. 278), running the curriculum course, our school needed a strong community, as the community was the glue that held *currere* and complexity together. A safe, caring community was "the vehicle by which we transform and transcend ourselves" (Doll, 2002, p. 52) and by creating an effective assessment of safe, caring and welcoming schools, we could narrow the moving construct target effectively.

Moving towards pedagogy based on paradox "shifts the focus from this subject-object split to their integration, conjunction, union" (Doll, 1993, p. 286), which implied indeterminacy and self-organization reflective of a school framework that was perceived as safe and caring by the students. Children could not feel the strength to ease into chaos and disorganization of learning unless there was implicit trust built on caring relations with their teacher. Employing a transformative *currere* would focus on the process of "traversing the course, of negotiating with self, others and the course" (p. 286), resulting in rich, deep learning in a safe environment.

At the heart of complexity and post-modern curriculum were relations, and as they become the focal point for epistemology, "one moves from data collection to relationships, one also moves from isolated facts (with all their 'inertness') to interconnected or webbed patterns (with their ongoing 'aliveness')" (Doll, 2012, p. 25), allowing teachers and students to work together to conceptualize their lessons.

Foundational Elements to Caring Relations

"To inspirit curriculum is to open it to the fullness of possibilities inherent

in a situation through relations with the world at large" (Doll, 2012, p. 170).

Students' readiness to understand involved "being *awake"* (emphasis in original,

Wilde, 2013, p. 34), which was only attained by teachers acting with care to respond to

students' expressed needs. Teachers could not plan to care in a prescribed manner before

entering the situation. Teachers needed to be equipped with the tools necessary to show

and model care so they could have responded authentically to the situation itself, in that

very moment. Care was constant and required staff to be receptive to ever-changing

situations. Coupled with teachers' narrative research, a safe, caring and welcoming

school culture would recognize potential prejudices (of both teachers and students) and

encourage true *understanding* which "involves insight into the incompleteness of our

traditions, practices and belief systems in the face of moments requiring care" (Wilde,

2013, p. 47). Strong caring relations would ensure that my teachers were equipped with

the knowledge of their students' called-for *currere*, resulting in dynamic instruction and

reliable assessment methods.

To embrace Doll's (1993) *currere* criteria of "richness, recursion, relations and

rigor" (p. 287), teachers needed to understand the foundational elements of caring

relations. To shift from a prescribed, transmissive curriculum to a lived *currere*, a safe

and caring school culture should be the foundation through which the *currere* is born.

Students and teachers as spectators of learning would now become active learners and

practitioners, respectively, engaging in thoughtful Socratic discussions, growing into

passionate critical thinkers and fierce protectors of democracy. I posit that the

foundational elements to teaching with care are teaching as an authentic listener; teaching as an authentic practitioner; teaching with openness, understanding and determination; and teaching with confirmation. In the following sections, each of the foundational elements is described and related to the construct of care.

Teachers as Authentic Listeners

Caring relations developed when the *"carer* is *attentive"* (Noddings, 2012, p. 772) to the expressed needs of the cared-for and not simply the assumed needs as prescribed by the school, parents or curriculum. As the carer attended to the expressed needs, s/he becomes "engrossed in the cared-for and undergoes a motivational displacement" (Noddings, 2013, p. 176) meaning that for the time of caring, the carer responded non-selectively to the cared-for's expressed needs, even if they were different from the assumed needs. This practical view simply allowed the teacher to lead the student to an objective and then helped the student attain the objective after they had chosen to embrace it, perhaps out of intrinsic interest or trust for the teacher. The caring teacher needed to help the child "attain competence in his own world of experience" (p. 178) by working cooperatively with the student.

Wilde (2013) stated "listening deeply is an aspect of teaching with care" (p. 48) which required dedication and discipline. To fully understand, the cared-for often required the carer to remain silent, thus opening himself or herself to the possibility of understanding without imprinting their narrative onto the story. To be a receptive listener, one had to refrain from speaking to ensure space for the emergence of the story and true understanding to occur. Noddings (2012) stated "listening to ideas of students is clearly

important pedagogically" (p. 774) as it encouraged students to learn the subject matter as well as starting to understand each other.

Listening was also important emotionally because it allowed the teacher to build a strong relationship with the student. As care and trust increased in the student-teacher micro-system, the teacher was able to address curricular objectives to attain educational fulfillment. Spacious listening opened up potentials for our students to be free from limitations and exposed to possibilities of deep, authentic learning.

It should be imperative to all teachers and administrators that their students be heard as it is essential for safe and caring school cultures. Nonjudgmental compassion essentially invites all students to be heard and cared for. Teachers should not ignore assumed responsibilities, of course, but their attitudes and expectations resulted in trust and respect from their students. Marginalized students, in particular, benefitted from unconditional, open listening. Wilde (2013) referred to this as *Gelassenheit* and noted that it "carries with it a deep respect for life in all its diversity" (p. 55) as it listened for the potential in others, particularly those teachers had difficulty teaching.

Authentic listening would allow children spaciousness to *be* and to navigate through the world to find their true selves. Authentic listening is challenging, as it demands silence from the carer and spaciousness to embrace all students. The difficult nature of authentic listening would result in strengthening caring actions and cultivate careful, compassionate school cultures. Both students and teachers would learn to respect each other, the school and society.

Teachers as Authentic Practitioners

An authentic teacher exhibiting care would be careful to engage students in situations that encouraged growth and critical thinking. Wilde (2013) iterated "encouragement gives care back to the other person" (p. 60), which would result in our students learning to care for each other and the world around them. Significant learning, would occur when teachers knew their students well and there was a high level of trust between them allowing a new world of opportunity for both of them. By "leaping ahead" (Wilde, 2013, p. 57), authentic caring characterized by spaciousness necessary to allow the cared-for to recognize his/her own potential, teachers would encourage exciting experiences that resulted in critical thinking and deep, meaningful experiences. Rather than transmitting a prescribed, linear curriculum, authentic teachers would explore topics in-depth and possess a depth of knowledge in their subject area, able to connect the targeted objective to each student in the classroom. Authentic teachers' pedagogy would be inviting and connected to their students' lives, involving teaching topics that students cared deeply about.

Teaching with Openness, Understanding and Determination

Teaching with an open heart and mind would invite and encourage participation from students. Reading and interpreting situations with openness would emulate an interpretable world, which would demonstrate to our students a willingness to question what was comfortable and expected. To truly achieve a curriculum that was both "*rich enough in depth and breadth to encourage meaning making*" (Doll, 1993, p. 288), the teacher would need to be open to invite participation and the curriculum had to be challenging and meaningful for the students. This dynamic state, which was not to be

confused with rigidness, invited a complex, creative curriculum open to new opportunities to be seized by the teacher (Wilde, 2013).

Teachers would need to be able to read and interpret situations with openness to ensure they were making the best decisions for their students. Teachers also need to be true to themselves, which comes with a strong and deep understanding of their own narrative, and to their students. Within all schools and school systems is a hidden power structure and authentic teachers must be mindful of new initiatives and how they will affect their students' learning.

Teaching with Confirmation

Confirmation is "the act of affirming and encouraging the best in others" (Noddings, 2008, p. 230), which identifies the *better self*, the one in the act of caring, and continues to encourage its development. Confirmation would only occur when there was a strong relationship between the cared-for and the *carer,* as it would be difficult to identify this behaviour in some cases. Confirmation "depends upon and interacts with dialogue and practice" (Noddings, 1986, p. 196), which denotes the importance of teachers having a strong background in the foundational tenets of caring relations. It would be important for teachers to have a very clear and deep understanding of the moral commitments and values of the community in order to properly confirm the cared-for's actions. When confirming actions, "we differ from character education in our use of dialogue and confirmation in preference to rules and penalties" (Noddings, 2013, p. 123), which would move away from a focus on spacious listening to increased attention for apparent growth in character traits such as citizenship and morality. Teachers would

confirm students' not from the belief that they were better than others but because they had given evidence that their character and actions are improving.

The four foundational elements to caring relations should be embedded in our school framework and encouraged in all of our teachers and administrators. In order for students to learn about caring relations, their teachers and administrators should model the main tenets of listening, confirming and dialoguing to them. The foundational elements provide the bedrock for caring relations in the school community that would then allow teachers to coax students into cognitive dissonance as they explored the curriculum as *currere.*

Reframing the Assessment of Safe and Caring Schools

"A broader range of assessment tools is needed to capture important learning goals and

processes and to more directly connect assessment to ongoing instruction"

(Shepard, 2008/2009, p. 99).

An alternative to the traditional assessment design incorporated in the Accountability Pillar Survey was the "assessment as research" (Slomp, 2016, p. 4) design, a process that begins with the assessors' needs and ends with an assessment that best suits the construct to be measured. Assessment as research attends to validity, reliability and fairness through its open nature and funneled approach as it draws on both quantitative and qualitative research traditions (Slomp, 2016).

Phase one of the "Integrated Design and Appraisal Framework" (Slomp, 2016, p. 4) identified the information needs that motivated the assessment, the audiences for that information, inferences and actions taken based on the information gathered, populations to be affected from the information gathered and subsequent actions taken

and the intended and unintended consequences that resulted from the assessment process. Phase two defined the construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools as seen through the students' perspective. Phase three called for the design of multi-modal assessments that were then appraised for consequential validity, construct representation, construct underrepresentation or construct irrelevant variance. If these assessments were to be used to measure safe, caring and welcoming schools, a scoring system would be developed, results would be analyzed and a plan would be implemented for analyzing assessment consequences 'paying particular attention to intended, unintended, positive and negative outcomes" (Slomp, 2016, p. 4).

Mislevy (1996) stated "effective assessment under a cognitive perspective requires first being clear about the inferences one wants to make" (p. 391) which, in this case, was to understand how care was expected and perceived by students in order to improve the level of care in the school. A multi-modal, social-constructivist assessment plan directly correlated to a construct of safe and caring schools to ensure validity and reliability would aid administrators in developing a solid, robust plan to improve the safe and caring relations in the school.

Phase One: Construct Development Process

Motivation. As a school administrator operating from an ethic of care, it was imperative to identify the construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools from the students' perspective. Noddings (2012) stated "the teacher as carer is interested in the *expressed* needs of the cared-for, not simply the needs assumed by the school as an institution" (p. 772). In terms of a safe, caring and welcoming environment, the construct of students' perception of care was identified and the theoretical construct was

developed. The construct needed to be delineated and the facets of the construct would need to be communicated to staff to ensure that all students are entering a safe, caring and welcoming environment. Noddings iterated "care ethics emphasizes the difference between assumed needs and expressed needs" (p. 773), which illustrated the importance of identifying each of the needs and making that public knowledge to teaching staff.

Audiences. There will be many stakeholders privy to the assessment information gathered. Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and students would be welcomed to access the results and provide feedback to inform programming. Student voices should contribute to school programming and upon analysis of the assessments, programming could be instituted to address student wishes and/or concerns. Teachers would be able to reflect not only students' perceptions of caring relations but also on their own ability to care through their self-assessment, professional development and through the results of the narrative inquiry.

Possible inferences from assessment results. The proposed assessments would provide a wealth of rich, detailed information regarding safe, caring and welcoming schools. The assessments designed were created to promote equity by ensuring there are no racial or gender overtones; to guarantee that student input and perspectives guided the construct and assessments; and administrators, teachers and students are the primary recipients of the assessment information which would allow them to make appropriate site-based decisions regarding programming and student initiatives, teacher professional development and school culture decisions. Because my goal was to develop a construct that captures safe, caring and welcoming schools from the perspective of the students, I

focused my research primarily on how junior and senior students' perceived care and tried to delineate that to junior and senior high students.

This data could be used to provide in-depth knowledge about results from the Accountability Pillar Survey and the Learning Bar Survey. The multi-modal assessments would provide extensive data for the results from the mandated assessments. Further to that, senior administration, administrators and the community could examine the showcase of safe and caring schools as presented by the students. I think that would give a very comprehensive view of the concept of safe, caring and welcoming schools that is embedded within schools full of varying socioeconomic status, family types and ethnicity. Administrators would be able to draw from a wealth of information to answer any questions that senior administration may have regarding students' feelings of safety and care, the school culture and teachers' caring knowledge, skills and dispositions.

Administrators should be programming with safe, caring and welcoming schools construct as the framework for their school. Further to that, they should be providing teachers with professional development opportunities, self-care professional development and spaciousness to examine their narratives to ensure that teachers are cared for at work, which would allow them to care for their students. Administrators could also use the information gathered from the students to design professional opportunities specific for each teacher with hopes to improve the school culture. Administrators could use the teachers' self-assessment tool to initiate professional conversations, examining for information to help them improve their own practice. Finally, administrators could use this information to filter initiatives and program suggestions from senior administration.

Phase Two: Identify Elements Foundational in the Assessment Design

The construct of safe and caring schools was developed after an extensive literature review (see Appendix A) to "ascertain the matrix of knowledge, skills, and dispositions" (Slomp, 2016, p. 9) that would collectively contribute to the developing construct model. I queried four databases, Google Scholar, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Education Journals and Academic Search Complete. In addition to this, I also searched the archives of Teachers College Record, Alberta Journal of Educational Research and Educational Leadership. I delimited the search to peer-reviewed articles from 1980-2017. Search terms included "care AND students' perspectives", "care AND education", "care", "care AND teaching", "care AND education NOT nursing", "care AND administration", "care AND administration NOT nursing", "caring relations", "caring relations AND education". The articles that I retained for the development of the construct of care needed to examine caring relations from the students' perspective rather than theoretical models of care based on cognitive research. Upon careful examination, five construct facets of safe, caring and welcoming schools were identified: teacher knowledge, teacher skills, teacher dispositions, school culture and administrator support (see Table 1). A map of the construct features has been included (see Figure 1).

Sadly, extensive research was attempted in the area of First Nations, Metis and Inuit and all of my search queries ended with no usable research for this project. I queried four databases, Google Scholar, Education Research Complete, ProQuest Education Journals and Academic Search Complete. Search strings included "First Nations AND care"; "Aboriginals AND caring relations"; "First Nations AND care NOT health"; and

"First Nations perceptions of caring relations". Caring relations for our aboriginal youth

is an area that calls for more study.

Table 1

Construct of Students' Perception of Care

Construct Facet	Teacher Knowledge	Teacher Dispositions	School Culture	Teacher Skills	Administrator Support
Sub-constructs	Knowledge of Self (Narrative)	Interest in Students' Lives	Emphasis on relationships within the school and broader community	Dialogue	Responsive school programming
	Knowledge of Subject Content	Interests in Students' learning	Social/ Learning Ecology	Models Caring Behaviour	Caring for staff
	Knowledge of Child Development	Values Relationships	History and Culture of the School and Community	Confirms Caring Behaviour	School relationships with the community
	Knowledge of School History	Respects and Trusts Students	Responsive School Community	Reciprocates Caring Behaviour	
		Passionate about students, subject matter and school		Receptive and Critical Listener	
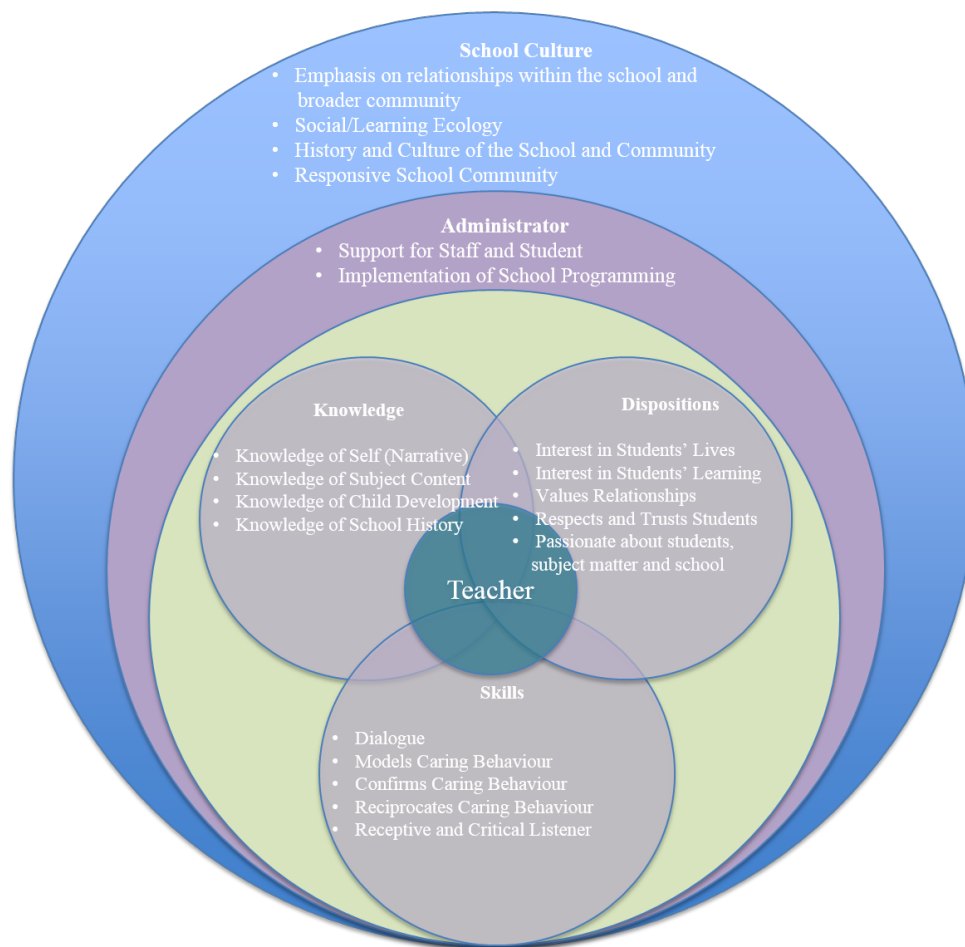
Figure 1. Construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools.

The literature review delineated five construct facets that contributed to students'

perceptions of caring schools. The construct facets nomological nature weaved together

an integrated and interrelated model, similar to Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model,

with each facet providing a layer to students' perceptions of caring relations without any

one construct facet eclipsing the other. Each of the five following construct facets

contributed to students' overall perception of care at school: (a) teachers' knowledge of

their subject content, child development, school history, and own narrative; (b) teachers'

dispositions as indicated through their interactions with students, demonstrations of

interest in students' lives and levels of learning, demonstration of valuing student

relationships, and respecting students, and demonstration of passion towards their subject area and school culture; (c) teachers' understanding of school culture, their understanding of the history and culture of the school community, the schools' level of responsiveness to students' expressed needs and demonstration of teacher, and administrators' emphasis on relationships within the school and broader community; (d) teachers' demonstrations of caring through receptive listening skills, demonstrations of caring behaviours, modeling caring relations, initiating dialogue with students both in- and outside of school, reciprocating caring relations, and confirming students' demonstrations of care; (e) administrator support for staff to allow staff to provide caring relations to students, administrators' demonstrations of care to students and the broader community, and administrators implementation of programming based on the expressed needs of students and staff. All of the construct facets worked together harmoniously to support and enhance caring relations in the school starting with administrators providing care to their staff. Administrator care would, in theory, provide teachers the energy and strength to care for their students, care for themselves, engage in specific professional development to enhance their caring relations with students and continue to demonstrate caring dispositions towards their students. The following section describes each construct facet in greater depth and detail.

Construct facet: Teacher knowledge. Students value and make stronger, more meaningful connections with teachers who had an in-depth understanding of their own narrative, subject matter, school context and developmental stages of teenager's growth. Owens and Ennis (2005) stated "teachers should develop a dynamic understanding of self in relationship to others across multiple contexts" which would allow them to open

themselves to caring relationships with students. Teachers with a strong understanding of self, perhaps through naïve storying or narrative research, enabled teachers to reconstitute themselves to be the very best possible teacher at every moment (Fowler, 2006). Teachers with an in-depth knowledge of self "feel compelled to provide similar experiences for the students with whom they work" (Larson & Silverman, 2005, p. 189), which suggested that teachers' personal biography had a very strong influence on teaching conduct, perhaps more so than teacher preparation.

Teachers with in-depth knowledge of their subject content, spanning across the curriculum, allowed students opportunities to engage in critical thinking and creativity. Noddings (2005) stated caring teachers need a richer, broader (latitudinal) knowledge base to "respond to the voiced and unvoiced needs of their students" (p. 776), which allowed them the opportunity to offer multiple possibilities for students to make connections to not only existential questions but also to their current social life. Nowak (2002) stated the importance of teachers "being an expert in the subject that is taught" (p. 5), as it allowed them multiple opportunities to make learning meaningful to each student in the class.

Another important sub-construct was the teachers' knowledge of child development; students not only expected teachers to understand their developmental stages but to adjust their expectations of their students accordingly. Noddings (2005) supported that account stating teachers were more capable of responding to the voiced and unvoiced needs of students based on knowledge of children. Understanding the stages of child development enabled educators to look at student behaviours and child development theories to guide them in decision making with their students (Williams,

2000). Teachers knowledge of students' various stages granted them the knowledge of "what is right for a developing child may differ from day to day" (Nowak-Fabrykowski & Caldwell, 2002, p. 5), which allowed them flexibility to respond appropriately in each instance.

Teachers who possessed a depth of knowledge about the school, its history and the current culture were extremely important to students' perception of caring instructors. Teachers who did not take the time to understand the traditions of the school, the *hidden* school culture, were not perceived as caring teachers.

Owens and Ennis (2005) suggested teacher caring was made evident to students when teachers acknowledged racial differences, confronted political tensions and involved students in developing solutions and strategies. Teachers that celebrated the schools culture and traditions were perceived as more caring than teachers who feigned ignorance or chose not to take the initiative to understand and celebrate the traditions.

This construct is stable socially, culturally and racially. It addressed and celebrated both students' and teachers' culture and racial differences. This construct did not measure any one type of race and social norm, but attempted to recognize the realms of teachers' knowledge of themselves, students' stages of growth, the subject matter they were teaching and the past, present and future of the school culture.

Construct facet: Teacher dispositions. The construct of teacher dispositions was difficult to delineate while researching students' perceptions of care. However, it was very clear that teachers' dispositions were extremely important to students. With the dynamic nature of this construct, it is imperative to remain humble and mindful that the

construct of care is responsive to students' expressed needs and to ensure the assessment results contribute to keeping the construct up-to-date.

Jeffrey, Auger and Pepperell (2013) stated "students' global opinion was that it is acceptable and usually a reflection of caring for teachers to know personal things about students" (p. 108), highlighting the importance of teachers taking time to dialogue with students. Of particular importance was the fact that students believed teachers who initiated conversations, were more caring than teachers who solely responded to student-initiated dialogue. Teachers taking time from their busy day were valued by students and often sought out when critical incidences in their lives arose. Alder (2002) stated "students saw care in teachers who they believed knew them as whole people, who took the time to talk with them and to listen, students across studies see caring teachers as those interested in them personally" (p. 262) and tended to trust teachers' sensitivities with issues of confidentiality.

Students also indicated that teachers should show great interest in students' learning. Jeffrey, Auger and Pepperell (2013) stated "teachers should recognize that providing academic help to students is seen by the students as a manifestation of caring, not as a task that takes time away from the construction of caring teacher-student relationships" (p. 108) especially when it is coupled with high-expectations and respect of the student. Caring teachers are considered to be helpful, take time to answer questions fully, worked along side them and generally taught to understanding (Alder, 2002). Schussler (2006) iterated "lack of care correlates with lack of academic achievement" (p. 1489) confirming the importance of caring relations for students and levels of achievement.

Teachers who demonstrated care showed that they valued relationships. Jeffrey, Auger and Pepperell (2013) stated "the key qualities of these relationships appear to be related to the ability or skill of the adult to…convey acceptance and emotional warmth, offer assistance as necessary, model regulated behavior, and enact appropriate structures and limits for the child's behavior" (p. 204), which not only demonstrated teachers' valuing the relationship but also demonstrated confirmation. Students' perception of teachers who valued their relationship were deemed very important as it established respect and allowed them to continue to teach the students. They encouraged students to complete assignments with high expectations for results, pushed them into disequilibrium and urged them to delve into critical thinking.

Coupled with valuing relationships was respecting and trusting the students. Schussler (2006) stated "teachers demonstrated respect for students by trusting in their abilities and pushing them to succeed even when students were not exhibiting success for whatever reason" (p. 1472), which showed students that they believed in them and their potential. Students felt cared for when they were presented with opportunities to succeed, when they were respected and a family atmosphere existed. Students' perception of respect was directly linked to whether or not they believed the teacher trusted them. Alder (2002) stated reciprocal dialogue implied "respect and empowerment.

The last sub-construct of teacher dispositions was teachers being passionate about their subject matter, the school and their students. Nowak-Fabrykowski and Caldwell (2002) suggested teachers who were passionate about their subject and their profession emanated care; care would become like a virus, infectious and contagious.

This construct is also stable socially and culturally and racially. It draws attention to teachers' dispositions towards students, opening lines of communication between both teacher and student, as well as with parents.

Construct facet: School culture. A school culture that placed an emphasis on relationships within the school and the broader community were perceived by students to be caring. Of particular interest, students believed that when the caregiver was embedded in the community or culture, caring relations were easily facilitated (Owens, 2005). Teaching staff and administrators acted as a linchpin between students and the school. Ellerbrock (2013) stated "teachers are a vital component to creating a community of care, as they provide a bridge between the school and the individual student" (p. 394) effectively connecting students with the school. Teachers who placed an emphasis on creating community connections were also seen as caring instructors because they bridged a relationship between the school and the community, opening doors for student employment and experiential learning. Alder (2002) stated students and teachers "made it clear that they saw involving parents as a sign of care" (p. 252), reinforcing the importance of family and relationships in the school community. Schools with strong student leadership teams could initiate acts of care by organizing local and global initiatives of care. Often they could be seen looping the broader community into their initiatives, which opened the doors for community members to model caring to students.

Students deemed the social and learning ecology of the school very important. Vaandering (2013) stated "learning ecologies are rooted in an understanding of education as a dynamic, organic, living process where participants impact and are impacted by their environment and interaction with it" (p. 302), which confirms students' valuing their

learning environment. A school culture that values caring interpersonal relationships "enhances students' feelings about school and serves to improve student learning" (Owens & Ennis, 2005, p. 405) which can serve as an instrument to enhance and improve students' academic learning. Schussler (2006) further postulated the following:

> Most important … is the role that the organizational factors play in promoting care. There are cogent indicators that the ideology and structure of a school both facilitate students' perception that the school is caring and provide opportunities for people within the school to act in caring ways. (p. 1490)

It was evident that caring was consistently revealed as a desirable characteristic of a school culture, whether it was explicitly evoked or an implicit assumption supporting all policy, procedure and programming decisions. The social and learning ecology emulated a "family like atmosphere where all students belong" (Vaandering, 2013, p. 306) with extensive student supports provided by the teachers. Within this construct facet, teachers should be cognizant that "there are also differences in ranking by ethnicity, indicating that different social experiences develop different perceptions among students about teacher caring" (Hayes, Ryan, & Zseller, 1994, p. 15) and as teachers are aware of these differences, they adjusted their caring relations accordingly.

The history and culture of the community played a significant role in the construct facet of school culture. Owens and Ennis (2005) postulated "understanding and articulating the history of community and the cultural meaning of caring for different members of a school are essential facets of building continuity among fragmented social lives of many students" (p. 404) particularly when dealing with underrepresented or marginalized populations. The history and the culture of the caring school community

nurtured and promoted relationships between school administration, teachers, parents and students. Teachers and administrators needed to be cognizant that "children respond differently to different environments and teacher actions based on their demographic characteristics" (Hayes, Ryan & Zseller, 1994, p. 5) and so understanding the history and the culture of the school community meant taking time to understand the immigrating history and culture that migrant students are bringing into the school.

Cohen (2009) stated "safe, caring, participatory, and responsive school climate fosters greater attachment to school and provides the optimal foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning" (p. 185), which iterates the importance of staff having a full understanding of the schools' culture. Further to that, Alder (2005) postulated "when teachers acknowledged racial differences, confronted actual and potential tensions, and involved students in developing solutions and strategies" (p. 405) students perceived their actions as caring primarily because they were assuming a sense of agency. Cohen (2009) stated "school climate also promotes – or complicates – meaningful student learning" (p. 185) and therefore it was imperative that a school climate be responsive to students' expressed needs so as not to impede student learning and achievement. Alder (2005) iterated that "although teacher caring is important, when nested within a community of care, teachers have greater impact on academic success and general well-being of their students" (p. 406) making this initially subtle construct extremely important. This construct facet adequately addresses social and cultural concerns, but does need to be individualized to address all races in the school. Administrators and teachers are charged with acknowledging racial differences and responding to political

and social tensions in the best interest of their students to promote and celebrate student learning.

Construct facet: Teacher skills. Teachers should be skilled at dialoguing with students, which "consists of talking and listening, sharing and responding" (Owens & Ennis, 2005, p. 395) as it allows the carer and the cared-for to share ideas and understandings and to conceptualize new understandings of the cared-for. Dialogue often reflects a desire for a common understanding, empathy and appreciation for differing points of view, allowing teachers and students to reach a common ground. Dialoguing contributes to the growing relationship and also maintains it. Noddings (2010) stated "the purpose of such dialogues is usually to identify needs, to learn what the cared-for is going through, or what the carer is aiming for, and then to work cooperatively on meeting the needs" (p. 147) for each of the students. Teachers should be initiating the dialogue with students, both inside and outside of school if possible, to increase the level of respect and trust that the student has in the teacher. Owens and Ennis (2005) postulated "dialogue was frequently depicted as a means of building and maintaining a caring relationship" (p. 400) and regardless of the type of dialogue (empathetic or confrontational), dialogue was necessary to foster a close, caring relationship. Open-ended dialogue should be structured in such a way that neither party knew what the outcome or decision would be at the end of the conversation; it was an authentic dialogue absent of motives or personal interest. Caring dialogue should be "a genuine quest for something undetermined at the beginning" (Noddings, 2008, p. 228) giving ample opportunity to talk about what we want to show through developing caring relations.

The teachers' ability to model caring behaviours was deemed extremely important to students' perceptions of care. Modeling was viewed as vital in caring relations as teachers were showing students how to care rather than transmitting a formula for care (Noddings, 1992). It was imperative that "we show them how to care by creating caring relations with them" (p. 228) through moral education. Students who had not been cared-for adequately (at home) took a longer amount of time to respond to the modeling of caring relations.

Moral education could not take short cuts and could not be delivered with formulas and pre-planned lessons (Noddings, 1992). Owens and Ennis (2005) stated "modeling provides teachers with the opportunity of how to care through their own relations with cared-for students" (p. 395). Noddings (2008) suggested "we need to provide opportunities for them [students] to gain skills in caregiving" (p. 229), which would allow students to emulate caring behaviour by seeing it modeled by their teachers. Wentzel (1997) further posited that students saw teachers who modeled a caring attitude toward their work as exhibiting caring behaviours.

The caring act of confirmation, "an act of affirming and encouraging the best in others, to develop a positive relationship" (Buber, 1965, as cited in Noddings, 1992, p. 230) actively encouraged the development of our students' *best selves*. By attributing "the best possible motive consonant with reality to the cared-for" (Noddings, 1986, p. 193), the carer confirmed the student, showing them a glimpse of an attainable *best self* image. Confirmation depended upon dialogue, modeling from the teacher and practice from the student. In this reciprocal relationship, teachers also benefitted as students confirmed their pedagogy, assessment and social skills at school. The response that

students and administrators give teachers is at the heart of confirmation for teachers'

professional development. Confirmation lists both students and teachers "toward our

vision of a better self" (Noddings, 1992, p. 230).

Owens and Ennis (2005) iterated "reciprocity is a mutual interchange, a give and

take, which occurs across time" (p. 402), implying a sense of responsibility on both the

students and the teachers. Caring teachers need to be more cognizant of their sense of

obligation to the students and be willing to adjust their schedule accordingly to meet the

cared-for's expressed needs. Thompson and Ongaga (2011) stated "the notion of

reciprocity is important, for as students are cared for by their teachers, they reciprocate in

their efforts toward competence and in their support of peers" (p. 49) now modeling care

for their fellow classmates.

Students valued the receptive and critical listening skills of their teachers.

Listening was important pedagogically as well as emotionally and intellectually to

students. It is the gateway for caring relations. Listening with discipline involved

significant time but eventually created a relation of care and trust (Noddings, 2012).

Ensuring the teacher was listening for expressed needs and not expediently trying to

rectify the problem of the assumed needs was extremely important. Noddings (2012)

iterated "receptive listening (attention) is at the heart of caring for human others, but it is

also central to hearing the messages from books, art, music and nature" (p. 775) so

ensuring there was adequate time to listen authentically, spaciously and deeply was a skill

that all teachers must master.

Evident throughout the theoretical research was that students' perceived caring

action primarily through their teacher's skills. Teachers' skills were the proverbial tip of

the iceberg with teacher knowledge, teacher disposition, school culture and administrator skills all feeding into teacher skills. Teachers that had a strong depth of knowledge of the school culture but did not exhibit caring skills were not perceived to be caring. But in order to exhibit the correct caring skills, the other constructs needed to be present.

Construct facet: Administrator care. Although students did not recognise administrators in their view of caring relations, the research showed that administrators were necessary to provide care for teachers so they are able to care for their students. Courtney and Noblit (1994) stated administrators needed to ensure "that the teachers care for the students" (p. 77) by supplying adequate resources and time to the caregivers. Marshall, Patterson, Rogers and Steele (1996) suggested "an ethic of care can provide administrators with a valuable perspective to guide their moral reasoning and decision making" (p. 278) giving them tools to solve situation and context-specific problems they face daily.

Caring relations exhibited by administrators were more diffuse. Marshall, Patterson, Rogers and Steele (1996) suggested "translated into practice, the ethic of caring emphasizes connection through responsibility to others rather than to rights and rules" (p. 277) calling on administrators to filter programs, policies and initiatives to ensure they were a best fit for the school demographic and staff. Noddings (2007) stated "leaders, like classroom teachers, have to balance the objectives of higher authority with those of their staff" (p. 344) which demanded intelligence, courage and an understanding of expressed needs of their staff. Working from an ethic of care would guide administrators in their moral reasoning and decision-making. This construct provided an "overarching ethical framework to guide administrative decisions" (p. 278), which

allowed them to draw on appropriate leadership tools to solve situation- and context-specific problems they confront on a daily basis.

Administrators need to demonstrate care for the school, staff and students, embracing the diversity everyone brings into the school and the community. Administrators need to be aware that operating from an ethic of care is complex and dialectical not following a specific formula; it requires full sensitivity to the instance and people within it. Consistently operating from an ethic of care would provide coherence to students and staff within the school. Although this could be somewhat more difficult as an administrator because of their official position and the obligation they have to it, it may undermine the caring relations if not attended to properly. The diffuse and indirect acts of caring, particularly when at a distance from the students, did not mean that the principal "abdicates taking care of the children to the teachers" (Courtney & Noblit, 1994, p. 77) but conversely that s/he was responsible for all contexts of caring for stakeholders in the school.

Administrators also need to ensure they were meeting their professional responsibilities and through an ethic of care, they could develop strong relationships with staff by providing mentorship through coaching. When caring was "coupled with improvement" (Courtney & Noblit, 1994, p. 73), administrators strengthened relationships with the teachers thus increasing trust and allowing teachers the strength they needed to care for their students. Courtney and Noblit further stated administrators demonstrate care to teachers by "promoting professional development" (p. 75) that aligned with the teachers' professional growth plan rather than top-down initiatives from central office.

Administrators offered care in different forms to their staff but of particular interest was providing teachers the opportunity to discover and embrace their narratives. This afforded teachers the opportunity to engage in narrative research, which would begin to open them to truths "about the difficulty of being human and what it is we still need to learn and practice together in an environment of *educaritas"* (Fowler, 2006, p. 190). Fowler (2006) stated educators "must be alert to that which interferes with the good of the greater being in one's ever-more conscious self, able to recognize its own potential for harm and be vigilant to keep unethical motivations and deeds in check" (p. 77) ultimately encouraging teachers to fully understand what they are potentially projecting onto their students. Administrators could provide instances for teachers to reflect on their stories that unknowingly shape their pedagogy, teaching relationships and collegial interactions if they expect teachers to "move forward into understanding, meaning, and even poetics in teaching" (p. 79). Drawing teachers' attentions to understanding how their narratives influence what and how they teach would ultimately support their growth as a professional and well-ness of the individual. Incorporating narrative professional development into school planning days has "the professional, ethical, intelligent and personal *aim* of reconstituting the self to be the best teacher possible at every moment" (p. 153) allowing teachers to examine their practice and provide pedagogic space to enlarge relational boundaries benefiting the students.

Finally, although "a school principal's responsibilities in caring are rather diffuse, indirect, and distance from the children, this does not necessarily mean that the principal abdicates taking care of the children to the teachers" (Courtney & Noblit, 1994, p. 77), calling on administrators to make themselves available to their students, inviting them

into conversations and keeping an eye on the relations within the school. Although an indirect method of care, primarily because of the vast numbers of students administrators needed to connect with, it was imperative that they were on the front lines, helping the teachers and trying to make connections with the students whenever possible. Administrators attended to aesthetic caring with regards to their students (the majority of the time) but focused attention to authentic caring of the teachers.

This construct calls for more research. The limited resources found confirmed the findings and sub-constructs, but more direction is needed to support administrators efforts of care to staff and students as well as program choices for implementation. Administrators understand they are socially responsible for all of the people in their building but it is important to understand that in order for their students to perceive they are in a caring and safe environment, the teachers need to be able to give care which means they need to be able to trust their administrators. It is my belief that this construct facet is the root of the construct of care, as it enables the construct facets of teacher knowledge of care, self and students, teacher dispositions, teacher skills, and school culture to flourish and mesh together a caring environment for our students. Contrary to the limited research in this area, I think it to be far more important than educators are aware and vital to the effective operation of schools.

Phase Three: Development of Multi-Modal Assessment Program

The multi-modal assessment tools were designed to "measure performance, but also to change it, by encouraging teachers and students to modify their practice" (Pellegrino et al., 2001 p. 39 as cited in Bonner, 2013, p. 97) allowing for professional growth and program planning. Due to the nature of this latent construct and its high

subjectivity, a combination of assessments and research would result in rich, robust data. It would also allow staff and administration to correlate emerging data with professional development in hopes of improving the degree of perception of a safe, caring and welcoming environment. The proposed assessment tools are subject to change based on future research as well as emerging needs of each individual school utilizing the assessment bank. As administrators and assessors, it is imperative to be cognizant of the fact that "the more complex the construct being assessed, the less likely it is that we can ever capture that construct completely or exhaustively" (Slomp, Corrigan, & Sugimoto, 2014, p. 279), which highlights the importance of being humble when trying to understand the ever-changing context of our school culture, expressed needs of our students' which are dependent on their often hidden bioecological factors as well as the needs of our teaching staff. The key issue with the proposed assessment tool is to determine how well the construct of care is understood specific to each school context and student demographic and to ensure the assessment tool is then specified as necessary to meet the school and students' expressed needs.

Teachers, administrators, parents and students were brought into the inclusive design process to reduce bias, generate support for the assessment and enhance transparency and ultimately, validity of the assessment tools. The multi-modal assessment tool consists of five parts: (a) an extensive quantitative survey for students to complete in small, manageable portions throughout the year in a randomized fashion or survey administrators can choose a random sampling of questions based on the schools' needs; (b) monthly journal response based on each construct facet of care to be used not only as an assessment of care but also as lessons of construct facets of care throughout

the year. The monthly journal response provides administrators not only with students' perceived levels of care but also with students' understanding of caring relations; (c) self-reflection/journal for staff members to complete to delve into teacher narratives, identify areas of need for professional development and improve knowledge of caring relations; (d) safe and caring schools project showcase allows students the opportunity to demonstrate their identification of care in the school in a variety of ways to be shared with the broader community. Students have the opportunity to present what they believe caring relations are, how they feel cared for or how they would like to implement caring programs in the schools; and (e) longitudinal narrative inquiry which would allow the researcher/assessment administrator to collect rich, robust data about students' bioecological factors, their expressed needs of care, their interpretation of the school culture, teachers and administrators. In the following section, each assessment tool is described in further detail.

Quantitative survey. The quantitative survey is comprised of 214 questions, each with a six-point Likert scale, as well as space for anecdotal comments by students for each construct facet descriptor. Each question in the survey was mapped to the descriptors in the construct facets for each staff member in the school. The survey was designed to provide extensive data for each construct facet for each staff member in the school, including educational assistants, counsellors and option teachers, as well as to collect data for extra- and co-curricular events specific to each school. The quantitative survey as a research/assessment tool (see Appendix B) would allow test administrators to code the data and look for trends of both the staff and student population. This survey would also be a valuable pre- and post-assessment tool allowing administrators and

teachers to understand areas of interest of students, the current level of caring of the

school providing a solid baseline to compare with at the end of the year when the survey

is administered again for achievement. Due to the extensive nature of the survey, it

should not be administered to students at one time. A random sampling of questions

should be taken depending on which construct facet the survey administrator is collecting

data for or the survey should be broken down and small portions of it administered to the

students throughout the year. The survey was blueprinted to the construct as it "improves

and documents validity by mapping the way the test instrument as a whole represents the

assessed domain" (Bonner, 2013, p. 93) (see Table 3).

Monthly journals. The monthly journal responses not only assess the students'

perceptions of caring relations in school but also provide lessons of care. Each month

correlates to a construct facet of care, with each monthly theme building towards the next

month. There is more freedom with this assessment tool, as it needs to meet the

demographic, social and emotional needs for each student. At earlier ages, many parents

are still highly involved in their children's education and often insist on participating in

social and emotional lessons, such as caring relations. It would be up to the schools'

administration and homeroom teachers to decide how best to utilize this assessment tool.

The design is not meant to limit the results but enhance the understanding of care and

expressed needs of the schools' students.

The monthly journals would provide students the opportunity to blog, vlog, write

or draw their thoughts on safe, caring and welcoming school. Each month has a provided

lesson and assessment questions that could be adapted to meet each schools' or students'

needs (see Appendix C). For example, in October, students watch a documentary called

"Children Full of Life" which highlights a grade four classroom that roots all pedagogy and classroom conduct from caring relations. After watching the video and discussing it with their homeroom teacher, students would have the opportunity to respond to a variety of journal prompts such as "What lessons can we take from Mr. Kanamori's class and implement in our school?" Teachers would then have the opportunity to discuss responses and provide valuable information from our students directly to administrators, celebrating successes and highlighting areas of growth for the school. This assessment tool was designed to meet not only the students' needs, but also the homeroom teachers. It should not limit their chosen pedagogy but be flexible to enhance their lessons. The variety of prompts embedded in the journal responses should allow teachers to individualize each monthly theme specifically for their students' needs.

Following completion of the monthly journal, students' homeroom teachers would be responsible for reading and analyzing the work submitted and subsequently initiating intervention as necessary and providing feedback to administration to influence programming needs for the school.

A limitation of this assessment tool is that the monthly themes may need to be altered to meet the emerging needs of the school and the students. The response questions and videos may also need to be altered to meet the needs of the culture and demographics in the school. The monthly journals nature is to provide immediate feedback to the teachers and administrators and should have the freedom to respond to their expressed needs.

Self-reflection survey/journal for staff. Bonner (2013) stated "teacher self-inquiry may be more effective than researcher-driven inquiry for improving validity of

teacher practice" (p. 103) so a self-reflection survey/journal assessment for staff to complete quarterly has been incorporated in the assessment plan (see Appendix D). The self-reflection survey consists of 26 quantitative survey questions with a six-point Likert scale response and four anecdotal response questions as well as an open self-reflection portion. The self-reflection journal allows teachers the opportunity to examine their own practice, discover their narrative (if they have not done so already) and isolate instances and bioecological factors that they are bringing into their classroom every day. Akram and Zepeda (2015) suggested when self-assessments are conducted in non-threatening situations, the teachers are the best judge of their own performance and also are quite capable of assuming responsibility for the appropriate professional development to affect change. Teachers who engage in iterative self-assessments are more likely to be more motivated to examine and improve their practice, particularly if they are committed to professional growth (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012), which is why the assessment should be completed quarterly. I would recommend that administrators give staff time during professional development days or during staff meetings to complete their self-reflection survey.

It is important to note that when this particular assessment was developed, it was cross-referenced to the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS) (Alberta Government, 2013). Many of the sub-constructs of safe, caring and welcoming schools match the indicators in the TQS. I have provided a map of the blueprint of the TQS facets to the construct of care (see Table 2). Teachers are required to meet the TQS in its entirety so the self-reflection journal/survey may help remind teachers of the importance of caring relations as part of their professional obligation.

Table 2

Teaching Quality Standard Indicators Blueprint to Construct of Care

Construct Facet	Teacher Knowledge	Teacher Dispositions	School Culture	Teacher Skills	Administrator Support
Teaching Quality Standard Indicators	2d, 2e, 2n, 2p, 2q, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3i, 3k	2g, 2h, 2q, 3b, 3f, 3i,	2a, 2m, 2n, 3a, 3f, 3j	2q, 3a, 3f, 3i	2q

Safe and caring schools project showcase. Students throughout the school would be provided the opportunity to showcase why they think their school is a safe, caring and welcoming building in any format that they choose (Appendix E). They may choose to create dramatic production recreating events throughout the school or bringing to life moments of care; presentations; video productions; portfolio presentations; write a story; conduct an experiment; calculate the probability of working with a caring teacher based on their own experiences etc. All stakeholders would be invited to the celebration of safe and caring schools, including senior administration, board members, parents and community members. This showcase gives teachers, counsellors and administrators a strong understanding of whom students care about or who they feel cared-for by (an adult in the building) and begin intervention if there are gaps.

Longitudinal narrative inquiry. The Longitudinal Narrative Inquiry is an approach to the study of human lives and is a "way of understanding experience" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 17), which would provide detailed data specific to each school. It is the exploration of the "social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 18) in which individuals experiences are shaped and enacted. Narrative inquiry begins and ends with the lived experience, as it is the exploration of all the social aspects of the subjects' world and the storied lives they lead.

Narrative inquiry is both the phenomenon under study and the methodology for its study. It is how we understand human experience. Narrative inquiry provides insight into people's thoughts, emotions and interpretations, which would provide in-depth knowledge of students' perceptions of teacher care specific to each teacher and school culture.

The intent of using narrative inquiry as both assessment and research is to enhance certainty of the assessment results by reducing doubt and answering questions that may arise from the quantitative data. Narrative inquiry would provide deep insight into students' perceptions of safe, caring schools as well as provide direction for professional development of teachers and implement necessary programs for the school. Longitudinal narrative inquiry would provide robust data that can inform programming and teachers' knowledge of caring relations for their students (Appendix F). The researcher/administrator would choose between four to six willing student participants and commit to bi-monthly interviews throughout the school year that target caring relations at their school. Guiding questions have been provided but the researcher would have to adapt the narrative inquiry as the data was being gathered rather than solely adhering to a rigid question guideline. In order to properly use this assessment tool, it would be imperative to have a researcher or assessment administrator that was familiar with narrative inquiry method.

Administrator care, although an important construct in the construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools, was bracketed out of the assessment plan. Although the research that was found did indicate that safe and caring schools are dependent on administrator care, there was not enough information to develop a strong assessment tool.

As further research is completed, the construct of safe and caring schools will be adjusted, as will the assessment tool, to include administrator care.

Current Assessments of Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools

"The essential reliability issue is: Is there enough information here?"

(as cited in Parkes, 2013, p. 117)

I found there to be few comprehensive assessments that effectively assessed safe, caring and welcoming schools primarily because of the difficultly delineating what constituted a safe, caring and welcoming school environment specific to each school culture. Changing demographics, multiple ethnicities, socioeconomic factors, gender and political and social contexts all affected what a safe, caring and welcoming school culture encompassed. I developed a comprehensive, multi-modal assessment tool to effectively measure the construct of safe, caring and welcoming school culture, which allowed the target domain to be identified for administrators and teachers.

The assessment tool for safe, caring and welcoming schools was the Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Survey as well as The Learning Bar Survey. The Learning Bar Survey (formally "Tell Them From Me") was not mandatory for each school to complete and could only be used with a purchased contract between the school and The Learning Bar.

After mapping the Accountability Pillar Survey to the construct of safe and caring schools, five of the 205 questions were reflected in the 'safe and caring schools' portion of the survey. Questions from The Learning Bar Survey were also mapped onto the resulting construct.

There were 12 ambiguous questions that were difficult to map as to how the students perceived their intent. It was unclear if they contributed to the 'safe and caring schools' marker in the Accountability Pillar Survey. From this analysis, the construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools was underrepresented by the assessments provided.

- I feel safe at school [Construct 2 and 4]

- I feel safe on the way to and from school [n/a]

- Other students treat me well [n/a]

- My teachers care about me [Constructs 2 and 4]

- I am treated fairly by adults at my school [Construct 2].

Reliability and Validity of the Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools Assessments

"A measurement procedure for which evidence of reliability is unavailable

should not be summarily dismissed" (Parkes, 2007, p. 3).

Reliability

Reliability, the overall consistency of a measure, has historically been underpinned by the concept of replication, the sampling of observations statistically and unidimensionality, which is achieved when any single score is representative of the results as a whole (Parkes, 2013). Parkes (2007) stated "by conflating method with value, practitioners let the tools (the methodologies) define the jobs (sound measurement) and not the other way around" (p. 3) critically examining important educational measurement opportunities that are inaccurately reported because of the chosen assessment method. Parkes further stated that historically "if Classical Test Theory, Generalizability Theory, or Item Response Theory cannot be used, then the job cannot be done" (p. 3) but questioned if the intended values could be evidenced through alternative methods. The

reliability of an assessment tool is an important scientific value that cannot be abandoned. This traditional approach to reliability is purely statistical but the boundaries are being pushed by approaching "reliability as argument" (Parkes, 2007, p. 2), where a variety of assessments may be used collectively to establish the reliability of a multi-modal assessment tool.

Safe, caring and welcoming school assessment paradigm is very similar to classroom assessment methods, comprised of various modes with results triangulated to achieve reliability and validity. Due to the fact that these multi-modal assessments are not providing statistical results through multiple iterations, it was imperative to examine how reliable these assessments are because of their *classroom assessment* nature. In order to reduce measurement error, the quantitative assessment was designed to constrain the measurement situation using an objectively scored item format. To improve measurement of the open-ended journal response items, detailed instructions and time for questions will be given prior to the assessment. The performance assessment is accompanied with a comprehensive rubric as "scoring reliability is higher with a rubric than without one" (Parkes, 2013, p. 111).

The reliability of an assessment tool "consists of both social and scientific values and methods for evidencing those values" (Parkes, 2007, p. 2) and although Classical Theory could be used to assess the reliability of the quantitative survey, that method alone could not be used to determine the reliability of the entire assessment tool. However, even though the reliability of this assessment tool may be difficult to ascertain, that problem should not impede the use of the assessment tool as it would capture important information regarding students' perceptions of care. The general psychometric

consideration, which can be attained through the current assessments of safe and caring schools, should be subordinated to the information that desperately needs to be gathered. The demands of the information about safe and caring schools are not congruent with traditional reliability theory. The non-linear construct of safe and caring schools calls for a deviation from Classical Test Theory, Generalizability Theory and Item Response Theory.

The assessment tool designed was complex and multi-modal, necessary to accurately triangulate the emerging data for the complex construct of safe and caring schools. By expanding reliability "beyond evidence to theories and arguments" (Parkes, 2007, p. 5), the assessment tool designed could be demonstrated to be reliable enough to share with other schools and districts. I believe the assessment tool would be reliable because it addresses Parkes reliability argument in that it would be dependable, consistent and accurate to the context at hand. This assessment tool consistently outlines the construct facet and/or sub-constructs that it is measuring. For example, the quantitative survey clearly states which construct facet it is measuring and the monthly journals highlight the targeted construct facet. Clear statements regarding the purpose and context of the assessment have been included with each individual assessment allowing for accurate data analysis and results reporting. The level of reliability necessary would be determined based on the analysis of the results from each individual assessment and then the amalgamation of the results of all of the assessment tools. The evidence gathered from the assessments would provide support for the staff and students' caring needs specific to the school context. The narrative inquiry assessment would only be deemed reliable upon multiple iterations of the narrative interpretation of the results between the

interviewer and the participant. This collaborative process is entrenched in narrative inquiry but must be mentioned to ensure that the assessment as research tool is reliable.

Validity

Validity is "concerned with the clarification and justification of the intended interpretations and uses of observed scores" (Kane, 2001, p. 339). Kane further stated "validity is an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the *adequacy* and *appropriateness* of *interferences* and *actions* based on test scores or other modes of assessment" (emphasis in original, Messick, 1989, as cited in Kane, 2001, p. 327). Validity involves an evaluation of the overall credibility of intended uses of assessment scores, the proposed interpretations involve a rationale and consideration of other possible interpretations, recognize intended and unintended consequences of tests uses and the consistent criteria for judging validation are employed (Kane, 2001). Validity of the theoretical construct and assessment plan for safe, caring and welcoming schools was completed by "development of a theory, the development of measurement procedures thought to reflect (directly or indirectly) some of the constructs in the theory, the development of specific hypotheses based on the theory, and the testing of these hypotheses against observations" (Kane, 2001, p. 323). The specific hypotheses that would result from the assessment plan would be that the identification of the needs of care of our students would allow our staff to be well equipped to meet students needs of care. This would allow students to feel safe and far more willing to delve into cognitive dissonance, creativity and critical thinking, which could potentially be indicated by analysis of large scale test results. Also, teachers would be able to articulate needs of care to administrators allowing them to feel cared for and

supported in their pedagogical and assessment choices for their specific classes. Teachers, understanding the importance of parental and community support, would also extend their pedagogical field to embrace the broader community, strengthening relationships between themselves, the school, parents and their local population. The safe and caring schools assessment plan should provide data that would inform programming specific to staff and students' expressed needs, allowing staff to engage in pedagogy that is reflective of their knowledge base and students to push into chaos and disequilibrium where deep, critical learning occurs.

Congruent with Eid's (2010) theory that test validation would require multiple measures, the validation of the assessment tool for the construct of safe and caring schools includes five measures that are as different as possible but "are each adequate for measuring the construct (*multiple operationalism* in contrast to *single operationalism)*" (emphasis in original, p. 254). To have confidence in the measure of the construct, it would be essential to measure both the convergent and divergent (discriminant) evidence of validation. Convergent validity "is proven by the correlation of independent measurement procedures for measuring the same trait" (Eid, 2010, p. 255) achieved through the measurement tools diverse modes (performance assessment, self-assessment and quantitative survey). Divergent, or discriminant, validity would be achieved if the "correlations of variables measuring different traits are low" (p. 255). This iterative validation process of construct validity would measure not only the constructs but would include "the nature of the network that related these qualities to each other" (Lissitz & Samuelsen, 2007, p. 439), also known as *nomological network*, the theory of relationships within the construct and quite necessary for construct validity.

Construct representation. Each of the assessment questions has been blueprinted to the construct of safe and caring schools (see Table 3) to ensure construct representation. I posit that the combination of these assessments accurately captures the complex nature of the construct of safe and caring schools. These assessments could be used to provide robust data as to how students' perceive care specific to their context thus allowing all stakeholders to tailor programming, policies, directives and professional development appropriately. Understanding the qualifications for safe and caring schools as outlined by the students would allow senior administration to narrow their policies and procedures appropriately to assist administrators as well as delineate which initiatives are a good-fit for specific schools. Administrators can continue to provide care to staff members by supporting their professional development choices, coaching and mentoring them as they work on improving their practice to increase student engagement and learning. They can also use the data from the assessments to direct student programming to improve the safe and caring school culture. Further to that, administrators can use the data to ensure that they are exhibiting care to their students (although diffuse due to the sheer numbers) to address their expressed-for needs. Administrators can also use this data to inform Accountability Pillar Survey results and The Learning Bar results. Teachers will be able to use this data to have a strong understanding of what knowledge, skills and dispositions students' perceive as caring, how to improve their skills and focus their professional development. And, most importantly, students can use these assessments as research tools to ensure that their voice is heard. There are multiple forms that they can choose from to express their needs of care, how they perceive care, what constitutes a safe and caring school culture and direction for the future for their school.

Table 3

Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools Assessment Plan Blueprint to Theoretical Construct

Construct	Student Quantitative Survey Assessment	Monthly Journal Response Assessment	Teacher Self Assessment	Safe and Caring Schools Project Showcase	Narrative Inquiry
Teacher Knowledge	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20	September October November May	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Teacher Dispositions	21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104	September October December March April May	9, 10, 19, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30	Rubric Descriptor 5: Showing Interest in Students' Lives	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Construct	Student Quantitative Survey Assessment	Monthly Journal Response Assessment	Teacher Self Assessment	Safe and Caring Schools Project Showcase	Narrative Inquiry
School Culture	105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153	September October December January May	26, 27, 28	Rubric Descriptor 4: Responsive School Culture	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
Teacher Skills	154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214	September October February March May	4, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	Rubric Descriptor 1: Initiates Dialogue Rubric Descriptor 2: Models Caring Behaviour Rubric Descriptor 3: Receptive and Critical Listener	21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34

Table 3 provides a transparency of the assessment matrix correlated to each of the construct facets. The resulting blueprint illustrates the overlap of the assessments for each

construct facet underpinning the broad scope of the assessment plan. Each construct facet is covered with multiple measures to minimize construct underrepresentation and improve validity.

It is important to recognize that this assessment tool is not perfect and any of the assessment choices may constrain the ability to capture the entire construct. The intention is to use all of the assessment tools in order to triangulate the data and reduce instances of construct irrelevant variance. We must be cognizant that with the complexity of the construct and the assessment tools, we need to be humble with its uses as well as with the decisions made upon data analysis. With all complex constructs, the assessments for safe, caring and welcoming schools have been designed to increase inter-rater reliability with a degree of standardization combined with results from the narrative inquiry. The dynamic tension between assessment pieces should result in high validity and reliability making it a sound assessment. Eid (2010) stated tests can be validated "based on the idea that it is not sufficient to consider a single operationalization of a construct but that multiple measures are necessary" (p. 254), and with the five varied assessments, which are effectively designed to measure the construct, provided in this plan, an iterative validation process is offered resulting in a robust method for measuring this construct.

Construct irrelevant variance. Slomp, Corrigan and Sugimoto (2014) stated there are "three potential sources of construct irrelevant variance that can infiltrate the target domain being measured: observation methods, context, and other constructs" (p. 280). The primary consequence of construct irrelevant variance, in this context, would be that it distorts the picture of students' perception of teacher care. Construct irrelevant variance may seep into the assessment depending on the time the assessments are

conducted. Students typically give more authentic responses when they are not missing

desirable courses (such as physical education or exploratory courses) and when sufficient

time has been allotted.

Assessors also need to ensure that students who require accommodations receive

them, as with any other assessment, to ensure the assessments are still reliable and valid.

Each school would also need to tailor each assessment to address culture values and

norm. School demographics change drastically and therefore it is the responsibility of the

administrator or assessor to design the questions to reflect the school culture and

demographics, as well as the broader community culture.

Construct irrelevant variance may also be introduced in the narrative inquiry if the

interviewer was not cognizant of their official position in the school. Although the

narrative inquiry would produce strong, robust data that could provide direction for future

programming of the school and professional development for the teachers, the

interviewers' position in the school may alter the data as the participant may not always

feels comfortable answering truthfully. The narrative inquiry assessment as research

could have the Family School Liaison counselor as the interviewer to try and produce

valid, reliable results.

Construct irrelevant variance could also be introduced through the teachers' self-

reflection assessment. Teachers may not respond accurately fearing repercussions if

administrators, parents or students discovered self-professed problems or concerns in

their teaching. I would suggest that the self-reflection assessment be completed at home

and assume that teachers, as responsible professionals, would use the results from their

reflections, naïve storying and narrative research to improve their practice through

conversations with administrators and/or counselors, ATA members and pursue appropriate professional development.

Construct underrepresentation. The design of this assessment was created humbly and should be used with tentativeness, fully acknowledging that due to the complexity of the construct, it would be subject to change and difficult to cleanly capture at any one point in time. Students caring for other students, parents, administrators and senior administrators have been bracketed out of this construct. I have also bracketed out parent's perceptions of care.

During my research, I found it very surprising that students' valued teachers' knowledge of their ages and stages, knowledge of the subject matter and knowledge of themselves (as teachers). I think this sub-construct has been adequately assessed by the quantitative student survey and the teacher self-assessment but I am cognizant that this facet is difficult to capture in a clean, unbiased fashion. Further to that, students would have a difficult time measuring their teachers' subject matter knowledge and more assessment methods may be necessary to try and measure this sub-construct more accurately from the students' perspective.

I also believe that school culture is a very subjective area and warrants further research for constructs specific to each school. School culture is very important to students' perception of care but as students move into a school from a completely different geographic area and type of school, it is hard to pinpoint what type of school culture they value as safe and caring.

Consequential validity, intended and unintended results. Lying at the boundary between measurement and purpose is consequential validity. Consequential

validity attends to whether or not the evidence gathered achieved the intended purposes of the assessment plan and identifies possible intended and unintended consequences of assessment results. During the assessment design process, participants were consulted to increase support from stakeholders, reduce "potential for bias, and generate more appropriate assessment decisions" (Slomp, Corrigan & Sugimoto, 2014, p. 282) primarily to improve transparency of the assessment design process and intent as well as to avoid possible unintended consequences.

Providing a detailed sampling plan prior to students' completing the assessments would easily allow the test users to disaggregate the data. Disaggregating the data would allow the test users to "better understand whether any prior design decisions have had a differential impact on subgroups of students" (Slomp, Corrigan & Sugimoto, 2014, p. 283) and allow for assessment redesign. This ensures that decisions made based on the assessment results are reflective of the construct being measured and not factors related to gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

There are many intended outcomes of the assessment tool. Primarily, the assessment tool would provide quality, robust data delineating how students' perceive care providing solid information to guide programming, policies and initiatives both at the site-based level and the division level. This information would be valuable in Annual Education Results Report meetings, providing substance to survey results. This assessment tool would also give a much-needed voice to our students.

Theoretically, student achievement should improve; as students feel they are cared for, they should be more willing to enter a state of disequilibrium as they attempt self-organization and critical thinking. Creativity should increase as well because

teachers are pushing further into their curriculum, demanding more from their students. Student attendance rates should improve because they want to be at school as it is a safe, welcoming place.

Teacher self-efficacy should improve as they are reflecting on their own stories through naïve storying and narrative self-reflection, allowing them to accept themselves and bring their *best selves* into the classroom. Targeted professional development should also help to improve their self-efficacy as will administrator support.

The school culture should shift to fully support students' needs of care, focussing on caring relations as the fabric from which all other programs evolve. Being responsive to expressed needs of students should allow administrators to fine tune their programming, extra-curricular activities and needs, community programs and global programs to reflect students' expressed needs of care. School culture would also be a vehicle for students to start reciprocating caring relations to fellow peers, teachers, parents, community members and their global world.

Potential negative outcomes of this assessment tool would be inaccurate data gathered from students who may target a teacher they do not like or respect. Although the assessment was designed specifically with that in mind, students' have a gifted way of shifting the intent of an assessment to work for their intended means. Administrators with solid supervision and evaluation methods in place would be able to quickly disregard misinformation so that it would not skew the data.

Another possible outcome that would be negative for the teachers would be if teachers are found not to be meeting safe, caring and welcoming school constructs as they are embedded in the TQS, which much be met in its entirety to hold a professional

certificate in Alberta. Although it would be important for the school administration and the students for teachers to meet these standards, it does bring an element of unease and worry to both the teachers and the administrators.

Programming may be inadvertently narrowed to align with improving students' perceptions of safe, caring and welcoming schools. It would be important to be cognizant that a school culture is built on many different facets and that the safe, caring and welcoming schools portion should be the fabric from which they originate. Once that framework is in place, future programming can be identified and implemented to fall in line with the school's continuous growth plan.

I plan on monitoring the intended and unintended outcomes of the assessment tool by ensuring that the purpose of the assessment tool is explained in detail to all stakeholders, including senior administration and the board members, parents, students, staff and the local community. Parents, students and staff would be welcomed to offer feedback to me as the assessment tool is administered. Each stakeholder typically values a different construct facet, perspective or historical context and could provide valuable feedback regarding the possible that would occur because of the assessment tool. I would also analyze large-scale test results to establish quantitative changes in achievement levels. I would continue to establish and maintain healthy, caring relationships with my staff to ensure that I could support them if they experienced difficulty with foundational elements of care and the construct facets as well as to facilitate professional development requests. I would also monitor intended and unintended outcomes by establishing and maintaining strong relationships with my students; their actions, dialogue, relationships,

extra-curricular activities and academic results will provide the best feedback with the administration of the assessment tool.

Further Research

"Ultimately, a contemplative approach to pedagogy helps to align ourselves and our work with the deep resonances of life" (Wilde, 2013, p. 93).

Designing this construct opened many windows into the house of safe, caring and welcoming schools. There are many facets that affect my school; parents, teachers, administrators, peers, digital peers, and the local and global community all affect my students' days at school. It was clear that there are many areas that call for more research. Students' perceptions of safe and caring schools, although primarily dependent on how they perceive their teachers' skills, are also dependent on how they interact with their peers. Students giving and receiving care and entering into caring relations is a nebulous construct at best. It is reliant on genetics, social factors (how students are raised, family life and values), religious and/or spiritual factors, epigenetic factors and societal factors. With so many sub-constructs, it may be a construct completely separate from the construct of safe, caring and welcoming schools.

I focused my research on students' perception of safe, caring and welcoming schools but further research is needed in the area of how susceptible students are to their parents' perception of safe, caring and welcoming schools, which ultimately reflects the parents' opinion of the school. Students are very susceptible to their parents' opinions so what knowledge, skills and dispositions do parents value in a safe, caring and welcoming school? In the research completed, parents' perceptions of safe, caring and welcoming schools was not mentioned but I think it warrants more research.

Our students are digital natives and are immersed in technology every day. I bracketed out digital safety and caring relations from the construct of students' perceptions of safe, caring and welcoming schools primarily because it is new and there was little to no research in the area but also because I believe it would warrant deep, thorough research.

Another area that warrants further research is that of junior and senior high schools. The research was definitely targeted towards elementary schools and outreach schools. Further research needs to be targeted towards mainstream junior and senior high schools.

The last area that warrants further research is how administrators can hone their skills to provide caring relations for their staff as well as their students. Administrators need to know how to meet the needs of their many students. There was little research found on administrator care but I do believe that they anchor safe, caring and welcoming school relations by providing care to both their staff and students as they continue to balance caring relations with the community.

Hesitations and Limitations

This construct was complex due to the nature of the interplay of the micro- and meso-systems. The complexity of this construct will continue to change as the exo-system (processes taking place between two or more settings that does not include the developing person), such as senior administration and provincial policy makers, are included in the construct. Researchers and assessment administrators need to be cognizant of the dynamic nature of the construct of safe and caring schools and to ensure that it is constantly being referred back to, adjusted to meet students' needs and changing

school demographics, staff needs and administrators' policy and programming implementations. In order to be truly representative of the needs of the students in each school, this construct, although an excellent starting point for all schools, should be tailored (from the assessment plan results) specifically for each school and programming altered to meet the students' needs.

Finally, this assessment tool would be more robust if it included an assessment design for administrators. It is clear that teachers need care from their administrator so it would be valuable for administrators to understand what their needs are. It would also be prudent to add a self-reflection tool for administrators to increase their efficacy and meta-cognition of care for both students and teachers. Understanding that the interactions between the various micro-systems all affect the overall construct of safe and caring schools, it would be interesting to run a regression analysis of teachers' perception of administrator care and cross-reference that with students' perception of care and overall student achievement. My hypothesis would be that a school with a strong, grounded care ethic at the administrator level would result in students' feeling high levels of care and increased student achievement results.

Conclusion

"Teaching is a relational activity that requires action in the midst of

multifaceted contexts and situations" (Wilde, 2013, p. 73).

Safe, caring and welcoming schools should be a priority for senior administration, administrators and teachers. Knowing that every child feels safe and cared for would allow administrators to implement dynamic programming ultimately increasing student achievement and critical thinking skills. To experience Doll's post-modernist *currere-*

oriented curriculum, students need to be able to focus on the "process of traversing the course, of negotiating with self, others and the course" (Doll, 1993, p. 286) rather than focusing on the external attributes of it. I posit that students would be more likely to take academic and creative risks in a safe, caring environment surrounded by people they know care about them. Administrators should strive to ground their programming in a curriculum of care to avoid alienating students (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Educational leaders cannot avoid tensions between their expectations from senior administration, parents, teachers, community members or students. However, when they reflect on the nature of their career and how it impacts lives, they should understand that "education is a human enterprise in which persons seek to promote the fullest growth and development of others, then they have little choice but to embrace a caring ethic as a central guide to their interactions" (Beck, 1992, p. 480). Administrators who make decisions from a care ethic perspective will demonstrate an enduring commitment to relations, the bioecological wellness of the school and maintain an open mind and heart to the expressed needs of both the students and staff in their building. Operating from a care ethic would provide a basis for all short- and long-term decisions.

It is my hope that the construct of safe and caring school aids administrators and teachers as they care for their students. The accompanying assessment tool should provide rich data to inform programming, direct professional development and improve the level of care in our schools.

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Appendix A

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Construct 1: Teacher Knowledge

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Appendix B

Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools Student Assessment

Note to Survey Administrator: This is an extensive quantitative survey to assess the students' perceptions of care in your school. Please note that this survey SHOULD NOT BE ADMINISTERED AT ONE TIME as it is too lengthy and arduous for students to complete in one sitting. As the survey administrator, it is your choice as to how you would like to operationalize this assessment. You can either break this assessment down to manageable amounts of time by administering 20 -30 questions at one time throughout the school year or take a random sampling of questions, with the amount of questions dependent on the age of the students to be completing the assessment. To expedite result analysis, the survey questions may be transferred to a Google Form, or electronic version of your choice, provided that your school and students have reliable Internet access.

Part I: Instructions

Please read each statement and choose the answer that best represents your thoughts and/or feelings. Use the following scale to respond to each question on the provided answer sheet.

(a) Very Strongly Agree (b) Strongly Agree (c) Agree (d) Disagree (e) Strongly Disagree (f) Very Strongly Disagree

Construct 1: Teacher Knowledge

1. I feel that my ELA teacher is very knowledgeable about English Language Arts.

2. I feel that my ELA teacher's knowledge of English Language Arts makes me excited about the subject

3. I feel that my ELA teacher's knowledge of English Language Arts allows me to be more creative.

4. I feel that my mathematics teacher is very knowledgeable about math.

5. I feel that my mathematics teacher's knowledge of mathematics makes me excited about the subject

6. I feel that my mathematics teacher's knowledge of math allows me to be more creative.

7. I feel that my science teacher is very knowledgeable about the sciences.

8. I feel that my science teacher's knowledge of the sciences makes me excited about the subject

9. I feel that my science teacher's knowledge of the sciences allows me to be more creative.

10. I feel that my social studies teacher is very knowledgeable about social studies.

11. I feel that my social studies teacher's knowledge of social studies makes me excited about the subject

12. I feel that my social studies teacher's knowledge of social studies allows me to be more creative.

13. I feel that my PE (physical education) teacher is very knowledgeable about physical education and athletics.

14. I feel that my PE teacher's knowledge of physical education and athletics makes me excited about the subject

15. I feel that my PE teacher's knowledge of physical education and athletics allows me to be more creative.

16. In general, I feel the staff understand the history of the school as it contributes to our learning and extra-curricular events (i.e. McKenzie Olympics, Graduation and Queen's Ball).

17. In general, I feel the staff understand teenagers' ages and stages of development.

18. In general, I feel the staff respect the history of the school even though changes are being made to keep up with emerging technologies.

19. In general, I feel the staff's personal experiences enhance my learning (by showing personal adventures, stories, mistakes, glimpses into family life).

20. If I was having a personal problem (emotional, social or developmental), I feel there is a staff member I would feel safe and cared for to confide in.

If you wish to write additional comments for any of the above questions, please feel free to use the space below.

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Part II: Instructions

Please read each statement and choose the answer that best represents your thoughts and/or feelings. Use the following scale to respond to each question on the provided answer sheet.

(a) Very Strongly Agree (b) Strongly Agree (c) Agree (d) Disagree (e) Strongly Disagree (f) Very Strongly Disagree

Construct 2: Teacher Dispositions

21. I feel that my ELA teacher's passion for English Language Arts has made me excited to come to school and learn.

22. I feel that my ELA teacher's passion for English Language Arts has made me try harder and consequently receive higher grades.

23. I feel my ELA teacher takes an interest in my life outside of school.

24. I feel the ELA teacher takes an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

25. I feel my ELA teacher values relationships with students in the school.

26. I feel my ELA teacher shows interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

27. I feel my ELA teacher is genuinely concerned with my learning.

28. I feel respected by my ELA teacher.

29. I feel trusted by my ELA teacher.

30. My ELA teacher tries to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

31. I feel my ELA teacher is passionate about my school.

32. I feel my ELA teacher is excited about the events at my school.

33. I feel that my mathematics teacher's passion for math has made me excited to come to school and learn.

34. I feel that my mathematics teacher's passion for math has made me try harder and consequently receive higher grades.

35. I feel the mathematics teacher takes an interest in my life outside of school.

36. I feel the mathematics teacher takes an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

37. I feel my mathematics teacher values relationships with students in the school.

38. I feel my mathematics teacher shows interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

39. I feel my mathematics teacher is genuinely concerned with my learning.

40. I feel respected by my mathematics teacher.

41. I feel trusted by my mathematics teacher.

42. My mathematics teacher tries to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

43. I feel my mathematics teacher is passionate about my school.

44. I feel my mathematics teacher is excited about the events at my school.

45. I feel that my science teacher's passion for the sciences has made me excited to come to school and learn.

46. I feel that my science teacher's passion for the sciences has made me try harder and consequently receive higher grades.

47. I feel the science teacher takes an interest in my life outside of school.

48. I feel the science teacher takes an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

49. I feel my science teacher values relationships with students in the school.

50. I feel my science teacher shows interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

51. I feel my science teacher is genuinely concerned with my learning.

52. I feel respected by my science teacher.

53. I feel trusted by my science teacher.

54. My science teacher tries to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

55. I feel my science teacher is passionate about my school.

56. I feel my science teacher is excited about the events at my school.

57. I feel that my social studies teacher's passion for social studies has made me excited to come to school and learn.

58. I feel that my social studies teacher's passion for social studies has made me try harder and consequently receive higher grades.

59. I feel the social studies teacher takes an interest in my life outside of school.

60. I feel the social studies teacher takes an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

61. I feel my social studies teacher values relationships with students in the school.

62. I feel my social studies teacher shows interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

63. I feel my social studies teacher is genuinely concerned with my learning.

64. I feel respected by my social studies teacher.

65. I feel trusted by my social studies teacher.

66. My social studies teacher tries to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

67. I feel my social studies teacher is passionate about my school.

68. I feel my social studies teacher is excited about the events at my school.

69. I feel that my PE teacher's passion for physical education and athletics has made me excited to come to school and learn.

70. I feel that my PE teacher's passion for physical education and athletics has made me try harder and consequently receive higher grades.

71. I feel the PE teacher takes an interest in my life outside of school.

72. I feel the PE teacher takes an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

73. I feel my PE teacher values relationships with students in the school.

74. I feel my PE teacher shows interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

75. I feel my PE teacher is genuinely concerned with my learning.

76. I feel respected by my PE teacher.

77. I feel trusted by my PE teacher.

78. My PE teacher tries to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

79. I feel my PE teacher is passionate about my school.

80. I feel my PE teacher is excited about the events at my school.

81. I feel that my option teacher's passion for their subject area has made me excited to come to school and learn.

82. I feel that my options teacher's passion for their subject area has made me try harder and consequently receive higher grades.

83. I feel my options teacher takes an interest in my life outside of school.

84. I feel my options teacher takes an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

85. I feel my options teacher values relationships with students in the school.

86. I feel my options teacher shows interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

87. I feel my options teacher is genuinely concerned with my learning.

88. I feel respected by my options teacher.

89. I feel trusted by my options teacher.

90. My options teacher tries to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

91. I feel my options teacher is passionate about my school.

92. I feel my options teacher is excited about the events at my school.

93. I feel our educational assistants take an interest in my life outside of school.

94. I feel our educational assistants take an interest in my life at school (my friendships, the sports I play, the clubs and/or groups I am).

95. I feel our educational assistants values relationships with students in the school.

96. I feel our educational assistants show interest in what my friends and I are interested in.

97. I feel our educational assistants are genuinely concerned with my learning.

98. I feel respected by the educational assistants.

99. I feel trusted by the educational assistants.

100. The educational assistants try to attend my extra-curricular activities (both in and outside of school) when they can.

101. I feel the educational assistants are passionate about my school.

102. I feel the educational assistants are excited about the events at my school.

103. In general, I feel staff members are passionate about the students, events and achievement at my school.

104. In general, I like it when the staff participates in school events and activities.

If you wish to write additional comments for any of the above questions, please feel free to use the space below.

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Part III: Instructions

Please read each statement and choose the answer that best represents your thoughts and feelings. Use the following scale to respond to each question on the provided answer sheet.

(a) Very Strongly Agree (b) Strongly Agree (c) Agree (d) Disagree (e) Strongly Disagree (f) Very Strongly Disagree

Construct 3: School Culture

105. I feel that my ELA teachers' understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

106. I feel that my mathematics teachers' understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

107. I feel that my science teachers' understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

108. I feel that my social studies teachers' understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

109. I feel that my PE teachers' understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

110. I feel that my options teachers' understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

111. I feel that the educational assistants understanding of the schools' history improves my learning and achievement.

112. I feel that my ELA teachers' presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

113. I feel that my mathematics teachers' presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

114. I feel that my science teachers' presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

115. I feel that my social studies teachers' presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

116. I feel that my PE teachers' presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

117. I feel that my options teachers' presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

118. I feel that the educational assistants presence at school helps creates a "community feeling", which makes me feel like I belong at the school.

119. I feel that my ELA teachers' understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

120. I feel that my mathematics teachers' understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

121. I feel that my science teachers' understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

122. I feel that my social studies teachers' understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

123. I feel that my PE teachers' understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

124. I feel that my options teachers' understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

125. I feel that the educational assistants understanding of the school culture enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

126. I feel that my ELA teachers' understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

127. I feel that my mathematics teachers' understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

128. I feel that my science teachers' understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

129. I feel that my social studies teachers' understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

130. I feel that my PE teachers' understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

131. I feel that my options teachers' understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

132. I feel that the educational assistants understanding of my culture (where I grew up, my family's lifestyle, my ethnicity) enhances my feeling of belonging at school.

133. I feel that my ELA teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

134. I feel that my mathematics teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

135. I feel that my science teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

136. I feel that my social studies teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

137. I feel that my PE teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

138. I feel that my options teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

139. I feel that the educational assistants support a school climate that promotes learning and achievement.

140. I feel that my ELA teacher understands and embraces changes in education and it is evident in how s/he instructs and assesses my learning.

141. I feel that my mathematics teacher understands and embraces changes in education and it is evident in how s/he instructs and assesses my learning.

142. I feel that my science teacher understands and embraces changes in education and it is evident in how s/he instructs and assesses my learning.

143. I feel that my social studies teacher understands and embraces changes in education and it is evident in how s/he instructs and assesses my learning.

144. I feel that my PE teacher understands and embraces changes in education and it is evident in how s/he instructs and assesses my learning.

145. I feel that my options teacher understands and embraces changes in education and it is evident in how s/he instructs and assesses my learning.

146. I feel that my ELA teacher understands and embraces my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

147. I feel that my mathematics teacher understands and embraces my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

148. I feel that my science teacher understands and embraces my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

149. I feel that my social studies teacher understands and embraces my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

150. I feel that my PE teacher understands and embraces my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

151. I feel that my options teacher understands and embraces my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

152. I feel that the educational assistants understand and embrace my ethnicity and possibly different perceptions that I carry because of my ethnicity.

153. I feel that there are facets of our school culture that enhance my feeling of belonging at school. They are (check off all that enhance your feeling of belonging):

   □ Queen's Ball
   □ Sports Teams
   □ Student Council
   □ Students Against Substance Abuse
   □ Awards Night
   □ Graduation
   □ Spirit Activities
   □ McKenzie Olympics
   □ FOCUS
   □ Band Concerts

   □ Drama Productions
   □ Field Trips
   □ Pink Shirt Day
   □ Orange Shirt Day
   □ Special Presentations (WorkPlays, post-secondary recruitment presentations, drumming etc.)
   □ Author Visits
   □ Rodeo
   □ Monthly Assemblies

If you wish to write additional comments for any of the above questions, please feel free to use the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part IV: Instructions

Please read each statement and choose the answer that best represents your thoughts and/or feelings. Use the following scale to respond to each question on the provided answer sheet.

(a) Very Strongly Agree (b) Strongly Agree (c) Agree (d) Disagree (e) Strongly Disagree (f) Very Strongly Disagree

Construct 4: Teacher Skills

154. I feel that my ELA teacher tries to talk with me both during class and outside of class time.

155. I feel that my mathematics teacher tries to talk with me both during class and outside of class time.

156. I feel that my science teacher tries to talk with me both during class and outside of class time.

157. I feel that my social studies teacher tries to talk with me both during class and outside of class time.

158. I feel that my PE teacher tries to talk with me both during class and outside of class time.

159. I feel that my options teacher tries to talk with me both during class and outside of class time.

160. I feel that my ELA teacher tries to listen to me about my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that) both during class and outside of class time.

161. I feel that my mathematics teacher tries to listen to me about my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that) both during class and outside of class time.

162. I feel that my science teacher tries to listen to me about my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that) both during class and outside of class time.

163. I feel that my social studies teacher tries to listen to me about my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that) both during class and outside of class time.

164. I feel that my PE teacher tries to listen to me about my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that) both during class and outside of class time.

165. I feel that my options teacher tries to listen to me about my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that) both during class and outside of class time.

166. I feel that my ELA teacher is genuinely interested in my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that).

167. I feel that my mathematics teacher is genuinely interested in my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that).

168. I feel that my science teacher is genuinely interested in my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that).

169. I feel that my social studies teacher is genuinely interested in my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that).

170. I feel that my PE teacher is genuinely interested in my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that).

171. I feel that my options teacher is genuinely interested in my life at school and my personal life (if I choose to talk with him/her about that).

172. I feel that my ELA teacher initiates conversations with me.

173. I feel that my mathematics teacher initiates conversations with me.

174. I feel that my science teacher initiates conversations with me.

175. I feel that my social studies teacher initiates conversations with me.

176. I feel that my PE teacher initiates conversations with me.

177. I feel that my options teacher initiates conversations with me.

178. I feel that my ELA teacher has tried to make me feel welcomed at school.

179. I feel that my mathematics teacher has tried to make me feel welcomed at school.

180. I feel that my science teacher has tried to make me feel welcomed at school.

181. I feel that my social studies teacher has tried to make me feel welcomed at school.

182. I feel that my PE teacher has tried to make me feel welcomed at school.

183. I feel that my options teacher has tried to make me feel welcomed at school.

184. I feel that my ELA teacher has modeled caring behaviour in our school.

185. I feel that my mathematics teacher has modeled caring behaviour in our school.

186. I feel that my science teacher has modeled caring behaviour in our school.

187. I feel that my social studies teacher has modeled caring behaviour in our school.

188. I feel that my PE teacher has modeled caring behaviour in our school.

189. I feel that my options teacher has modeled caring behaviour in our school.

190. I feel that my ELA teacher's caring actions have encouraged me to be a more caring person both in school and in the larger community.

191. I feel that my mathematics teacher's caring actions have encouraged me to be a more caring person both in school and in the larger community.

192. I feel that my science teacher's caring actions have encouraged me to be a more caring person both in school and in the larger community.

193. I feel that my social studies teacher's caring actions have encouraged me to be a more caring person both in school and in the larger community.

194. I feel that my PE teacher's caring actions have encouraged me to be a more caring person both in school and in the larger community.

195. I feel that my options teacher's caring actions have encouraged me to be a more caring person both in school and in the larger community.

196. I feel that my ELA teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

197. I feel that my mathematics teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

198. I feel that my science teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

199. I feel that my social studies teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

200. I feel that my PE teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

201. I feel that my options teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

202. I feel that my ELA teacher encourages all students at our school, including me, to demonstrate our best caring behaviour both to others and ourselves.

203. I feel that my ELA teacher's caring behaviour has encouraged me to be more competent.

204. I feel that my mathematics teacher's caring behaviour has encouraged me to be more competent.

205. I feel that my science teacher's caring behaviour has encouraged me to be more competent.

206. I feel that my social studies teacher's caring behaviour has encouraged me to be more competent.

207. I feel that my PE teacher's caring behaviour has encouraged me to be more competent.

208. I feel that my options teacher's caring behaviour has encouraged me to be more competent.

209. I feel that my ELA teacher's critical listening skills have made me feel more connected to him/her and connected to the school.

210. I feel that my mathematics teacher's critical listening skills have made me feel more connected to him/her and connected to the school.

211. I feel that my science teacher's critical listening skills have made me feel more connected to him/her and connected to the school.

212. I feel that my social studies teacher's critical listening skills have made me feel more connected to him/her and connected to the school.

213. I feel that my PE teacher's critical listening skills have made me feel more connected to him/her and connected to the school.

214. I feel that my option teacher's critical listening skills have made me feel more connected to him/her and connected to the school.

If you wish to write additional comments for any of the above questions, please feel free to use the space below.

_____

_____

Appendix C

Monthly Journal Response

Instructions: During the last week of each month, please think about and respond to the provided theme of safe, caring and welcoming schools. These journal responses will be completed in your thirty minute FOCUS class. Your FOCUS teacher will be available to support you so you can answer each response completely. If additional time is needed, you can request to use your option classes to complete your entries. Please try to provide as much detail as possible in your response so our staff can continue to improve our safe, caring and welcoming school environment. We value everything you have to tell us.

Format: Your journal response can take any format that best works for you. You can respond in a journal response notebook, a vlog, a private blog, dramatic production, song, poetry etc. Please discuss the format of your submission with your FOCUS teacher to ensure you have all of the necessary materials prior to beginning. Each journal entry should answer each prompt or question completely. Short-answer responses will not be accepted. These responses are to be completed individually or with the support of your FOCUS teacher, school counselor or administrator. You may not work in small groups or partners.

Please note: These responses will be read only by your FOCUS teacher. They will not be shared with anyone else without your permission.

Monthly Journal Themes Correlated to the
Construct of Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools

Month	Theme	Construct
Sept	Pre-Assessment of Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools	All
Oct	Students and Teachers demonstrating care at the local, national and global level – response to "Children Full of Life" video	All
Nov	Teachers' knowledge of subject content, history of the school and child development	1: Teacher Knowledge
Dec	Teachers' interests in students' lives and learning; relationships and responsive school culture	2: Teacher Dispositions 3: School Culture
Jan	School Culture: how important is the history of our school to our current culture? Is our school culture responsive to emerging needs?	3: School Culture
Feb	Teacher Skills: dialogue, receptive and critical listening	4: Teacher Skills
Mar	Teacher dispositions: passion in subject area. Teacher Skills: modeling, confirmation and reciprocating caring behavior	2: Teacher Disposition 4: Teacher Skills
Apr	Teachers' Disposition: respecting and trusting students, valuing relationships	2: Teacher Dispositions
May	Post-Assessment of Safe, Caring and Welcoming Schools	All

September Journal Response

Pre-Assessment of Care

Welcome to Grade _____!!

Instructions: Welcome to Junior/Senior High! We are excited to get to know you, your interests and to find out how you feel cared for, how you care for others and how you learn. Please feel free to skip over any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering or any questions that you do not know the answers to. Please take this survey home and answer it with your parents' help if you feel that is necessary.

1. What school did you attend last year?

   _____

2. What was your favourite aspect of that school?

   _____

3. Do you currently take a bus to school? (Circle one)   Yes   No

4. Answer if you circled YES to #3: When you are on the bus, do you feel safe?

   (Circle one)   Yes   No

   If you answered yes, please let us know why:

   _____

   If you answered no, please let us know why:

   _____

5. If you do not take the bus to school, do you walk or do you get a ride?

   _____

6. If you walk to school, do you feel safe? (Circle one)   Yes   No

   If you answered yes, please let us know why:

   _____

   If you answered no, please let us know why:

   _____

7. What can the staff at this school do to make you feel welcome?

    _____

    _____

8. What does "being cared for" mean to you?

    _____

    _____

9. What can the staff at this school do to make you feel cared for at our school?

    _____

    _____

10. What should students at this school do to show that they are caring individuals at a local, national and/or global level?

    _____

    _____

11. Is there any information that you would like to share with the staff with regards to how you learn? (Example: are you anxious before exams, do you need a quiet space to work, do you like group work or do you prefer to work on your own etc.)

    _____

    _____

12. What are your interests in school?

    _____

    _____

13. What are your interests outside of school?

    _____

    _____

14. What is one thing (event, action, staff initiative) that you would like to see happen at our school to make it a more safe, caring and welcoming community? How can you help us make it happen?

_____

_____

15. We have many clubs and programs currently running at our school. Please check off which one's you are going to be joining to help continue our safe, caring and welcoming community:

- ☐ Queen's Ball
- ☐ Sports Teams
- ☐ Student Council
- ☐ Students Against Substance Abuse
- ☐ Awards Night
- ☐ Graduation
- ☐ Spirit Activities
- ☐ McKenzie Olympics
- ☐ FOCUS
- ☐ Band Concerts
- ☐ Drama Productions
- ☐ Field Trips
- ☐ Pink Shirt Day
- ☐ Orange Shirt Day
- ☐ Special Presentations (WorkPlays, post-secondary recruitment presentations, drumming etc.)
- ☐ Author Visits
- ☐ Rodeo
- ☐ Monthly Assemblies

16. Are any of the above programs detracting (taking away) from our safe, caring and welcoming environment? If so, please list them.

_____

_____

17. Do you feel connected to an adult(s) in the building?   Yes   No

18. If you answered **yes**, please let us know who it is or they are (if you are comfortable with that).

_____

_____

Thank you for taking time to answer this questionnaire. If you or your parents have any questions about it, please do not hesitate to call the office or come in for a visit. We're looking forward to a great year with you at our school!!

October Journal Response

Constructs: 2, 3 and 4

In our last two classes together, we watched the video "Children Full of Life". You were introduced to Mr. Kanamori, a teacher of a 4th grade class in Tokyo, Japan, who teaches his students not only how to be students, but how to live caring and compassionate lives. Mr. Kanamori instructs each student to write their true feelings about events in their lives in a letter which is then read aloud in front of the class.

1. Do you think that by sharing their lives, the children begin to realize the importance of caring for their classmates?

2. Mr. Kanamori is one model of an effective and caring teacher. He has made a positive difference in his students' lives. What characteristics and actions of Mr. Kanamori's would you like to see in your teachers?

3. Approximately half way through the movie (time: 20:18), Mr. Kanamori is very upset with Yuto for "chattering and goofing around all morning". He revokes his privilege of riding the raft that afternoon. Yuto's teammates rally behind him presenting Mr. Kanamori reasons why Yuto deserves to ride the raft. They also take responsibility for the class culture because they didn't tell Yuto to behave, stop talking and stay on task.

    a. What were your thoughts when this was happening in the documentary?
    b. Did your feelings towards Mr. Kanamori change? Why or why not?
    c. Have you ever been in a similar situation as Yuto's? Did anyone defend you?
    d. Have you ever been in a similar situation as Yo's and Mafuto's (the students who defended Yuto)? Did you defend someone who needed you by their side? Did they deserve to be defended but you didn't feel safe or strong enough to do it? If you could re-live that situation, what would you do?

4. Do you think that this teacher could do the same letter writing activity in a junior high class to promote safe and caring environments? Would it be as successful? Why or why not?

5. What lessons can we take from Mr. Kanamori's class and implement in our school?

6. How can we encourage students and teachers in our school to care for each other?
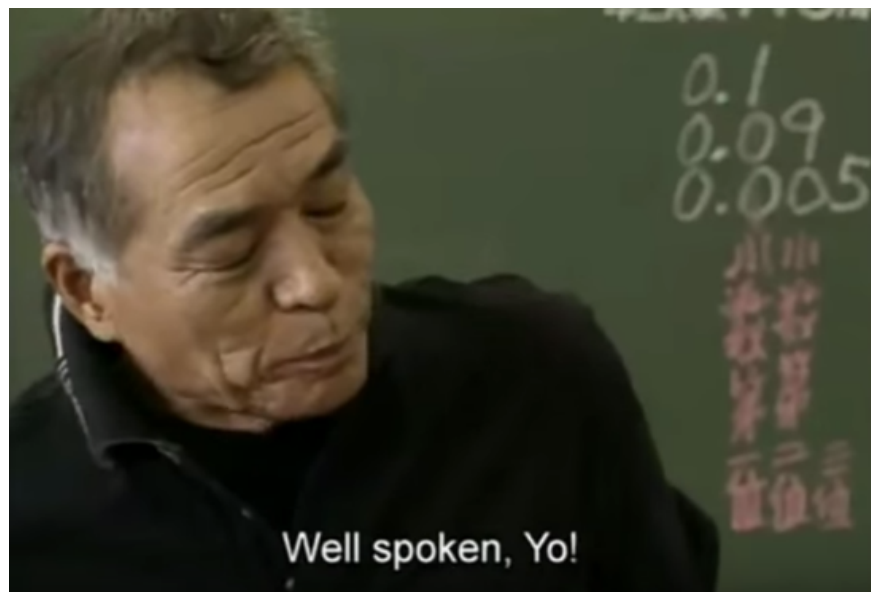
November Journal Response

Construct 1: Teachers' knowledge of subject content, history of the school and child development.

1. Do you feel that our school's rich history of ranching and farming enhances your education? Why or why not?

2. Do you feel that the teachers at our school should demonstrate an understanding of the history of J. T. Foster to enhance your feeling of belonging here? Why or why not?

3. Do you feel that you would be willing to help educate new staff members about the history of our school? Do you feel that if you helped them understand the schools' culture that it would enhance their teaching and assessment?

4. Many teachers in the building have a strong understanding of your upbringing and lifestyle. How does that help you in terms of achievement at school? Does their effort in understanding your life encourage you to do better in their classes?

5. Has there been a time when a teacher connects a lesson objective directly to your life or lifestyle? How was that lesson different than other lessons?

6. Going through adolescents can be difficult and confusing for teenagers. Has there been a time when an adult in the building gave you some insight into how you were feeling or why you were doing the things you were doing? Can you provide an example? Did it make you feel more connected to the school or to that adult?
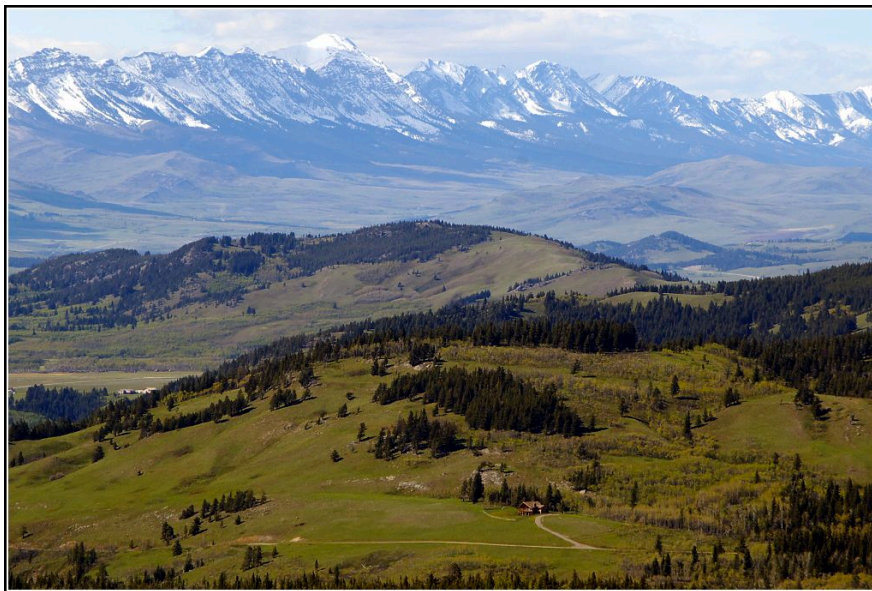
December Journal Response

Construct 2: Teachers' interests in students' lives and learning; passion towards subject area.
Construct 3: School culture

Last day, we watched Rita Pierson's Ted Talk called "Every Kid Needs a Champion". Please keep that talk in mind when you responding to the following questions.

1. Have you ever tried to learn from someone who took an interest in your life? Were you able to learn from them? Why?

2. If you feel a teacher is not interested in your life or doesn't approve of your lifestyle, would you be willing to talk with them to explain how you feel and how it is impacting your ability to learn?

3. Who in your life motivates to you to 'want to do better'? Why?

Helping Hampers

4. Throughout December, we collect food, clothes and money for needy families. How did that make you feel when you saw all of the food and goods that we collected?

5. When you saw your friends bringing in donations, did it make you want to donate more (either through food and/or money or your actions (working in a soup kitchen, shoveling walks for elderly or disabled people etc.))?

6. Did you feel that our students and staff were more caring during December because of our Helping Hampers initiative or do you feel we are always a caring community?

7. Do you feel that our school needs to reach out on a local level more consistently throughout the year? If you answered yes, how could we do that? If you answered no, why do you feel that way?

8. Do you feel that our school needs to reach out on a global level more consistently throughout the year? If you answered yes, how could we do that? If you answered no, why do you feel that way?

January Journal Response

Construct 3: School Culture: how important is the history of our school to our current culture? Is our school culture responsive to emerging needs?

In our November journal response, you thought about how important it is that our staff have a solid understanding of the school history and try to incorporate that knowledge into their lessons (to improve engagement where possible) and to build relationships with students.

Continuing with the theme of school culture, please respond to the following questions prompts:

1. Is the history of J. T. Foster and the surrounding community important in building relationships in the school? How so?

2. If you were a new student to J. T. Foster, perhaps from Calgary, how would you feel when you arrived here? Do you feel that the students in our school are welcoming to new students? What actions have you taken to make someone feel welcome or to start creating a relationship with them?

3. Do you feel that we are a welcoming school community to new students? What actions demonstrate a welcoming community?

4. Do you feel that the staff is a welcoming community? What actions are welcoming?

5. Do you feel that our staff values a learning community? How do they show that they value a learning community?

6. Do you feel that our school is responsive to student needs? How does the school make changes to respond to what the student body needs?

7. Do you feel the staff is responsive to new students and their needs? Can you think of a time when you saw a staff member responding to a student's needs? How did that make you feel?

February Journal Response

Construct 4: Teacher Skills: dialogue, receptive and critical listening.

In the last two weeks, we have watched "The Horse Whisperer". Prior to the movie, I asked you to watch intently for examples of listening and care. Please think back to the movie now as you respond to these questions.

1. Think of Annie, Grace's mom, at the beginning of the movie. Is she demonstrating care when she listens to Grace? What about when she is talking to the veterinarian about Pilgrim after the accident? Why or why not?

2. Tom Booker is the horse whisperer in the movie, but is he also a receptive listener to his family and friends? What about to Annie and Grace? Provide examples of what you think are moments of receptive, critical listening. How do you know that he is a good listener?

3. Annie likes to talk a lot…on the phone, to the Booker brothers, to her husband and especially to her daughter. Do you believe that the way she talks to people, especially at the beginning of the movie, is demonstrative of effective dialogue to demonstrate care? Why or why not?

4. Have you ever had a teacher demonstrate critical, receptive listening with you? Who was it? How did it make you feel? Did it affect your learning or your time at school?

5. Have you ever had a teacher at school that you really enjoy talking to? Why? What is it that makes you feel happy? Does it help your learning and make your time at school more enjoyable?

6. Do you feel you are a receptive listener? Why? What characteristics make you a receptive listener?

7. How could teachers improve their listening skills at our school?

8. How could teachers improve their dialogue at our school?

March Journal Response

Construct 2: Teacher dispositions: passion in subject area.
Construct 4: Teacher Skills: modeling, confirmation and reciprocating caring behaviour

We just finished watching Ramsey Musallam's Ted Talk "3 Rules to Spark Learning".
He seems to have a passion for chemistry, curiosity and students' learning.

1. Do you feel the staff at our school is passionate about their subject area? If so, who are they? How do you know they are passionate about math or science or ELA etc.?

2. Give an example of a staff member demonstrating passion about a lesson or subject area?

3. Are staff members passionate about something else (i.e. traveling, extreme sports, athletic teams, movies, Star Wars, politics, farming etc.) and you find their passion enhances your learning? Please explain.

4. Are staff members passionate about your extra-curricular activities (i.e. rodeo, ranching, hunting, sports, dance, music, gaming, baking, art etc.) and you find it enhances your learning? Please explain.

5. There are many adults in the building that work hard to make sure it is a safe, caring and welcoming community. Do these demonstrations of care make you want care for others? How so?

6. Has a staff member ever thanked or acknowledged your caring behaviours in our building? Do you feel you deserve or would like acknowledgement when you demonstrate care or contribute to our safe and caring school community?

April Journal Response

Construct 2: Teachers' Disposition: respecting and trusting students, valuing relationships

In October, we watched the documentary "Children Full of Life". Please take time to watch the documentary again if your mind needs refreshing.

1. Do you feel that Mr. Kanamori respects his students? What actions of Mr. Kanamori's demonstrate respect?

2. Do you feel that his students respect him? What student actions demonstrate respect?

3. I believe that Mr. Kanamori values relationships with his students. Do you agree or disagree? Is there a moment in the documentary that shows he respects his students? Please explain.

4. Now please think about relationships that you have with teachers in our building. Do you feel that your teachers respect you? Why or why not? Please provide examples (you do not need to name specific teachers but feel free to journal about the experience you have had).

5. Do you respect each of your teachers? Why or why not? (*Please remember to keep in mind all of the years and instances that you have shared with these teachers, not primarily the one time when they upset you. If there was one upsetting instance, did it help you in the end? Did the pain lead to growth?)*

6. Do you value your relationships with staff at school? How do you show that you value those relationships?

7. Do you feel that the staff members value your relationship with them? Do they show that they value those relationships?

May Journal Response

Post-Assessment of Care

Instructions: Another year has come and gone. All year, you have completed journal response entries focused on our goal of improving and enhancing our safe, caring and welcoming school environment. Please take time now to let us know how we did, areas of strength, areas that need improvement and your thoughts for next year.

1. What was your favourite aspect of school this year?

   _____

   _____

2. Do you currently take a bus to school? (Circle one)   Yes   No

3. Answer if you circled YES to #3: When you are on the bus, do you feel safe?

   (Circle one)   Yes   No

   If you answered no, please let us know why:

   _____

   _____

4. If you do not take the bus to school, do you walk or do you get a ride?

   _____

5. If you walk to school, do you feel safe? Please explain.

   _____

   _____

6. We watched many videos, a documentary and you read some articles about safe, caring and welcoming school communities and relationships. What does "being cared for" mean to you?

   _____

   _____

7. How have the staff members at J. T. Foster made you feel cared for? Please explain.

   _____

   _____

8. How have the staff members at J. T. Foster to make you feel welcome? Please explain.

   _____

   _____

9. What should students at this school do to show that they are caring individuals at a local, national and/or global level?

   _____

   _____

10. Did your academic achievement change this year? Why do you think it changed?

    _____

    _____

11. I feel there is an adult in the building who you feel shows interest in my life.

12. I feel there an adult in the building who you feel shows interest in my learning and achievement?

13. I feel there is an adult in the building who respects and trusts me.

14. I feel that there is an adult in the building who values my relationship with them.

15. Now that I understand the importance of a responsive school community, I feel I will be more proactive when I see that my fellow classmates are struggling or need help.

16. What is one thing (event, action, staff initiative) that you would like to see happen at our school to make it a more safe, caring and welcoming community? How can you help us make it happen?

    _____

    _____

17. We have many clubs and programs currently running at our school. Please check off which one's you are going to be joining to help continue our safe, caring and welcoming community:

☐ Queen's Ball
☐ Sports Teams
☐ Student Council
☐ Students Against Substance Abuse
☐ Awards Night
☐ Graduation
☐ Spirit Activities
☐ McKenzie Olympics
☐ FOCUS
☐ Band Concerts

☐ Drama Productions
☐ Field Trips
☐ Pink Shirt Day
☐ Orange Shirt Day
☐ Special Presentations (WorkPlays, post-secondary recruitment presentations, drumming etc.)
☐ Author Visits
☐ Rodeo
☐ Monthly Assemblies

18. Are any of the above programs detracting (taking away) from our safe, caring and welcoming environment? If so, please list them.

_____

_____

19. Do you feel connected to an adult(s) in the building?   Yes   No

20. If you answered yes, please let us know who it is or they are (if you are comfortable with that).

_____

_____

Thank you for taking time to answer this questionnaire. If you or your parents have any questions about it, please do not hesitate to call the office or come in for a visit. We're looking forward to a great year with you at our school!!

Appendix D

Teacher Self-Assessment of Safe, Caring and Welcoming Relations

Instructions: Please complete the following self-assessment in order to continue our growth as professionals primarily understanding that "quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply result in optimal learning by students" (Alberta Government, 2013, p. 1). The intent of this self-assessment is to celebrate our strengths and develop our areas of growth. Use the following scale to respond to each question on the provided answer sheet.

(a) Very Strongly Agree (b) Strongly Agree (c) Agree (d) Disagree (e) Strongly Disagree (f) Very Strongly Disagree

1. I have an accurate understanding of the typical developmental characteristics of the age groups that I teach, as well as exceptions to those general patterns.

2. I have an extensive understanding of how students learn and apply this knowledge to individual students as well as the group.

3. I recognize the value of understanding my students' cultural heritage.

4. I go to great lengths to show my students that I value their cultural heritage.

5. I recognize the value of understanding my students' interests both inside of school and outside of school.

6. I go to great lengths to show my students that I value their interests both inside of school and outside of school.

7. I ensure that I possess information regarding each student's learning and, if necessary, medical needs.

8. I am aware of resources for my students that are available through the school and district that link the content to their culture and background.

9. My interactions with my students reflect genuine respect and caring for individuals and groups of students.

10. My interactions with my students reflect genuine respect and caring for their background and ethnicity.

11. While students are with me, I encourage them to demonstrate genuine caring for one another.

12. I model caring behaviour consistently.

13. I confirm caring relations when the opportunity presents itself.

14. I consistently work on building relationships with my students.

15. I consistently work on building relationships with my students' families.

16. I consistently work on building relationships with the community our school is located in.

17. I consistently try to improve my knowledge of the school's history to enhance my lessons and level of engagement for my students.

18. I have deep, rich subject matter knowledge, which I believe enhances my students' level of engagement.

19. I am highly proactive in serving my students needs.

20. I have a strong knowledge of my narrative and how it affects my teaching.

21. I respect and trust my students.

22. I am passionate about the subjects I teach.

23. I am passionate about the extra-curricular activities I am involved in at school.

24. I demonstrate critical and receptive listening skills with my students.

25. If I believe a student is struggling or needs someone to talk to, I will make sure that they are connected to the right person (if that person is not me).

26. I initiate conversations with students on a regular basis.

27. Upon analysis of this self-assessment, I believe that I am strong in many areas of safe, caring and welcoming relationships. They are:

   _____

   _____

28. Upon analysis of this self-assessment, I need to work on a few areas of safe, caring and welcoming relationships. They are:

   _____

   _____

29. In order to improve in those areas, these are the resources I may need:

   _____

   _____

30. My goal is to:

_____

_____

Date to achieve it:

_____

Reflection:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Safe and Caring School Project Showcase

Background:

You have been given the opportunity to show the school and community at large how J. T. Foster demonstrates care and makes our building a safe, caring and welcoming environment.

Instructions:

Please think of a time when you witnessed an act of care or demonstrated care to someone in our building, in our community or in our world. You can also think of a time when someone demonstrated caring relations towards you (from our school). Take time to plan how you would like to showcase this demonstration of care. You will conference with your advisor teacher to think of the best way to showcase your project. You can create a dramatic production recreating events throughout the school or bringing to life moments of care; presentations (PowerPoint, Google Slide etc.); video productions; portfolio presentations; write a story; conduct an experiment; calculate the probability of working with a caring teacher based on their own experiences etc.

When your projects are completed, we will showcase your safe, caring and welcoming projects to parents, community members, Board of Trustees and central office staff. You may choose to work individually or in small groups to create your project. Once you have decided on your project, you will design a rubric to guide you through your work process.

An example of a project and a rubric has been provided.

Safe, caring and welcoming instance: AA new student joined our school mid-semester. He was from Calgary and came to our school with a very powerful history, one that most students do not ever encounter. Even though he was mean to the teachers and principals, they were always kind to him. They always asked him how he was or how his weekend was and even though he didn't answer, they would keep trying to talk to him. Some days, teachers would just leave a granola bar on his desk or put it in his locker because he wasn't eating. One of our teachers found out that he really liked gaming so she incorporated some gaming into our math lesson. I think that made him a bit happier. My friends and I saw that the teachers didn't quit, so we tried to include him in our project work in class and also asked him to sit with us at lunch time. Eventually he felt safer and did start eating with us and joining in on school work.

Project idea: After talking to my advisor teacher, I think it would be best to either write a children's book for the elementary school to show how important it is to be understanding of our friends stories, even if we don't know them. Or I would like to create a collage showing how my school helped my friend feel safe.
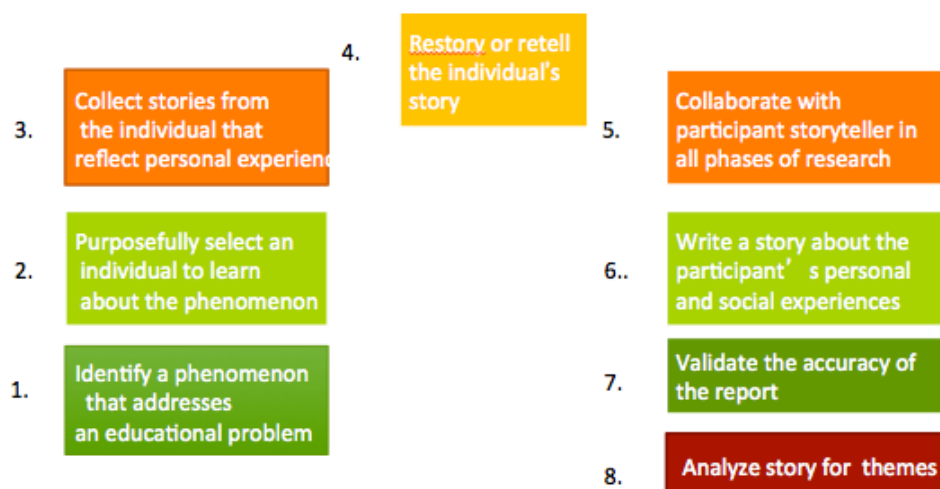
Safe and Caring Project Showcase Rubric

Level\Criteria	Excellent	Proficient	Basic	Not Yet	Insufficient
Construct 4: Teachers Skills Initiates Dialogue (C4.1)	Provides a **comprehensive** description or demonstration of how dialogue was used to create and/or maintain a caring relation.	Provides a **thorough** description or demonstration of how dialogue was used to create and/or maintain a caring relation.	Provides a **reasonable** description or demonstration of how dialogue was used to create and/or maintain a caring relation.	Provides a **vague** description or demonstration of how dialogue was used to create and/or maintain a caring relation.	
Construct 4: Teacher Skills Models Caring Behaviour (C4.2))	Provides a **comprehensive** description or demonstration of how modeling caring behaviour promotes caring behaviour.	Provides a **thorough** description or demonstration of how modeling caring behaviour promotes caring behaviour.	Provides a **reasonable** description or demonstration of how modeling caring behaviour promotes caring behaviour.	Provides a **vague** description or demonstration of how modeling caring behaviour promotes caring behaviour.	
Construct 4: Teacher Skills Receptive and Critical Listener (C4.5)	Provides a **comprehensive** description or demonstration of how being a receptive and/or critical listener promotes caring behaviour.	Provides a **thorough** description or demonstration of how being a receptive and/or critical listener promotes caring behaviour.	Provides a **reasonable** description or demonstration of how being a receptive and/or critical listener promotes caring behaviour.	Provides a **vague** description or demonstration of how being a receptive and/or critical listener promotes caring behaviour.	No score is awarded because there is insufficient evidence of student performance based on the requirements of the assessment task
Construct 3: School Culture Responsive School Culture (C3.4)	Provides a **comprehensive** description or demonstration of how being responsive to school culture promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	Provides a **thorough** description or demonstration of how being responsive to school culture promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	Provides a r**easonable** description or demonstration of how being responsive to school culture promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	Provides a **vague** description or demonstration of how being responsive to school culture promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	
Construct 2: Teacher Disposition: Showing Interest in Students' Lives (C2.1)	Provides a **comprehensive** description or demonstration of how taking an interest in students' lives promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	Provides a **thorough** description or demonstration of how taking an interest in students' lives promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	Provides a r**easonable** description or demonstration of how taking an interest in students' lives promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	Provides a **vague** description or demonstration of how taking an interest in students' lives promotes a safe, caring and welcoming environment.	

Appendix F

Safe, Caring and Welcoming School Longitudinal Narrative Inquiry

Instructions: After deciding whom the researcher will be (recommendations would include someone skilled in narrative inquiry, such as family-school liaison counsellor or an administrator), choose three-four students that would be willing to work with the researcher for the next three-five years keeping in mind that the goal is to change practice in a positive way. Students can be interviewed twice a year. The researcher should continually validate the accuracy of the report and be analyzing results with the intention of changing practice to improve the level of safe, caring and welcoming schools.

Steps to Conducting Narrative Research

4. Restory or retell the individual's story

3. Collect stories from the individual that reflect personal experience

5. Collaborate with participant storyteller in all phases of research

2. Purposefully select an individual to learn about the phenomenon

6.. Write a story about the participant's personal and social experiences

1. Identify a phenomenon that addresses an educational problem

7. Validate the accuracy of the report

8. Analyze story for themes

Attending to the Three Commonplaces of Narrative Inquiry:

Temporality - Narrative researchers need to attend to the temporality of their own and the participants' lives, and to the temporality of places, things and events. This draws attention to the relational dimensions of the inquiry. The researcher is studying themself in this inquiry as well.

Sociality –Social conditions refer to the conditions under which the people's experience and events are unfolding. This can refer to the family, institution and social narratives. Also, the narrative inquirer cannot subtract his or herself from the inquiry relationship.

Place – Clandinin and Connelly define place as "the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where inquiry and events take place" (p. 41). The key here is realizing that all events take place somewhere and that it is linked to the person and the event.

Ethics: Please ensure that the narratives are authentic. If possible, triangulate data using students' monthly journal entries to increase reliability. Please keep in mind that narrative inquiry is a scholarly discipline and the research garnered should lead to change in practice rather than reinforcing or trivializing difficulty in teaching.

The following questions are provided to allow the researcher to ensure they are focusing on the construct of safe and caring schools. These questions can also be asked again in subsequent years to analyze results for change in the level of safe and caring schools and perceived care from teachers.

Construct 1: Question Bank

1. You spend a great deal of your time with your _____ teacher. In fact, you may have been instructed by the same _____ teacher now for a few years. Do you feel that your _____ teacher is quite knowledgeable about his/her subject area?

2. How do you know that your teacher is knowledgeable about their subject area? What are some indicators?

3. Does your _____ teachers' knowledge of their subject area make you more excited to learn about (subject)?

4. Do you feel that your _____ teacher's knowledge of their subject area allows you to be more creative? Can you give me an example?

5. There is a lot of history at our school. In fact, your parents probably went to school here. Do you feel that your _____ teacher has a solid understanding of the schools' history? Is it important to you that your _____ teacher have a solid understanding of the schools' history? Why or why not? Can you think of a time when their knowledge of the school enhanced your learning?

6. Do you feel it is important for your _____ teacher to have a strong understanding of the different stages that teenagers go through? How does that understanding affect your learning and achievement? How does that understanding affect how you feel cared for?

7. Many teachers share personal stories with students or interweave their personal experiences in their lessons. Does this enhance your learning? Do you feel like you know the teacher better when they do this? Does their sharing make you want to share your own stories? Does it make you feel safer to talk to an adult in the building?

Construct 2: Question Bank

8. Do you feel trusted by your _____ teacher? How does that affect your learning and achievement? How does that affect your feeling of safety at school?

9. Do you feel respected by your _____ teacher? How does that affect your learning and achievement? How does that affect your feeling of safety at school?

10. Do you feel that your _____ teacher is genuinely concerned with your learning? Does this make you feel cared for at school? How does that affect your learning and achievement?

11. Does your _____ teacher seem interested in your likes, dislikes, hobbies etc.? Does this make you feel cared for at the school? How does that affect your learning and achievement?

12. Does your _____ teacher seem passionate about their subject? How can you tell? Does this improve your learning experiences during class?

13. Do you notice when your _____ teacher pays attention to or attends your extra-curricular activities? Do you feel that your teacher shows they care for you by attending your activities? Do you invite them or do they ask you when your activities will be?

14. Do you feel that your _____ teacher values relationships at school? How do you know? What characteristics of your teacher indicate that they value creating and maintaining relationships with you? How does this make you feel when you come to school?

Construct 3: Question Bank

15. Do you feel that your _____ teacher's presence at the school helps create a "community feeling"? What actions or characteristics of your teacher help create a "community feeling"? Does this make you feel like the school is a safe and welcoming community?

16. Every school has a culture - set of values and beliefs, ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the personality of the school – and it can grow and change as our demographics change. Do you feel that it is important that your _____ teacher have a strong understanding of the school culture and what elements help create the culture? Do you think that your _____ teacher has a strong understanding of your school culture? Does this contribute to a safe and caring school environment?

17. Do you feel that your _____ teacher has a deep understanding of your culture and family history? Would you like them to have a deep understanding of your culture or your family history or both? Do you feel their knowledge of your history contributes to your learning and achievement because you feel cared for and safe at school?

18. Do you feel that your _____ teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning and achievement? Does this make you feel more connected to the school and/or an adult in the building? Do you feel safe and cared for when you know your _____ teacher supports a school climate that promotes learning?

19. Do you think that your _____ teacher embraces changes in education (i.e. technological, athletic, subject matter and its relevance to your world)? How does this relate to a safe and caring school environment? Does it enhance your learning and achievement? Does it make you feel cared for?

20. Do you think that your _____ teacher embraces your ethnicity? Does your _____ teacher promote your ethnicity? Does this help you feel a sense of belonging at school? Does it make you feel safer at school? Do you feel cared for that your _____ teacher embraces your ethnicity?

Construct 4: Question Bank

21. Do you feel that your _____ teacher initiates conversations with you in class? What about outside of class time? If they initiate the conversation with you outside of class time, do you enjoy talking with him/her?

22. Does your _____ teacher listen to you when you try talking to them about school work? What about when you try talking to him/her about something other than school work, do you feel that he/she still listens to you? How do you know when they are listening? What actions show you that they are listening to you?

23. Do you feel that your _____ teacher is interested in your life at school? What about your life outside of school? How do you know if a teacher is interested in your life outside of school? If they show that they are interested in your life, do you feel more connected to that teacher? How would you act differently with that teacher (who you are connected with) as compared to a teacher that you don't feel connected to?

24. When you feel connected to a teacher, how do you perform in class academically? Do you try a bit harder to do well? Do you feel that you are able to ask a few more questions because you feel safe with that teacher and that is why you do well?

25. Does your _____ teacher make you feel welcomed at school? What actions do they take to make you feel welcomed at school?

26. Does your _____ teacher model caring behaviour towards you? What exactly do they do that makes you know they care for you?

27. Do you think that your teachers' caring behaviours and actions have made you a more caring person?

28. Do you exhibit care to teachers at school because you are learning about caring relations at school?

29. Do you exhibit care to your peers because you are learning about caring relations at school?

30. Do you exhibit care at home because you are learning about caring relations at school?

31. Do you exhibit care in the community because you are learning about caring relations at school?

32. Do you feel that your _____ teacher encourages you to do well at school?

33. Do you feel that your _____ teacher encourages you to exhibit caring relations towards others at school?

34. Do you feel that your _____ teacher exhibits critical listening when you are talking to him/her? How do you know? Does their good listening skills make you feel more connected to the school?