

THE IMPACT OF A C.A.R.E. BASED MARTIAL ARTS CLASS ON STUDENTS'  
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, PEER RELATIONSHIPS,  
AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education

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## ABSTRACT

What is the goal of education in America today? Why is education so important to our society? Why do we spend millions of dollars each year towards the success of America's educational system? What processes and procedures should be employed to insure an efficient and effective education for all individuals? These questions and more arise as we consider the current academic, social, and economic climate of America, as well as the rest of the world; and the role education has played in shaping our past, impacting our present, and directing our future as individuals of a free society. Abraham Lincoln said:

The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next (Barton, 1993, p. 22).

In today's worldwide economy, academic success for all individuals is considered to be a key component for the survival and progression of society as a whole. This success, however, is often hindered among students by deficiencies in the home environment, peer relationships, and social interactions. Moreover, unless these deficiencies are addressed at the earliest stages of development, they can become progressively worse and more difficult to overcome later in life.

This study shows, through the reflective observations of parents, how their children overcame developmental and learning hindrances in academics, peer relationships, and social interactions by participating in a martial arts program based on concepts of care. The study argues that educators need only to demonstrate genuine care to their students to realize in return, individuals who are motivated and willing to be

guided by them into higher level academic achievement and engagement regardless of the students' dispositions within society.

The “genuine care” initiative introduced in this study is defined as C.A.R.E.; ‘C’ for Confirmation, meaning to establish value; ‘A’ for Affirmation, signifying to maintain value; ‘R’ for Reformation, denoting to change in a positive way; and ‘E’ for Exhortation, indicating to strongly encourage. Employing these attributes of care as teaching foundations of the martial arts program appear to have produced positive outcomes in students that were not limited to their academic achievement, but were also evidenced in students’ peer relationships and social responsibilities.

In essence, it is suggested herein that the solution to academic success lies in our ability to care for one another unconditionally—from the heart. That is, to seek the best good for all individuals of our American society as well as our neighbors abroad; to recognize and understand that the success of the next generation depends significantly on the foundations, principles, and practices of the current generation.

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## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

I am writing to request information about your karate class. Can you please tell me if you have any class openings for a 6-year old girl and a 10-year old boy? My wife and I are interested in getting them into a class where they would learn some self-control and mental discipline. And of course, the spiritual emphasis you give is highly desired.

The above is not only a request but a plea from an exhausted couple who are looking for a setting that would address or fulfill unmet needs in their two children. The unmet need can be simply stated as “care.” Although care has been defined in many ways, most would agree that it is characterized by positive experiences or interactions between the one cared for and the care provider (Noddings, 2001). That is, care produces and demonstrates a sense of value or worth for the cared-for and a feeling of accomplishment and purpose for the care provider. Additionally, care is implied and expected in any relationship where individual or group needs are to be met. This concept of care is widely accepted among educational researchers and believed to be instrumental in student development and learning (e.g., Battistich, Schaps, Solomon, & Watson, 1997; see also Baldwin, DaRos-Voseles, & Swick, 2003). It is no wonder then, that care has become an important focus in schools and is one of the foremost attributes of character education programs and initiatives (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps (1997). Care is implicit in titles of textbooks and books for educators such as: *Learning to Trust* (Watson, 2003); *Educating Hearts and Minds* (Lewis, 2003); and *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (Noddings, 1992).

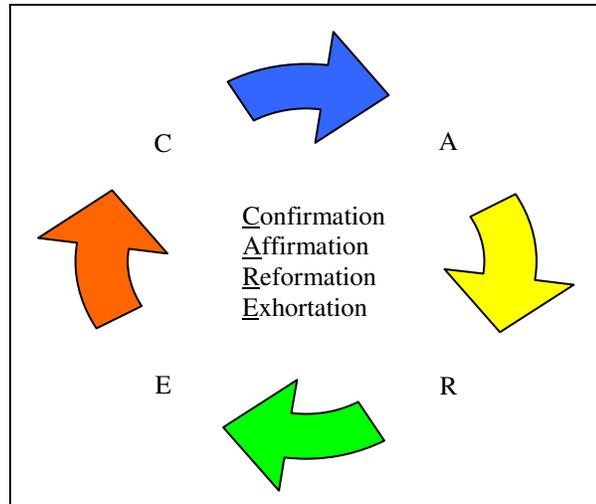
Unfortunately, and for a variety of reasons, many children do not always experience care from expected institutions and environments such as schools, community

centers, and similar settings. This is why parents have sought out other programs and activities that may meet these needs and promote growth in their children's development. One of these activities is martial arts programs which are known for building discipline and self-confidence in the lives of its participants. The classes are usually well structured, with a strictly maintained environment, and provide individual as well as group attention to developmental needs (Soet, 1991). When these types of programs, as well as others, adopt a foundation of care as the basis of their operation, the affectivity of development and learning appears to be enhanced. That is, students are more likely to accept, internalize, and emulate the principles and practices of programs that are characterized by caring and nurturing interaction with instructors, activities, and environments (Battistich et al., 1997, 2003).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the importance of "care" in developing discipline and self-confidence in children. This research seeks to identify attributes of a care based martial arts program that promotes discipline and self-confidence in its participants and determine if these attributes transfer to academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions. The study also introduces a new more robust definition of care in the form of an acrostic "C.A.R.E." and its positive implications in child development and learning; 'C' for Confirmation, meaning to establish value; 'A' for Affirmation, signifying to maintain value; 'R' for Reformation, denoting to change in a positive way; and 'E' for Exhortation, indicating to strongly encourage.

Figure 1 illustrates the cycle of care attributes and goals that are expressed to each participant of a program based on the C.A.R.E. model of development and learning that

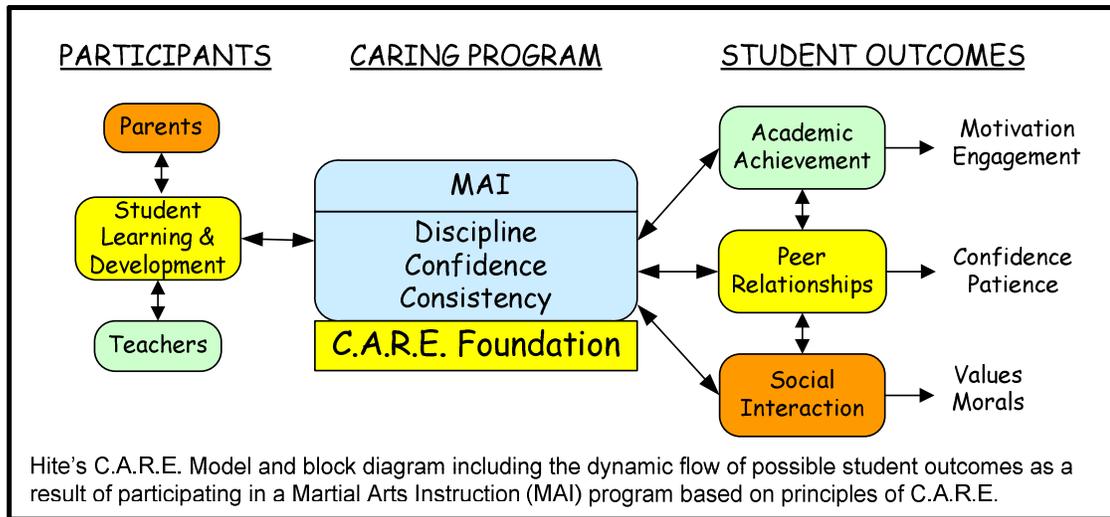
emerged through this study. Our first challenge is “Confirmation:” to personally demonstrate to each individual that he/she is unconditionally valued as a member of the program. Secondly: to express “Affirmation” in the form of maintaining the value of the participant in a consistent and ongoing way. When care for an individual has been demonstrated and maintained, he/she begins to manifest self-efficacy, an “I can” kind of an attitude about themselves and their abilities and begins to change in a positive way. This is the “Reformation” part of the C.A.R.E. model where the cared-for begins to change or respond to the care-giver in a positive way. Someone said, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” In other words, the motivation of a participant within a program may be dependent upon the level of care expressed by the leaders of the program. Lastly, our goal is to employ “Exhortation:” to strongly encourage participants as they actively express these positive changes. As individuals gain enough confidence to change positively, there will inevitably be setbacks that may discourage them, therefore, the cycle of care attributes returns to “Confirmation:” to insure that the unconditional value of the individual is re-established and maintained again and again until the participant becomes self-engaged and confident to the point that they are able to overcome obstacles that may hinder their success.



*Figure 1: Hite's Cycle of C.A.R.E. Attributes*

Moreover, these action words are used to show “care” in operation. That is, they demonstrate, illustrate, and dynamically express the dimensions of care as an experience. In other words, as we interact with others, these descriptive words can serve to shape our attitudes, actions, and deeds as we endeavor to manifest expressions of care.

The goal is to set forth a C.A.R.E. model of child development and learning that can be implemented in various settings and environments. Figure 2 is a block diagram of such a model including the flow of possible student outcomes as a result of participating in a martial arts program based on principles of C.A.R.E.



*Figure 2: Hite's C.A.R.E. Model*

### Statement of the Problem

At a time when academic challenges are at an all time high, students find themselves unmotivated, withdrawn, and lacking the disciplinary skills and confidence necessary to fulfill their responsibilities in school. In some instances, these attitudes and dispositions have resulted in violence, drug use, promiscuity, school drop-outs, and selfishness towards one another, as well as, an overall lack of concern for education as a whole. The affects of this kind of student behavior is not confined to academic breakdown, but is also manifested in difficulties with peer relationships and problems with societal interactions. Communities in Schools, a national non-profit organization for dropout prevention, reported:

One-third of students nationally drop out of high school and 72 % of Americans say that an increase in dropout rates-rather than the prospect of Social Security

running out – is the greater threat to the long term future of an average 10-year-old. (Communities in Schools, n.d.).

Who's to blame? Educators are accused of being insensitive to the needs of the students; students are labeled irresponsible and lazy; and parents are indicted for not supporting the school system or their children (Tobias, 2000; see also U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The question is not where to place the blame; but where to find the solution? This study theorizes that the solution lies in our ability to care for one another unconditionally. That is, to seek the best good for all individuals of our American society as well as our neighbors abroad; to recognize that the success of the next generation depends significantly on the foundations, principles, and practices of the current generation.

#### Significance of the Topic

The Significance or importance of the topic of care is best stated by the quote: “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” This quote implies that the attitude, desire, or willingness of individuals to receive or accept information from someone is dependent upon the belief that that “someone” cares for them. Since care produces a sense or feeling of value and worth for the cared-for, there is a natural tendency for the cared-for to respond to or give attention to the care-provider. This phenomenon manifests itself in various situations and settings including school classrooms where students’ response or attention to teachers may be based on the student’s sense of acceptance or value by the teacher.

Students who might otherwise reject academic instruction for various reasons may be enticed into submitting to instruction through the kindness and attention of the caring

teacher. The caring instructor would possess an attitude of “never giving up” on a student’s ability to learn. Often times students need educators to be tough enough or maybe I should say sensitive enough, to see beyond a student’s negative behavior to his/her potential. This, however, can require great patience on the part of the care-giver. In Marilyn Watson’s book, “Learning to Trust,” she describes an incident between 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students that resulted in the teacher being accidentally hit, by one of the students, as she intervened. Instead of implementing strict consequences, she uses the incident to model and teach her students to care enough for others to forgive one another:

Kids are always hurting one another. Sometimes these hurts are accidental; sometimes they are the result of poor self-control, and sometimes they are clearly intentional. And even when children clearly intend to cause harm, the actual harm can end up being greater than the children anticipated. Laura had many opportunities to teach her students how to forgive; often these lessons were indirect.

Helping her students acquire the skills, attitudes, and understandings required to be a friend was essential to Laura’s goal of creating a caring classroom. A more abstract goal was to develop her students’ awareness that they were part of a community—a community from which they drew benefits and to which they had responsibilities (Watson, 2003, pp. 76, 79).

The caring teacher is sensitive enough to see opportunities, during the course of a school day, that may be used to develop characteristics of care within students, and flexible enough to act upon them. These educators understand that when students learn to care for one another, the classroom becomes more than a room where academic lessons are given; it becomes a center for developing and learning academic achievement, peer relationships, and social responsibilities.

### Definition of Terms

Dictionary Definitions (Lindberg, Ed. et al., 2002):

Confirmation (n) – The act of confirming to show proof.

Confirm (v) – To establish or support the truth of something; to make stronger; to ratify and bind by formal approval.

Affirmation (n) – The act of asserting or affirming something as being true; that which is asserted; confirmation; ratification.

1. Assert (v) – To declare or state positively; to maintain; to defend.

2. Assertion (n) – Maintaining claim; The act of affirming.

Reformation (n) – The act of reforming.

Reform (v) – To construct, make over, or change something for the better; improve.

Exhortation (n) – The practice of exhorting; Language intended to encourage.

Exhort (v) – To urge by earnest appeal or argument; to advise or recommend strongly.

Operational Definitions:

#### Confirmation

To establish a foundation of individual value, uniqueness, and unconditional acceptance for each student.

#### Affirmation

To maintain a foundation of individual value, uniqueness, and unconditional acceptance for each student.

#### Reformation

The motivation and freedom to exercise one's individual will and seek to change or grow for the better.

#### Exhortation

To strongly encourage, guide, and support students.

Additional Terms (Lindberg Ed. et al., 2002):

Caring – (adj) Displaying kindness and concern for others.

Confidence – (n) Firm trust.

Consistency – (n) Unchanging in achievement or effect over time.

Determination – (n) Firmness of purpose; resoluteness.

Discipline – (n) The practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior.

Efficacy – (n) The ability to produce a desired or intended result.

Morals – (adj) Standards of behavior that are considered good or acceptable.

Motivation – (n) The general desire or willingness of someone to do something.

Obedience – (n) Compliance with someone's wishes or orders.

Patience – (n) The capacity to tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.

Respect – (n) Due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of others.

Responsibility – (n) Duty; a moral obligation to behave correctly toward or in respect of.

Self-assurance – (n) Confidence in one's own abilities or character.

Self - efficacy – (n) One's ability to produce a desired or intended result.

Self-engaged – (adj) Committing one's self to a particular aim or cause.

Self-esteem – (n) Confidence in one's own worth or abilities; self-respect.

Values – (n) A person's principles or standards of behavior.

### Organization of the Study

In addition to this chapter, there are five additional ones. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature associated with concepts of care. Chapter 3 includes a description of the methodology used to carry out this study. The findings of the study are reported in chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the results and discussion of the findings. Chapter 6 and the final chapter will offer suggestions for further research as well as implications for practice.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the concept of care in development and learning and consists of three sections. Section one, *Historical Perspective*, focuses on the importance of care based education for all citizens including a background sketch or historical perspective of America's school system. Section two, *Research Studies on Care*, contains an exploration of research studies conducted by leading investigators of "care" initiatives, and an examination of outcomes and possible implications for participants of programs based on care. Each researcher's findings are summarized and synthesized into care models to help visualize key components of their perspectives. Section three, *Martial Arts Concepts and Care*, describe martial arts programs in general, their relationship to discipline and self-confidence, and caring possibilities associated with these programs.

#### Historical Background

The concept of care is not new to America's school system. The goal of American education has always been to nurture students beyond academic achievement and attend to their social and psychological needs as well. An earlier book entitled *Public Education in America*, expressed it this way:

The best education is seen to be one that tries to give attention to the wide variety of needs and interests of learners at various age levels. The best education will be measured in large part by what it does for the life of the individual learner. (Bereday & Volpicelli, 1958, p. 2)

Early schools provided a warm nurturing environment; accommodated students of various ages and grade levels within a single classroom; and required teachers to be of

strong moral character and wholly devoted to the educational needs of the students. Additionally, professional educators were tasked to be life-long learners; to research and apply better teaching methods; to collaborate with colleagues regularly to improve interactions and overcome learning obstacles with students; to aggressively strive for personal and professional growth on a regular basis (Bereday et al., 1958). In essence, education was to be a dynamic institution, constantly growing and emerging for the primary development of all participants.

This development, as described by early education, manifested itself in three distinct areas; academic growth, self development, and concern for the common good and progress of society. Academic growth or intellectual pursuits focused on the acquisition of knowledge and understanding to the point of application. Teaching methods and inquiry centered on subjects, such as, language skills, literature, science, mathematics, social sciences, and fine arts or creative and expressive arts. Educators considered these disciplines to be basic fields of knowledge necessary for intellectual value, growth, and development.

Secondly, educators believed that self development or individual growth was equally important to the human experience and that education should contribute to this area of life as well. The goal was to encourage and support students into developing their individual talents and goals; to explore their personal preferences and ideas of mental and physical fulfillment; to meet students' needs as they grow through successes and disappointments (Bereday et al., 1958). These educators understood that there is more to the lives of individuals than academic aptitude or intellectual prowess.

The third and final area that characterized early education was the goal to produce responsible citizens. Educators believed that students needed to understand, accept, and adopt their role and place in society. Students needed to receive education in the importance of society and the critical contributions of all citizens necessary for healthy social growth. Individuals needed to do more than accumulate knowledge about society; they needed to actively participate in it. Students were challenged to address current issues, taught how to contribute to public policy decisions, and educated in the processes and procedures of getting involved in local, national, and international concerns. Early educators believed that students with well rounded educations would be capable of impacting or changing the world (Bereday et al., 1958).

The challenge to early American educators was to maintain equal emphasis on these three goals and insure their presence throughout every level of development and learning. However, the individual dispositions and personal preferences of the educators caused some of them to focus on one goal over the others. Academic oriented instructors would place strong emphasis on intellectual skills and evaluate students' success based on high academic standards. Teachers with an affinity towards the individual and psychological needs of students devoted their training to personal development and growth, with minimal concern for academic achievement. Educators whom were given to social concerns prioritized students' responsibility for the furtherance of society and focused on the necessary skills to develop therein (Bereday et al., 1958).

Even when instructors over-emphasized their personal preferences in skill development, they recognized that students still needed a balance of subject matter to be

successful. For example, if one believed that strict knowledge was the key to good education, he or she also understood that knowledge alone would make education cold and insensitive. Likewise, those who believed self-development should be prioritized in education to avoid monotony and inflexibility also maintained that self-development alone may not address the necessary discipline and critical thinking exercised by academics. Lastly, educators who promoted social obligations over other instruction, as the practical or applied aspect of education, were also mindful that social responsibility on its own could hinder creativity or stifle originality (Bereday et al., 1958).

Historically, character education and ethics training were strong proponents of education in America until the sixties when both the culture and the school system experienced a decline in the formalized instruction of ethics. This decline was short lived, however, as educators soon realized that remaining neutral on topics of morality and ethics was interpreted by students as having virtually no ethics at all—resulting in student rebellion, negative attitudes, and little or no respect for others. School systems today understand that morality and ethics taught in the home and throughout society must be reinforced within schools in order to maintain a productive learning environment. As a result, some educational systems have begun to incorporate character training within their standard curriculums as early as preschool and kindergarten grades and have adopted this training as an integral part of classroom protocol. (Huffman, 1993; see also Delattre, & Russell, 1993).

### Research Studies on Care

Today, care initiatives and concepts of care have continued to grow as an integral part of the education system. Educators are beginning to realize that teaching is much more than lecturing to groups of students, assigning homework, and giving exams. It requires that the would-be professionals build ethical relationships with students, express concern and consideration for them beyond the classroom, and be willing and flexible enough to serve each student's multi-dimensional developmental needs in order for teaching to be successful. This section presents care models and programs from leading researchers Carol Gilligan, Nell Noddings, and Marilyn Watson. Each researcher's care initiatives have been synthesized into a block diagram and examined for its foundations and practices. The block diagrams provide proposed visualizations of the investigators' care models including the key components, suggested process flow of development and learning, and potential outcomes for participants. This section closes with a summary comparison between these care models and the model presented in this study.

#### Gilligan's Care Model

Carol Gilligan identifies herself as a feminist and believes that care is based on our concept and understanding of morality and is manifested through stages of moral development. This development begins with caring for one's self, progressing or maturing to the point of caring for others over self, and finally realizing the need to balance care between one's self and others (Gilligan, 1993). See Figure 3. She also makes a distinction between males and females regarding their concepts of care. While women view care for others as a moral responsibility, men believe caring for others is

expressed through respecting and protecting the rights of individuals. The former understanding being based on relationships and personal involvement and the latter mindset based on impersonal, non-interference, and external concerns. Gilligan explains:

The moral imperative that emerges repeatedly in interviews with women is an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the “real and recognizable trouble” of this world. For men the moral imperative appears rather as an injunction to respect the rights of others and thus to protect from interference the rights to life and self-fulfillment (Gilligan, 1993, p. 100).

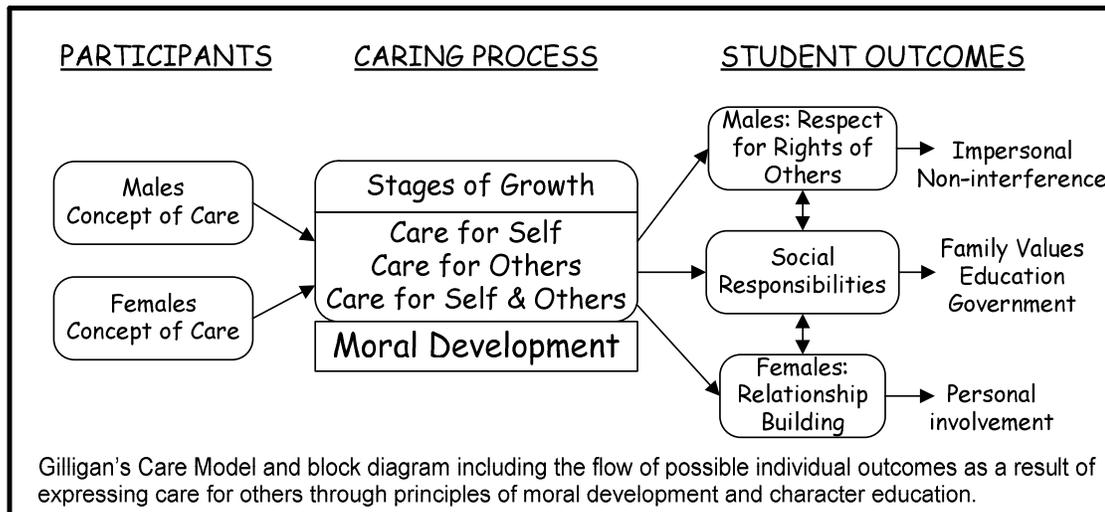


Figure 3: Gilligan's Care Model

In Gilligan's book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Gilligan, 1993), she conducted interviews with women at various developmental stages of life in an attempt to reconcile the misrepresentation of women's views on morality by the mainstream of psychological theory of the day. She argued that the work of Lawrence Kolberg, recognized for his stage theory of moral development and

whom she had worked with earlier as a research assistant, did not accurately represent the views of women, regarding the stages of moral development, since no women were included in his research study. As a result, the views of women regarding caring relationships were derived from the biased thoughts of men (Gilligan, 1993, 1998).

Gilligan's goal was not so much to refute the findings of Kohlberg's moral development theory, but to expand it and include an accurate view of the moral dilemmas and their resolutions that affect the development and lives of women, from women themselves.

#### Gilligan's Theoretical Perspective

Gilligan's research was based on Kohlberg's stage theory of the development of moral reasoning. Kohlberg's theory, with implications in cognitive development theory, contends that moral development in individuals is a product of growing through three levels of maturity in our ability to make moral decisions throughout our lives. Level 1: Preconventional, contains two stages that postulate individualism, where decisions are made from a self-centered frame of reference. Level 2: Conventional, includes three stages that suggest a transition from self-centeredness towards including the perspectives of others over their own in the decision making process. Decisions at this stage of development would be predicated on the importance of relationships and how to protect them in the process. It also reasons that an expansion takes place within individuals during this level that begins to include societal concerns and perspectives when making decisions. Level 3: Postconventional or principled, argues that for the most part, individuals at this level are able to successfully integrate and balance the decision making process with sensitivity and consideration of personal moral values, empathy for others,

and societal responsibility. It claims that these individuals are able to make rational decisions based on impartiality and the protection of societal legal rights and privileges of all citizens (Lerner, 2002).

Kohlberg believed that the key to understanding one's stage of moral development was to understand the reasons or rationale one uses to make moral decisions. That is, he was not only interested in responses, he was interested in the "Why" underlying the responses which would ultimately reveal the true character or motivation of the individual. The following further depicts Kohlberg's theory:

...Kohlberg rejected response-oriented approaches to understanding development and chose to investigate the reasons underlying moral responses (Kohlberg, 1958, 1963a). He devised a way to find the underlying reasons through his construction of a moral-development interview. Information from this interview provided the data for the theory he formulated (Lerner, 2002, p. 392).

Like Kohlberg, Gilligan used interviews to gather data for her conclusions; however she posed her questions to individuals who were in real-life situations where decisions of morality were implied. For example, young men and their role or responsibility to the Vietnam War or women dealing with unwanted pregnancies and thoughts of abortion (Gilligan, 1993, 1995).

The main difference between Kohlberg and Gilligan was her focus on care initiatives relative to moral development, while Kohlberg steered his research towards justice and individual rights aspects of morality. Additionally, Kohlberg's work showed similarities between men and women and their moral decision making processes, while Gilligan believed that the moral decisions made by men and women were based on very different paradigms. Even with these differences, both researchers were successful in

providing insight into the moral development of individuals, which has positive implications and support for care initiatives to be employed where autonomy is desired, relationships are to be cultivated, and social responsibility is encouraged (Gilligan, 1998).

### Gilligan's Educational Implications

Gilligan's educational implications are based on her belief that education as a whole is incomplete without moral foundations. These foundations serve to regulate what is taught, learned, retained, and adopted depending upon the moral stage of development of the individual. In other words, we are subject to adopt teachings and concepts that are or may be detrimental to ourselves and society without a moral foundation or reference point that seeks the best good for all individuals. As a result education must be first and foremost directed towards the moral development of each student. This moral development, Gilligan argues, in turn leads to a social responsibility that includes valuing family principles, education, and governmental policies. Maughn Gregory, in his analysis of Gilligan's concept of care, writes:

The behavioural dispositions, or virtues, we value enough to educate are those without which, we have judged, it would be neglectful to allow our children to make their way through life. There is no such thing as education that is value-neutral (even norms as universal as reading and hygiene bespeak particular values), and so all education is a form of enculturation. As behavioural analysis makes clear, enculturation is more than acquisition of knowledge but less than indoctrination, for the very nature of ideals such as reason, care, and democracy is that they must be willfully chosen and practiced (Gregory, 2000, p. 457).

Gilligan would agree with Gregory that no education or subject is value neutral and therefore educators must be intentional and clear on the values being taught. Then and only then will the students gain the best opportunity to willingly learn, adopt, and put

into practice these same values that we believe to be critical for the progress of a free moral society.

### Noddings' Care Model

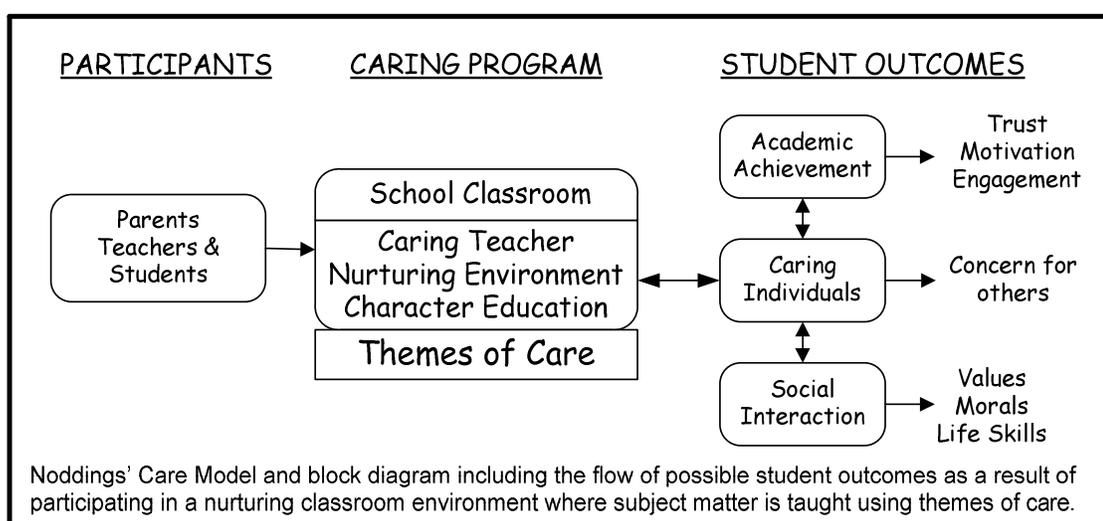
Like Gilligan, Nel Noddings characterizes herself as a feminist, and believes that an individual's ability to care is directly proportional to his/her moral character development. Noddings however, focused heavily on educational practices of moral and ethical ideals, while Gilligan's work centered more on societal aspects of development. Noddings contends that nurture and care are at the core of human development and should be addressed first and foremost by educators and the education system as a whole. She writes:

As we build an ethic on caring and as we examine education under its guidance, we shall see that the greatest obligation of educators, inside and outside formal schooling, is to nurture the ethical ideals of those with whom they come in contact (Noddings, 1984a, p. 49, as cited in Bergman, 2004, p. 149).

Noddings' research suggests that teaching themes of care within the classroom will not only help address academic issues, but will encompass human developmental needs which are far greater and all encompassing. She identifies ways of expressing care at the student level, strategies for parents and teachers, and practices and procedures that can be implemented by the school system. See Figure 4. She argues that students may experience substantial growth beyond standard academics when subject matter from one curriculum is complemented or integrated into another one. Noddings explains:

Themes of care can help us to connect the standard subjects. The use of literature in mathematics classes, of history in science classes, and of art and music in all classes can give students a feeling of the wholeness in their education. After all, why should they seriously study five different subjects if their teachers, who are educated people, only seem to know and appreciate one (Noddings, 1995, p. 1)?

In other words, Noddings proposes a caring approach to education that demonstrates abstract and creative thinking within logical and sequential subject matter and vice versa. As a result, students may experience encouragement and feel comfortable participating, even when their talents lie outside of the mainline subject area.



*Figure 4: Noddings' Care Model*

Noddings also suggests that themes of care are able to lead students into higher order thought, where questions become formulated based on existence, morality and society, and life itself. She believes that teaching themes of care serves to connect individuals to various aspects of human development; educators become personalized to students and trust is increased, students are freer to interact with each other due to the open atmosphere; and students feel better about themselves and their abilities because

there is always something within the subject matter that appeals to them and allows their talents to be exercised (Noddings, 1995; see also Cohen, 2001).

Noddings understands that caring is very relational and implies great concern for the cared-for by the care-giver. She contends that this relationship with regard to academics is always seeking to educate the whole person which in turn causes growth in areas far beyond education. She writes:

Caring implies a continuous search for competence. When we care, we want to do our very best for the objects of our care. To have as our educational goal the production of caring, competent, loving, and lovable people is not anti-intellectual. Rather, it demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents (Noddings, 1995, p. 2).

Noddings believes that, while it is important to consider both the care-giver and the cared-for when evaluating concepts of care, there must also be emphasis upon the activity that manifests the alleged care initiative. The goal is to be able to complete the care initiative and if not able to do so, determine the reasons for the short comings, such as; issues with the care-giver; lack of response from the cared-for, or a situation or activity that hindered the process of care (Noddings, 2001; see also Noblit, 1995). She argues that since we are able to care as a result of being cared for, our “self” or identity is based on caring for others. In other words, she claims that our worth or value as human beings is tightly connected to being worthy of someone taking time to care for us, the cared-for, and our sense that we, the care-giver, are worthy enough to care for others.

#### Noddings’ Theoretical Perspective

Noddings’ theoretical perspective appears to be informally based on cognitive development theory with emphasis towards character education. This theory focuses on

intelligence and the role it plays in human development. It has strong applications towards academic achievement relative to human development and includes thinking processes such as, problem solving, decision making, creativity, and social interactions. Noddings however, bases these processes on moral or ethical reasoning. She focuses on academic achievement through an ethic of care which she believes will result in well rounded, socially accepted, competent individuals. Like Urie Brofenbrenner, and his bioecological view of human development, where contexts or natural surroundings play a key role in the validity of studying children's development, Noddings agrees that educators should create an environment that complements the activities that need to take place (Lerner, 2000). She contends that failure to consider the context in which learning is to take place may hinder the outcome of the activity due to individual dispositions and mindsets of the participants.

Noddings further parallels the work of Brofenbrenner with her focus on caring relationships and their impact on the progress of society. She believes educators must possess an ethic of care in order to teach an ethic of care and it must be held as a core value of their responsibilities. The following explains the importance of this concept:

The need for a caring perspective in early childhood education is based in the conception that "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" (Brofenbrenner, 1979, p. 53). Early childhood educators must have experience that promotes the caring ethic as a primary value in their work with children and families (Freeman, 1999, P. 1).

Student autonomy is another strong component of Noddings' theoretical perspective. She believes, along with scholars such as John Dewey and Jean Jacques Rousseau that students should be treated as individuals and teachers should be sensitive

to the way students acquire knowledge. Educators therefore, should adopt teaching methods that accommodate the broad range of skills and abilities of students within a classroom to insure that the learning goals of various activities are met for each student.

The following statements further express this view:

For caring teachers today, the demand to teach everyone the same material may pose a great dilemma. Teachers agree that all children must acquire certain skills, but many fine teachers believe not only that children gain skills at very different rates, but also that children should be allowed to pursue different interests beyond these skills. Both Dewey and Rousseau support teachers in this belief. Dewey (1916) wrote:

The general aim translates into the aim of regard for individual differences among children. Nobody can take the principle of consideration of native powers into account without being struck by the fact that these powers differ in different individuals. The difference applies not merely to their intensity, but even more to their quality and arrangement. As Rousseau said:

Each individual is born with a *distinctive* temperament... We indiscriminately employ children of different bents on the same exercises; their education destroys the special bent and leaves a dull uniformity. Therefore after we have wasted our efforts in stunting the true gifts of nature we see the short-lived and illusory brilliance we have substituted die away, while the natural abilities we have crushed do not revive. (p. 116) (Noddings, 2001, pp. 101-102)

These statements imply that without an understanding of the individualistic nature of students and adopting teaching methods that allow their creativity to be expressed through academic activity, educators run the risk of hindering or stifling students' natural abilities and creativity forever. This is why, according to Noddings, an ethic of care is essential in the classroom to insure that educators are intimately aware of their students' needs, wants, and desires, and addresses them with as much energy as a caring individual would put forth.

### Noddings' Educational Implications

Educational success as caring individuals appears to be at the heart of Noddings' work. She would like to see themes of care taught within all academic subjects and contends that this initiative of care will broaden the development and learning of students beyond standard educational goals. Noddings believes that children learn ethical behavior and how to care for others from their care givers, such as parents and teachers. She understands that educators have strong influences over students and play key roles in their human as well as academic development, and therefore teachers should demonstrate ethical ideals and caring concepts which encompass societal responsibilities as well as positive classroom practices. Noddings explains:

...Caring parents and teachers provide the conditions in which it is possible and attractive for children to respond as carers to others. We show them how to care. Children educated in this way gradually build an ethical ideal, a dependable caring self. A society composed of people capable of caring—people who habitually draw on a well-established ideal—will move toward social policies consonant with an ethic of care (Noddings, 2002a, p. 223, as in Bergman, 2004, p. 150).

Noddings' goal is to produce caring individuals; which she believes is accomplished best through education that is characterized by caring teachers, teaching themes of care within a nurturing environment. This type of school system serves to compliment and enhance caring principles taught to students by parents. Collectively, these caring initiatives and ethical behaviors learned in homes, supported and continued in schools, build self-efficacy in students and help them overcome additional academic challenges and societal concerns throughout their development and learning.

### Watson's Care Model

Marilyn Watson is a strong advocate of caring relationships in education and believes it to be the most important initiative that can be adopted by a school system today. She is a major supporter of attachment theory which emphasizes the quality of early attachments and relationships in infants and children, to promote positive development and learning later on in life. Watson credits Nel Noddings and her steadfast work on the importance of care as being a strong influence on her educational views. Although she believed throughout her career in the positive impact of caring concepts in education, it was Noddings' research along with Watson's classroom experiences over time that fully convinced her; that the development of children depends heavily on the nurturing they receive through caring environments. Watson recalls:

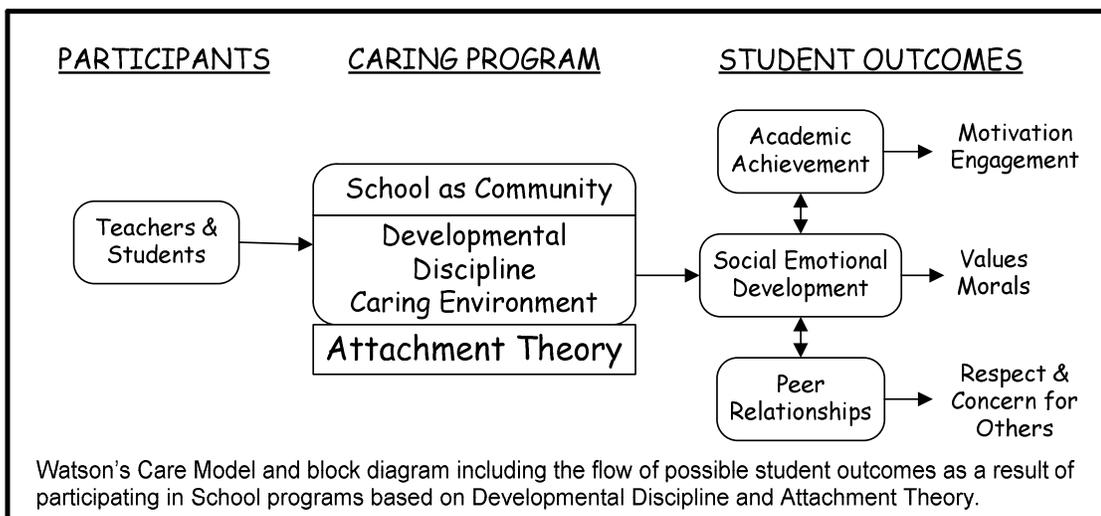
Nel Noddings and her focus on caring have long influenced my thinking about what is most important in educating our children. Over the years, as I worked with schools where qualities of caring were high on the agenda for children as well as teachers, my convictions about the role of caring only deepened. I saw that when children felt cared for, their competence grew and they were able to reciprocate caring to those around them (Watson, 2000, p. xvii).

Watson's care model is a result of more than twenty years of research and personal interaction with schools involved in the Child Development Project (CDP). CDP is a government sponsored project that incorporates social and ethical aspects of child development within daily schoolroom activities. Watson builds upon the success of CDP and a key attribute of the program known as Developmental Discipline. See Figure 5. She describes Developmental Discipline as being "the most ambitious" part of CDP as well as the most critical ingredient in accomplishing the developmental needs of students.

She writes:

Developmental Discipline is not “discipline as usual.” It is discipline that derives its power from the quality of the teacher-student relationship and its efficacy from the caring quality of the total classroom environment. ...it focuses on building a caring classroom community and a nurturing, trusting partnership with each student (Watson, 2000, p. xvii).

Watson makes it clear however, that adult supervision within the classroom is still necessary even where ethical relationships and caring classroom environments have been established. Students are still developing, maturing, and learning these principles and therefore must be guided through conflicts or issues as they arise. In her book “*Learning to Trust*” she provides an opportunity to witness this care model in action through a caring educator, Laura Ecken, who seeks to employ methods of Developmental Discipline and apply attachment theory within her daily classroom activities. Watson observes, councils, and collaborates with Laura as these daily practices are implemented in the lives of the students.



*Figure 5: Watson's Care Model*

### Watson's Theoretical Perspective

Along with the concepts of CDP and Developmental Discipline, Watson's work is heavily grounded in attachment theory, which she believes serves the primary needs of the students and provides the best foundation for child development. Attachment theory originated through the research of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, where attention was given to the social and emotional development of children with respect to their environment (Watson, 2000). This theory argues that the quality of an individual's attachment and relationships with others, early in life, may determine the quality of attachments and relationships with others later on in life. Therefore it promotes quality attachments in the lives of infants and young children as early as possible. Watson agrees that the quality of attachments and relationships early in life are critical for proper child development, but believes that deficiencies in early childhood relationships can be

overcome through quality relationships at later stages of life as well. That is, it's never too late to implement and demonstrate care for individuals who may not be used to it and see positive changes in their development.

Watson notes that attachment theory is not well known within the educational community and as a result has not been implemented in many school systems. School systems tend to place emphasis on teaching methods, where attachment theory is directed towards discipline in schools. She writes:

...attachment theory has not yet become widely known and influential in education theory and practice. Two reasons are likely. First, children's social and emotional development is often seen as less central to education than their cognitive development. Second, most of the early work in attachment theory was focused on understanding infants and very young children, not school-age children.

However, attachment theory's view of children's social and emotional development has profound implications for their lives in our classrooms, not only for their social and emotional development but for their cognitive development. (Watson, 2000, p. 267)

Watson's theory and practice appears to be an integrated approach of attachment theory and Developmental Discipline that seeks to nurture individuals and create or provide an encouraging environment and atmosphere of belonging. This she believes will enhance development and learning because it reinforces students' self-worth and promotes self-efficacy (Sanacore, 2000). Watson also contends that principles of attachment theory along with Developmental Discipline's specialized approach to discipline will assist educators who seek to build ethical relationships with students, where the students' needs are prioritized over the educators' desire to make students obey them.

### Watson's Educational Implications

Watson parallels Noddings with her belief that students need caring teachers within caring environments to be successful. Watson however, bases her conclusions upon attachment theory and focuses on those early relationships and attachments, both parental and academic. She proposes an integration of social and academic development within a community setting. That is, the lives and experiences of teachers and students are shared as part of the educational process, which results in an ethic of care that benefits both parties. Watson believes in using real-time situations that arise within the classroom to teach students concepts of care similar to what can be accomplished in the home or in close relationships within a community.

Watson tells of an incident where grade school students became upset over their teacher's absence and trashed their classroom. The students did not like the substitute teacher who lead the class and blamed their usual teacher, Laura, for their discomfort. The incident was very discouraging to Laura because she had spent several months building successful caring relationships with the students and felt as though her efforts might have been in vain. Watson counseled Laura regarding the students' disobedience and together they discussed what could be done to realize a positive outcome from such a negative situation. The following is Watson's account of Laura's follow-up with her students:

Whatever the causes, this situation allowed Laura, once she got control of her own emotional response, to provide her students with a very deep kind of reassurance—the reassurance that she still cared about them and was not going to punish or desert them, even though they had done something very bad. Laura's trust that deep down her students really were sorry and did want to repair the harm they had done enabled her to refrain from punishment or from trying to

force them to make amends. By asking for her students' help, she allowed their best motives to surface, and she provided the space and support for them to reflect and to autonomously engage in the moral act of restitution (Watson, 2003, p. 42).

Laura, through Watson's guidance, was able to restore the relationships with her students by employing Developmental Discipline techniques where disciplinary methods are guided by the best need of the cared-for by the care-giver. That is, because of Laura's great care for her students she was able to see beyond the circumstances resulting from the students' disobedience to the underlying cause of their actions. This discernment afforded Laura the freedom to meet the needs of her students in an unconventional, but very successful way. Watson contends that this kind of caring and trusting relationships between teachers and students is education at its best.

#### Summary Comparisons of Care Models

It is very clear that each of these researchers see care initiatives as a vital foundation for the success of the education system. Gilligan argues from a societal standpoint that education as a whole is incomplete without moral foundations. Noddings adds that nurture and care are at the core of human development and should be given the highest priority in educational practices. Similarly, Watson contends that successful child development depends on the nurture a child receives through caring relationships and environments. Each researcher also noted the significance of student-teacher relationships in teaching concepts of care.

This study agrees with the findings of these researchers regarding the foremost importance of teaching concepts of care and its critical role in development and learning. The study also concurs that positive student-teacher relationships are necessary for the

success of educational practices. However, this study further suggests that the concept of care needs to contain a more robust definition and characteristics in order to impact areas of students' lives far beyond the academic arena; characteristics that can be demonstrated to students on a consistent basis to maintain a dynamic connection to their individual needs. Moreover, the unconditional basis of care denoted in this study as C.A.R.E. serves to involve parents, educators, and students in a collaborative plan of development and learning. One that focuses on building relationships with students as well as other key individuals that may be instrumental in affecting positive growth in the lives of the students.

#### Martial Arts Concepts and Care

Martial Arts can be defined as a system of finely tuned combat strategies and techniques that employ physical and mental development leading to proficiency in self-defense situations. These techniques include combinations and sequences of stances, blocks, punches and strikes, kicks and various fluid body movements designed to overcome single or multiple attackers. Martial Arts are also practiced for health and fitness, sports, religion, and participation in various eastern philosophies. The simple goal of the martial artist is to strive for self-improvement and discipline in all dimensions of life—to seek positive growth in body, mind, and spirit (Chu, 2003).

#### Martial Arts Historical Perspective

The oldest and most recognized system of martial arts is called kung-fu. It means to be “skilled” or to “possess ability” for something—in this case, martial arts. It is also believed that most, if not all, of today’s variations of martial arts and eastern fighting

styles are rooted in the many systems of kung-fu. A book entitled, *The Original Martial arts encyclopedia, Tradition-History-Pioneers*, explains:

Kung-fu is composed of a number of martially inspired systems for fighting, health development, and dance. There are several hundred styles of kung-fu; most, however, were formed around a more limited number of approaches to a specific subject, be it combat, health, or whatever. Some systems of kung-fu emphasize strenuous, energetic kicking and punching, while others stress more subtle techniques. Indeed, some are nearly static (Corcoran, Farkas, & Sobel, 1993, p. 88).

The origins of martial arts, and kung-fu in particular, are not fully understood but is believed to date back to ancient China through the religious practices of Buddhist monks. Supposedly these monks trained in monasteries and were responsible for spreading the art throughout the orient. The training involved intricate fighting techniques and proficiency with various weapons. Although these practices were combative in nature, they were considered to be a prominent part of the art and culture of the orient. Historians note the following regarding the origins of kung-fu:

Exactly when kung-fu first surfaced is not known, though the subject continues to be disputed. Some traditional historians date it as far back as the Shang dynasty (16<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). Others place it in the period of the Contending States (475-221 B.C.) and the Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti. Perhaps its origins are bound up in the unique way China learned to absorb aspects of her conquerors' cultures. Contemporary kung-fu certainly exhibits distinct traces of Mongolian, Tibetan, Indian, and other culture ideologies (Corcoran, et al., 1993, p. 88).

Today, kung-fu systems and martial arts styles are practiced all over the world with a multitude of variations of focus and technique from its original tenants. The variations are usually based on the country or culture of the style's origin or development. In addition to kung-fu, some of the most popular or familiar styles and derivatives today are Karate, Tae-Kwon-Do, Jiu-Jitsu, Aikido, and Judo. While these

systems and styles differ quite bit in their basic techniques and training regimes, most of them maintain the tradition of discipline, structure and order, and the pursuit of self-improvement. For this reason martial arts training, regardless of the style, has been credited with positive changes in the lives of many students. Students have realized growth in self-esteem, self-confidence, respect for others, and an awareness of their responsibility to society. The most popular and influential martial artist of this century, the late Bruce Lee, expressed the benefits of martial arts in this way:

The total picture Lee wanted to present to his pupil was that above everything else he must find his own way. He always said, "Your truth is not my truth, and my truth is not yours." Lee did not have a blueprint, but rather a series of guidelines to lead to proficiency. Using equipment, there was a systematic approach in which you could develop speed, distance, power, timing, coordination, endurance, and footwork (Corcoran, et al., 1993, p. 88).

The above quote is still the major goal of most martial art clubs today. That is, to encourage students to pursue self-discovery through self-engagement; to take ownership of their development and learning (Vaughn, 2001). Martial art training is meant to serve as a vehicle for that very purpose. The programs and practices are intended to be ongoing, where students may establish long-term goals and receive assistance and guidance in meeting them. The martial arts instructors serve as agents of positive change for the students and inevitably realize positive growth themselves. Their relationship with each student is individualized and extends far beyond the practice or training hall. These instructors treat their students as family members and are willing to give additional time, energy, and support to help students succeed in other areas outside of the training environment. Similarly, the students respond to this form of care and are all the more

eager to please their instructors and adopt the principles and practices of their teachings (Alderman, 1999; see also Apps, 1996).

### Martial Arts Training Concepts

Martial Arts classes are designed to promote discipline and self-confidence in the lives of its participants. The classes are structured and ordered to demonstrate to students the benefits of a structured and ordered lifestyle. Additionally, students are encouraged to express themselves through the various techniques of the style practiced. That is, as students learn techniques, their goal is to adapt each technique to their own body style and temperament. As a result, students have the opportunity to tap into the creative or artistic side of their nature as well. In other words, creativity is demonstrated within structure and order (martial); and structure and order are realized within creativity (art). These practices serve to promote growth in both of these key areas of human development; structure and creativity.

Although mental discipline is a strong component of martial arts training, it is not isolated training, but accomplished through the physical training sessions that require critical and creative thinking skills. That is, to the degree students engage themselves in thinking through martial arts techniques, determines the depth and quality of their execution of that particular technique. This concept is very important for success in martial arts because of the integral and interdependent nature of all of its techniques.

Martial art training is typically comprised of basics, formal exercises, and free-style fighting practices. Basics include: stances, blocking, punching and striking, and kicking techniques. Stances involve primarily the practitioner's legs and feet, where

students learn the importance of creating a stable foundation or platform for executing defensive and offensive techniques. Blocking movements involve mostly hands, arms, feet, and leg techniques and are used to deflect or intercept attacks from one or more assailants. Punching, striking, and kicking movements are offensive techniques used to attack opponents and deliver powerful blows with specifically positioned hands and feet as well as other parts of the body. Formal exercises are defined as integrated movements and sequences or patterns involving specialized series of basics (Pfluger, 1977). These exercises simulate defensive and offensive fighting sessions against multiple attackers. Students are taught smooth and skillful tactics to overcome their “invisible” opponents’ attacks from prescribed angles and directions. Formal exercises are designed to increase in difficulty as students advance from novice to intermediate and finally advanced levels of training. Free-style fighting is where students demonstrate applied defensive and offensive techniques against “real” attackers. The students wear protective gear during the fighting sessions and are instructed to use control and much less than full contact when striking each other to avoid injuries. Students are attacked randomly by multiple attackers in an effort to exercise the students’ ability to assess an attack situation and employ martial arts mental and physical skills to overcome it.

#### Martial Arts Training and Academic Implications

This emphasis on dynamic thinking skills along with physical action is one of the many reasons that martial arts training parallels educational initiatives. Both require individuals to be motivated, engaged, and completely focused on the task at hand, in order to gain the full benefits of the learning exercise (Squires, 2001). Secondly, each

system contains promotion criteria where students realize major accomplishments for their efforts; academically, as students progress in their education they are promoted to the next grade level; up to and through 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation. Similarly, martial arts students' progress through grade levels; typically through a belt system, where various colored belts, worn as part of the martial arts uniform, serve to identify the level of training, achievement, or experience the students have. Also, each program incorporates multifaceted instructional content with various degrees of difficulty which allows students an opportunity to meet and overcome multiple challenges; education encompasses multiple dimensions of learning at all levels, for example: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, music, physical education, and so on. These skills are taught at progressively complex levels during elementary school, middle school, and high school. In the same way, multi-dimensional martial arts skills, such as, basics, formal exercises, free-style fighting, weapons, take-downs, and joint-manipulations are increased in their level of instruction and complexity as the student progresses into higher levels of training.

Martial arts instruction is not un-like academic endeavors in their ability to meet the broad complex needs of student development. Additionally, martial arts instructors, along with school teachers, find themselves with unique opportunities through these teaching methods to build positive relationships with their students and motivate them for life-long success.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to carry out a qualitative research study that focuses on identifying attributes of a *care* based martial arts program, which promotes discipline and self-confidence in its participants, and determine if these attributes transfer to academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions. Qualitative inquiry is well suited for this type of research because of the complex nature of individuals and the multitude of emotional, psychological, and spiritual variables that are involved in human development.

Qualitative methods can be used to obtain intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods (Strauss, 1998, p. 11).

This research is important for students and educators alike because academic challenges and social development creates a great need for students to appropriate discipline and self-confidence throughout their development and learning and for educators to understand these needs and employ proven practices or strategies to address them (Morganett, 2001; see also Shann, 1999).

In this study, parents answer survey questions about their child's development relative to having participated in a martial arts program founded upon concepts of *care*. The survey is a reflective questionnaire that contains open-ended questions to assist parents in describing their children's development and learning experiences over a period of time. That is, parents are asked to assess the current state of their children's development, reflect backwards in time relative to their involvement in the martial arts

program, and consider the phases of growth and development of their children, during this period of time; and the role or impact the MAI program may have had on his/her development.

Details of the methodology used for this research include: a description of the site and setting of the study, its participants, instruments and procedures used in gathering data, and techniques and strategies for analyzing, interpreting, and presenting results.

### Site and Setting

The site for this study was a small auditorium which is used as a martial arts studio and located within a commercial office building. The studio is a carpeted rectangle room (25ft x 40ft) with an eleven foot high ceiling. Six (5ft x 8ft) mirrors are mounted along one wall and two 12 ft balance beams or stretch bars are mounted on the opposite wall, 3.5ft above the floor. These devices are both used as martial arts training aids. The mirrors, along with the high ceiling gives the studio a much larger look and feel and creates an open environment for students to move about freely (Hansen, 2002; see also Swaminathan, 2004). Additionally, the practice area is clean, bright, relaxed, and yet maintains a structured atmosphere, with training mats and mannequins stored neatly in the corners of the room. These provide guidelines or boundary conditions for students as they express themselves through training (Cohen, 1999; see also Saracho, 2002).

The room has double doors at its entrance that are kept open during training sessions with chairs placed at the entrance (lobby) for parents and/or visitors to view the activity. A single door exists at the far end of the room that is used by students for

entering and exiting the practice area. There are large glass double doors and windows at the entrance to the building that allow lots of sunshine to enter the room from the outside, during sunny days, which helps to maintain a warm and friendly environment.

The walls of the room are painted in an eggshell white color and are bare with the exception of a white board towards the front of the room and a large wooden cross mounted on the far wall with a plaque next to it containing the Bible verse, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.” John 3:16 (New International Version). The white board is used to list martial arts training concepts or recurring themes that are critical for the students to adopt for building and improving their techniques. The cross is used to symbolize the Christian principle of God’s unconditional love and care for all of mankind, and as such, we are to “...treat people the same way you want them to treat you...” Matthew 7:12, according to Jesus Christ. This treatment of others serves as the goal or standard of operation for all of the martial arts program participants and provides parents and students with a clear principle of conduct that they can expect from each instructor.

### Participants

#### Parents

Participants consist of both parents and children. Parents provide the reflective discussion while children ages 6 through 18 are the subjects of discussion. Parents were chosen for this study because of their opportunity and ability to both, witness their child’s current state of growth and maturity, and also reflect on past experiences, influences, and interactions that they perceive to have been instrumental in their child’s development

over the years. Parents or guardians are crucial for this type of study because of their intimate knowledge and relationship to their children's development. They were also selected based on their willingness to become an active participant in the martial arts program. Parents are encouraged to participate in training sessions to assist with their own personal development goals and enhance relationships or bonding with their children. Adult participation is very beneficial to the goals of the martial arts program because it creates a cross-generational atmosphere (Eisenberg, Fabes, Shepard, Guthrie, Murphy, & Reiser, 1999) that serves to increase communications between generations and elevate the value of the program in the minds of the children. In other words, parents automatically demonstrate the importance of their children's activity when they participate or give their personal time to the same.

### Children

Children were selected to participate in the study based on their length of time of participation in the martial arts program. There were a total of six children needed to complete the study and cover the research design of having two students per group, preferably one male and female pair, representing one of three time periods of participation; short-term (3 months to 2 years), medium-term (2 to 5 years), and long-term (greater than 5 years). Age was another important factor in the selection, I wanted a broad age range between students to compare observations and interpretations of parents with many years of investment in their child's growth with those had only a few years. This data could show that the martial arts program may have a more corrective

affect on older students as opposed to a more preventative affect on the younger participants.

### Instruction

My instructors and I always begin new participants by teaching them an applied martial arts technique that is easy to master but has profound benefits relative to their training. For example, teaching students a simple technique for always protecting their face or performing strikes or punches with speed and accuracy. This allows the students to express themselves freely through the technique. For example, a student is taught to punch a manikin in the face as an offensive move. He/she is then asked to strike the manikin as many times as he/she can within a ten second time period. At the end of the time period, the student is praised regardless of the number of strikes performed. The praise is a result of effort. This creates an open forum of expression for the student without fear of failure (Estola, ERKKILÄ, & SYRJÄLÄ, 2003). Once the student overcomes his/her fear of failure, we begin teaching the mechanics or details of the techniques that may have intimidated or frustrated the student earlier. The student is now ready to receive or handle the detailed instruction, with minimal frustration, because some amount of self-efficacy in his/her ability to perform has been realized at this point (Davis, 1993).

### Instruments

Questionnaires were used as a data gathering tool for this research. These included reflective questions, parental consent/permission and informed assent forms for children. See Appendix B. The questions were open-ended and probing to assist parents

in describing their child's learning experiences and development over a period of time. Specifically, questions were designed to stimulate the thoughts of parents/participants regarding things related to their child's personal development, academic achievement, and interaction with peers and society. Follow up questions served to probe parents for expanded or more in depth thought within their responses. The following is an example of the open-ended nature of the initial questions along with the follow-on probing inquiries:

5. What impact, if any, have you observed in your child since joining this martial arts class?
  - A. Any impact related to school/academics? Please explain.
  - B. Any impact on peer relationships/friendships? Please explain.
  - C. Any impact related to home/family life? Please explain.
  - D. Any impact related to community/social interactions? Please explain.

Each questionnaire was mailed as a packet to the households of all participants. This allowed parents time and freedom to answer questions within the setting of their choice, which may improve the quality of reflective thought. To maintain privacy of participants, the questionnaires were mailed with self-addressed, stamped envelopes by the UNI faculty sponsor of this research, and received through return mail by the same. He removed any identifiers that may have been inadvertently included in the responses and collected all parental consent/permission and informed assent forms, which were kept privately by him and discarded upon completion of the study. Each questionnaire was then numbered or lettered and the code known only to the UNI faculty sponsor.

## Procedures

### Participants

The study design consisted of a reflective questionnaire mailed to the parents of a sample group of students enrolled in a martial arts program. Parents were asked open-ended questions regarding their observation, over a period of time, of their perceived impact the martial arts class has had on their children. The student sample consisted of 6 participants (subjects of discussion) selected from a population of more than seventy martial arts students. This student selection included 3 male and female pairs that represent short-term participation or 3 months to 2 years of involvement, medium-term participation or 2 to 5 years of enrollment, and long-term participation which involves 5 or more years of training within the martial arts program. See student selection sheet in Appendix B.

### Data Collection

To maintain student or family privacy, all correspondence associated with the questionnaire package were directed to me, the Principal Investigator (PI), via my UNI Faculty sponsor of this research. As a result, I was unaware of who decided to participate in the study or not. The questionnaire was mailed along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to at least 5 families within each category of student participation (short-term, medium-term, and long-term) for a total of 15 households. A parent consent/permission form was also included in the envelope which provided a brief and general overview of the purpose for the research and reasons for this type of questionnaire. Parents were encouraged to complete the questionnaires at their own leisure which helped them engage

themselves more readily in reflective thought prior to answering the questions. The return address of the questionnaire was to the Faculty sponsor of this research in the UNI Educational Psychology Department.

### Data Handling

Upon receipt of completed questionnaires, all parental consent/permission forms and informed assent forms were removed from returned envelopes, kept privately by the UNI Faculty sponsor of this research, and discarded upon completion of the study. The Faculty sponsor also reviewed each questionnaire and removed any identifiers that may have been inadvertently included in the responses. Each questionnaire was then numbered or lettered and the code known only to the Faculty Sponsor. Finally, the Faculty sponsor passed the questionnaire responses on to the PI for analysis. Of the returned responses, two participants (male & female pairs) were chosen from each category, Short-term, medium-term, and long-term. To protect participants' confidentiality, rights and welfare, data was kept confidential by researcher and no identifying information is included in this report. All original responses were discarded at the completion of the study.

### Analysis

Interpretation and analysis involved the exploration or search for recurring themes and patterns that existed throughout the data. These themes were then analyzed with respect to the original research question. Implications for development and learning are

explored, and comparisons to current research are included as well as, opportunities for future research on the concept of *care*.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the results or findings of this qualitative research project focused on a care based Martial Arts Instruction (MAI) program. A questionnaire was used to gather data for this study and the responses are summarized in tables 1 through 5. The data is organized using one female and male student pair for each of three groups, categorized by length of MAI participation. A matrix format is used to allow quick side-by-side comparisons of summary responses to each question. Responses to the questions were compared between each of the student pairs and resultant themes or similarities extracted and examined across the remaining groups. The goal was to determine whether recurring themes existed between the female and male pairs as well as the groups as a whole.

The organization of the chapter includes a description of the questionnaire, an overview of each interview question, its relevance to the study, and an examination of the summary responses contained in the corresponding table for that particular question. Comparisons between pairs and across groups are made and resultant themes are determined based on the collective responses as a whole. The goal of the questionnaire was to help parents reflect backwards in time upon their child's development and learning since joining the MAI program. These questions were designed to probe for details as parents interpret their child's MAI experience with respect to academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions.

## Questionnaire

### Description

The questionnaire is qualitative and reflective in design to best capture parents' feelings and emotions as they interpret their child's development and learning over a period of time. The questions were open-ended and probing to help stimulate reflective thought and draw out details that may otherwise be overlooked. There were a total of eight interview questions used for this research. Inquiries included participants' background information, rationale for joining the MAI program, and development and learning experiences as a result of participation. The interview was designed to answer the research question: "What impact does a C.A.R.E. based martial arts class have on students' academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions?"

### Interview Questions & Responses

The first three questions capture the participants' gender, age range, and length of participation respectively. The goal was to compare responses between female and male pairs of similar age and period of participation; to explore differences in responses, if any, between short, medium, and long term participants.

The fourth question was concerned with the participants' rationale for joining the MAI program. Refer to Table 1. The reasons for joining the program may have a significant effect on the experiences of the participants. The female participants across the groups appear to be influenced mostly by psychological needs for participation while their male counterparts were motivated mostly by physical concerns.

Table 1  
*Summary of Questionnaire Responses (#4)*  
*F = Female M = Male*

Question #4 Rationale	Short-Term F/M Pair Response	Medium-Term F/M Pair Response	Long-Term F/M Pair Response	Themes F/M Pairs Across Groups
4. Rationale for joining MAI program?	F: movies/actors M: self-control, defense, confidence	F: referral from student M: exercise, weight control	F: self-confidence, self-esteem M: school flyer, general interest	Physical, Psychological, Other

Questions five through seven were specifically directed towards participants' experiences within the program and the impact or influences on development and learning that may have occurred as a result. These questions explored academic achievement, peer relationships, home and family life, community and social interactions, MAI class atmosphere and environment, and relationships between instructors and students.

Table 2 reveals that parents believe that their children gained self-efficacy, motivation, and moral values through participating in the MAI program, which has had a positive affect on their academic performance. This observation appears to be consistent within the female and male pairs as well as across the groups. Additionally, the positive impact of the MAI program continued to influence participants' peer relationships, home and family life, and social interactions as well. See Table 2.

Table 2  
*Summary of Questionnaire Responses (#5)*  
*F = Female M = Male*

Question #5 Impact	Short-Term F/M Pair Response	Medium-Term F/M Pair Response	Long-Term F/M Pair Response	Themes F/M Pairs Across Groups
5. Impact of MAI?				
5A. Academics?	F: moral values, respect for others, confidence, participation M: physical coordination, memory skills	F: confidence, motivation M: confidence, motivation	F: confidence M: discipline, determination, confidence, moral values (self- engagement)	Confidence (Self- efficacy), Motivation, Moral values
5B. Peers?	F: control, respect M: no	F: accepting of others, caring M: control, patient	F: confidence M: patience, understanding, confident	Patience, Control, Respect, Confidence
5C. Family?	F: control, respect M: no	F: discipline, obedience, values M: respect, obedience, values	F: father-daughter bonding, confidence M: obedience, moral values	Obedience, Moral values
5D. Social?	F: control, respect M: no	F: confident M: confident, self- assured, outgoing	F: father-daughter bonding, confidence M: listening, patience, responsibility	Confidence, Respect, (Self- efficacy)

The interview responses to question six, relative to the atmosphere and environment of the MAI program, record that most parents expected the class to be strict, rigid, and militaristic based on their understanding of traditional martial arts programs. Refer to Table 3. However, the care based MAI program was reported by one parent as “Disciplined but fun!” These responses also revealed the consistency of the program through the probing question, “What do you think now?” relative to the environment, as

opposed to when the participants began. All parents believed that the MAI program continued to maintain a supportive and encouraging environment.

Table 3  
*Summary of Questionnaire Responses (#6)*  
*F = Female M = Male*

Question #6 Environment	Short-Term F/M Pair Response	Medium-Term F/M Pair Response	Long-Term F/M Pair Response	Themes F/M Pairs Across Groups
6. Describe the MAI environment?	F: disciplined but fun, satisfying M: diversified group, equally managed with enthusiasm and sincere good will	F: no response M: no response	F: no response M: equal treatment, individual worth, build confidence, discipline, serve others	Equality, Discipline, Acceptance
6A. What was expected?	F: disciplined but fun M: strict and rigorous	F: disciplined or rigorous M: militaristic, regimented	F: militaristic and regimented M: instructional, focused on MAI skill	Militaristic, Disciplined, Rigorous, Strict, Regimented
6B. What did you think on your first day of class?	F: disciplined but fun M: more teaching than cold coaching occurred	F: more to MAI instruction than martial arts M: relaxed learning environment	F: well run class, fun, instructor knowledgeable and caring M: class culture was much more than MAI training	More to class than learning material, relaxed caring environment
6C. What do you think now?	F: disciplined but fun M: consistent and progressive curriculum	F: great program, Christian concepts learned, MAI skills, class values adopted M: supportive, nurturing, encouraging, valued, motivating	F: encouraging, edifying, accepted, supported M: class culture completely positive, students improve in school, at home and on a social level	Consistent, Supportive, Encouraging

The relationship between the MAI instructors and students are recorded in the interview responses of question seven. Refer to Table 4. The data reveals that parents

observed the instructors to be student focused and caring, which was not what most had expected. As before they expected traditional forms of student-teacher interaction, where the authority of the instructor is obvious to all and the focus is usually on the presentation of the subject material.

Table 4  
*Summary of Questionnaire Responses (#7)*  
*F = Female M = Male*

Question #7 Relationship	Short-Term F/M Pair Response	Medium-Term F/M Pair Response	Long-Term F/M Pair Response	Themes F/M Pairs Across Groups
7. Describe the Instructor-student relationship?	F: respect, kindness M: instructors are there to benefit the students	F: no response M: no response	F: no response M: instructors are there for students' benefit, positive impact	Positive, Student focused
7A. What was expected?	F: respect, kindness M: cold, militant	F: rigid M: strict	F: knowledgeable, caring, hoped for patience M: teaching focused on MAI skill	Strict, Rigid, Focused on material
7B. What did you think on your first day of class?	F: respect, kindness M: pleasantly surprised at mild demeanor	F: more to MAI instruction than martial arts M: not as strict or regimented	F: good safe place M: impressed with skill level and teaching abilities, student focused, comfortable social atmosphere	Comfortable atmosphere, Student focused instruction
7C. What do you think now?	F: respect, kindness M: our son will have a longer interest due to relationship with instructors	F: blessed, instructors care about us and share in our successes M: instructors are supportive, caring, motivating	F: excellent instruction, genuine, caring, student focused M: blessed, gained as parent, teacher, and manager	Positive instructor student relationships promote growth

The eighth and final interview question responses verified the parents' desire to have their children continue involvement with the MAI program because of its positive

benefits across many areas of development and learning. Refer to Table 5. Participants' motivation and willingness to continue with a program serves as a key indicator of the success of the program.

Table 5  
*Summary of Questionnaire Responses (#8)*  
*F = Female M = Male*

Question #8 Future	Short-Term F/M Pair Response	Medium-Term F/M Pair Response	Long-Term F/M Pair Response	Themes F/M Pairs Across Groups
8. What are your future plans for MAI participation?	F: continue, strong benefits M: continue indefinitely, apply skills	F: advance to instructor, kids will continue until they leave for college M: no response	F: hope to continue, realized huge benefits M: continue to develop, serve as model, learn life skills, support class objectives	Desire to continue MAI participation due to realized benefits in lives

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that a care based Martial Arts program does impact its participants' academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions. The responses from parent participants were consistent regarding their belief of the importance of having instructors that genuinely cared for their children. They understand that a caring instructor of any program, activity, or subject has the ability to encourage, guide, and support any student through the learning process. This chapter provides a more detailed discussion of the questionnaire results of chapter 4. It begins with the rationale or motivation for joining the MAI program, followed by the impact the program may have had on participants in four areas of development and learning. The next sections discuss responses to the class atmosphere or environment of the MAI program; the relationship between instructors and students; and future plans and goals for participation. The chapter closes with a summary paragraph of key themes that emerged from the collective responses to the questionnaire.

#### Rationale for Joining MAI

Two themes emerged from responses concerning the rationale for joining the MAI program. Females joined more for psychological needs such as, low self-esteem or lack of confidence, while males tended to be concerned with physical needs such as, self-defense, exercise, or weight control. It can be reasoned however, that the physical desires of the males may stem from psychological needs. That is, the desire to learn self-defense (physical) could actually be a need to feel confident (psychological) in one's ability to

defend himself. Similarly, the motivation to exercise and control one's weight (physical) may actually be a need to increase one's self-esteem (psychological) through obtaining a more acceptable physique.

### MAI Impact on Development and Learning

#### Academics

The primary response given by parents for the impact MAI may have had on their children's academic achievement was self-confidence or self-efficacy. Parents claim that they have seen significant improvement in their children's confidence in asking questions, memory skills, motivation for academic success, ability to fulfill academic challenges, and discipline. One parent commented, regarding a male participant, 13 to 16 years of age, with long term participation of more than five years:

This is the area (academics) that I feel my son benefited the most from David's teachings (the MAI program) and class culture. Due to the requirement to progress belt levels, he (parent's son) developed strong discipline, determination and a competitive spirit, which he has applied to all areas of his life, specifically, in his diligence completing his homework and school assignments at an honor role level every year (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Another parent responded, regarding a male participant, 10 to 12 years of age, with medium term participation of two to five years:

My son hated school in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. He hated it so much that he would cry and refuse to go. I was so worried that I took him to counseling, after consulting with his teacher and school counselor with little results. We started Martial Arts (the MAI program) in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade but we also moved to a new school. My son enjoyed 2<sup>nd</sup> grade a lot more, but even toward the end of the year he was reluctant to go. He is very bright but he really struggled with writing. It seemed almost torturous for him. The struggle got worse and a concern about ADD was expressed by his 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher...4<sup>th</sup> grade evaluation processes helped very little.

Mr. Hite worked with my son on writing one night and it was like he (Mr. Hite) unlocked something inside of him (parent's son). I told my son's grandmother that it was like Mr. Hite filled him (my son) with helium. And he was a different

child after that. He was “lighter” and happier and it was like a load had been lifted from him. It is important to my son to follow rules and be a “good boy” and do what is right. I think it was very hard on him that he could not produce what teachers wanted with his writing, and Mr. Hite helped him see that he could do it. I know it was a big relief to him. I think Mr. Hite was able to help him because of the teaching skills that he has, but also because of the relationship (mutual respect, trust, admiration, etc) that he has with my son as his karate (MAI program) instructor (MAI Questionnaire Response).

A key comment to note in the above parent’s response is that I worked with this young man only “one night” regarding his writing and was able to reframe the way he looked at the writing process. I submit that my relationship of care (C.A.R.E.) towards the young man was the main ingredient in getting his attention, and thus challenging him to rise to the occasion. A strong relationship between Instructors and students substantially reduces the amount of time it takes to get students’ attention and see progress because once the students know you care about them, they care about what you have to impart to them (reference importance of student teacher relationships in academics). Also, having listened to him (‘C’ confirming his unconditional value as a student) regarding his frustration with writing, I could tell that he had not reconciled in his own mind the real purpose of the written word, which is to “communicate” information in written form. Having gained his attention, I explained the purpose of writing to him, and asked him open-ended non-threatening questions about communication relative to his area of interest, which happened to be science. He had been involved with presenting a recent science project at a Science Fair. I shared with him how excited I was when he verbally explained his science project to me and how I was able to understand and see his activity as if I had been at the Science Fair. I then challenged him and said, “How could you communicate your science project to me and include all of the enthusiasm that you

displayed visually and orally without good writing skills?” I continued, “A science report is actually a writing assignment, it communicates to your science teacher the details of your experiments.” My goal was to convince the young man that he already possessed the ability and skill for writing (‘A’ affirming his abilities and unconditional value); we only needed to duplicate or transfer this ability and skill from his exciting science reports to his not so exciting language arts assignment.

A trusting and supportive teacher-child relationship is the foundation on which a nurturing relationship is built. Achieving such a relationship with all our students requires that we see each of them in a positive light, learn enough about them and their lives to be able to understand their unique ways, and convince our students that we can be trusted to care for them no matter what – three huge tasks (Watson, 2003, p. 53).

At this point he became motivated and excited about the writing process (‘R’ reformation – willing to change positively) and he and I worked on outlining, and paragraph concepts which enabled him to complete his writing assignment later that night at home (‘E’ exhortation – I strongly encouraged him as we worked together and I expected, trusted, and challenged him to finish his assignment that night). I recall being shown, by his parent, upon their next visit to MAI, an e-mail received from the young man’s teacher, which said something to the effect of, “Tell Mr. Hite thanks for working with (student’s name), he (the student) is very excited about writing now; he says he wants to write a whole book.”

The “Cycle of C.A.R.E.” model proposed in this study seeks to demonstrate a consistent theme of unconditional acceptance that allows students the freedom to express themselves. Its goal is to remove walls and barriers that students erect to protect their

sense of well being, ego, or manifest their lack of trust for individuals who should have students' best interests at heart.

Students with a history of insecure attachment will need to be assured over and over that they are worthy and that we care about them. Several of Laura's students needed this kind of continual reassurance, and even when Laura provided it, not all of them ever really believed her (Watson, 2003, p. 48).

Students need to feel free and confident enough in classrooms to ask questions, try new and challenging tasks without fear of ridicule or sense of inferiority, and believe that they are fully accepted participants. This parent responded, regarding a female participant, 10 to 12 years of age, with short term participation of three months to two years:

This particular martial arts class (the MAI program) has also helped increase my kids' confidence in asking questions and further participating in their school classroom discussions and projects (MAI Questionnaire Response).

This model believes that instructors have the authority to set such an academic climate by using concepts of care in a consistent manner so that all students will have an equal opportunity for academic expression and success (Nowak-Fabryowski, 2003).

### Peer Relationships

The next area of potential MAI impact on participants of this study is that of peer relationships. The questionnaire responses show a significant positive impact of MAI on participants with respect to their peers. The major parental comments in this area were their children's improvements in self-control, patience, and the acceptance of diverse groups. One parent responded, regarding a female participant, 10 to 12 years of age, with short term participation of three months to two years:

Relationships at home, in school, with friends and other people within the community have all benefited from Mr. Hite's instructing (the MAI program) my

daughter and son. They have better control over their emotions and they treat people with honor and respect (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Another parent adds, for a female participant, 6 to 9 years of age, with medium term participation of two to five years:

I think that her participation in MAI has taught her to be accepting of all types of people. She is a very caring and sensitive child naturally, so I think that Mr. Hite's teachings and caring environment (the MAI program) have supported her personality (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Personally, I believe peer influence is one of the strongest components in human development because of the emotional content that appears to be ever present during peer interactions and our great need to be accepted by our peers. How students are seen by their peers, quite often determines how they see or feel about themselves. If their peers see them as popular and smart, they tend to work hard to maintain such status and are often influenced by their admirers. However, if the opposite is the case, they may have a tendency to become withdrawn from the so-called mainstream groups of students and seek acceptance with less popular or maybe even socially unacceptable groups. This is why as a society we are very concerned with peer pressure, the strong pull of one individual over another, to lead someone into thoughts, actions, or deeds that he/she might otherwise have avoided. As a result, the MAI program endeavors to promote discipline and self-confidence in students to assist them in overcoming negative influences, and motivate them to embrace positive interactions (Colder, 1998; see also Kanevsky, & Keighley, 2003).

This parent shares, with respect to a male participant, 13 to 16 years of age, with long term participation of more than five years:

My son demonstrated a patient and understanding personality when associating with his peers and children of all ages. He is confident and secure, associating with older kids and adults in all areas. These attributes I feel came from my son's teaching years due to David's specific ability to communicate to the students what the objectives and goals were for every student and belt level (the MAI program). David also boosted my son's confidence level to teach new students by allowing him to take-on the role of assistant instructor. I was very impressed by my son's attention to detail when he was asked to demonstrate or correct a student's technique (MAI Questionnaire Response).

The roll this young man was able to achieve as assistant instructor also influenced his peers positively. I recall witnessing his peers coming to him on a regular basis to gain insight on MAI techniques to insure acceptable performance on exams. This peer relationship or influence can be seen in academics also, when students seek out other peer students that appear to have a better grasp on the material at hand than they do (Chaskin, & Rauner, 1995; see also Wentzel, 2003).

#### Home and Family Life

Home and family life is another dimension of development and learning that all but one parent responded favorably regarding the positive impact the MAI program has had on their children. The one parental response for a male participant, 6 to 9 years of age, with short term participation of 3 months to two years, claimed that the MAI program had no impact on their child's home and family life. There was no elaboration accompanied with this response and therefore my conclusions are speculative and based on other comments made by these parents. For instance, the response may have been due to the short term MAI participation of their child, and so the principles of MAI were not sufficiently adopted at the time of the questionnaire. It could also be that rules within the home are much stricter than other environments, which potentially would delay the

affects of the MAI program, but not necessarily negate them altogether. Lastly, this comment may support the belief that the home and family life are the most difficult areas for individuals to manifest positive changes. We are so set in our ways that it becomes very difficult to make positive changes in attitude and behavior that are consistent, relative to certain environments and relationships (Colwell, & O'Connor, 2003).

It is interesting to note at this point, regarding the particular parental response above, that while these parents claimed that there was no impact of MAI on their child's home and family life, peer relationships, nor social interactions, that they made the following comments relative to the academic impact of the MAI program on their child, the MAI program itself, and their child's continued MAI participation:

When asked to describe any academic influence that MAI may have had on their child, they responded: Better physical coordination & memory skills (MAI Questionnaire Response).

When asked to describe the atmosphere or environment of the MAI class, they responded: Diversified group; equally managed with enthusiasm and sincere good will. The curriculum has been consistent and progressive (MAI Questionnaire Response).

When asked to describe the relationship that instructors have with students in the MAI class, they responded: It is clear the instructors are there (MAI program) to benefit the students. We believe our son will have a longer lived interest in martial arts and will more than likely achieve more advanced levels due to the relationships & presentations of the instructors (MAI Questionnaire Response).

When asked about their future plans for their child's participation in the MAI program, they responded: Our son will continue indefinitely. We would like to see him complete or apply these skills constructively in the distant future (MAI Questionnaire Response).

These additional parental comments indicate that although they have not realized an MAI impact up to this point, for certain areas of their child's development, they do see the

potential for the MAI program to continue to influence their child in the future. They obviously have an expectation for their son's development that they believe the MAI program can help to achieve.

Additional responses from parent participants for this area of research on the impact of the MAI program, included themes like, improved discipline, more sensitivity when interfacing with younger siblings, special father-daughter bonding, and more trustworthy and able to make responsible decisions. The following parent participant wrote, with respect to a female participant, 6 to 9 years of age, with medium term participation of two to five years:

Our daughter is very disciplined. She is also very cognizant of her behaviors, as she does not want any negative reports going to Mr. Hite (MAI program) (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Another parent participant's response shared, with respect to a male participant, 10 to 12 years of age, with medium term participation of two to five years:

Because my son respects Mr. Hite, I know that he has grown in his respect for me because he knows that I have been trying to teach him these things (better nutrition, exercise, obeying parents, etc.) all along. It's like he is thinking "oh, I guess you do know what you are talking about."

Mr. Hite teaches (the MAI program): "treat others how you want to be treated." If my son is teasing his sister or won't share something with her, I can say to him: "remember, treat others how you want to be treated" and he immediately shifts his behavior. I can even say this to his sister now, who isn't in the classes yet, and she understands what I mean and will adjust her behavior as well (MAI Questionnaire Response).

These comments support MAI's goal of reinforcing respect for parents. We endeavor to elevate and support parents to enhance their position of authority in the eyes of the child. For example, parental approval is requested in the presence of the child

participant prior to any promotion tests. Parents are allowed to cancel their child's promotion test without providing MAI instructors with any reasons. The rationale I use with the students is that parents are privileged with all of their activity, attitudes, and behaviors, both in and outside of class, and serve as my most trusted source in deciding whether enough effort has been put forth, by the child participant, on certain home and family goals to warrant a MAI promotion test. Students understand throughout their training that their behavior outside of MAI class does have an affect on their MAI progress (Cohen, 1999). Having said that, there are times when I have had side discussions with parents whom I suspect may have been influenced by their child to approve a promotion test, and I have postponed the test myself. The MAI program's intention is to teach the participants that discipline and respect for others in one area should transfer to other areas of life in order to manifest true growth in development and learning (Eisenberg, 2000; see also Eisenberg, Guthrie, Murphy, Shepard, Cumberland, & Carlo, 1999).

### Social Interactions

The social aspect of this section is a broad area and could easily have encompassed the previous discussions on academic achievement, peer relationships, and home and family life regarding the impact of a care based martial arts program on participants' development and learning. However, I understand that peculiar differences in relationships, interactions, and behaviors can easily be seen between, students' self-efficacy towards academic challenges, confidence with peers, and patience and respect on the home front (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Therefore, I wanted to see

how participants of this research would make a distinction, if at all, between social interactions and the previous areas of discussion relative to the impact of the MAI program.

All responses believed MAI had an impact on their children socially with the exception of the one participant discussed in the previous section. Two of the six participants drew from previous responses and therefore did not make any distinction between social interactions and other similar areas. One of the remaining three participants' comments focused on social interactions relative to peers indicating that their child exhibited more confidence, whereas the last two responses centered on growth such as, new confidence in performing in public, responsibility, ownership, and an understanding of human needs. The following responses make good distinctions between the impact of social interactions and previous areas of development: this parent's response, regarding a male participant, 10 to 12 years of age, with medium term participation of two to five years, stated:

I believe being in Martial Arts has helped my son be more confident and self assured and even more outgoing. My son used to be so shy that he would hide behind my legs on elevators and other public situations like that. Now he tries to join in and participate in social conversations and the other day I even saw him ask a group of kids if he could join in their basketball game, which used to be unusual for him. He plays his flute in performances at school or city music contests and doesn't get nervous. I feel that learning karate (the MAI program) and having to do it in front of other people and even testing for a new belt in front of other people has helped him in this way (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Another parent writes, with respect to a male participant, 13 to 16 years of age, with long term participation of more than five years:

I feel my son developed advanced skills in the areas of listening, focus, patience, and understanding to human needs. He also developed above my expectations as

a parent with regards to ownership and responsibility for his actions and decision making. These skills and attributes were demonstrated in MAI by my son's effectiveness in following detailed instruction and his ability to demonstrate and teach what he learned to other students (MAI Questionnaire Response).

These parents understand the importance of societal maturity which translates into social responsibility. Unfortunately, the social component of development and learning is often overlooked in schools in order to place additional emphasis on higher level academic achievement; and yet it is the socially rich environment that promotes academic achievement the most (Howes, 2000). The MAI program seeks to promote social responsibility as an integral part of development and learning.

#### MAI Class Environment

The MAI program seeks to insure that each participant is encouraged, guided, and supported throughout their development and learning. The environment, atmosphere, or setting of the MAI activities plays a major role in the success of the program. Students must be able to relate to or identify with their surroundings. They need to feel comfortable enough to express themselves openly and freely within the setting where learning is to take place. A student-friendly environment will motivate students to attend sessions, voluntarily participate in activities, attempt greater challenges, and adopt more readily the values and morals of the instruction. In other words, the learning environment is meant to allow students to be and become themselves in the midst of the learning process, which in turn provides instructors with the necessary feedback to determine how best to guide them.

The collective responses of this study's questionnaire described the MAI class environment as encouraging, supportive, and consistent across the groups. Other similar

words used to describe the setting were nurturing, disciplined, edifying, valued, and motivating. All of these descriptive words portray a caring environment where students or participants can be themselves and get the most benefit from each development and learning experience. The following comments are specific responses depicting the parents' view of the MAI class environment. This first parent responds, regarding a female participant, 10 to 12 years of age, with short term participation of three months to two years:

The atmosphere at this martial arts class is disciplined but also fun. As the students advance, the discipline becomes slightly more strict, but the satisfaction of completing new levels also increases. My kids almost always look forward to attending Mr. Hite's Goju-Ryu karate class (MAI program) (MAI Questionnaire Response).

This next participant describes the MAI environment, for a male participant, with short term participation of three months to two years, as:

Diversified group; equally managed with enthusiasm and sincere good will (MAI Questionnaire Response).

The comment regarding "diversified group" reflects the variety of backgrounds and cultures that participate in the MAI program. It is important for students to interact with individuals different from themselves to help broaden their perspectives on development as well as expand their learning capabilities. In diversified environments, students often shed biases and prejudices that have been inadvertently formed over the years. They realize that differences in culture, race, religion, and other dispositions can serve to strengthen their own beliefs and understanding of development and learning (Wentzel, 2003).

This study was also concerned with expectations, stereotypes, and biases that parents may have had when joining the MAI program. It is important to address these mindsets very early into the program; otherwise participants may resist the processes and procedures of the program when they conflict with their own perceptions of how certain tasks should be accomplished, and thus hinder progress. The following responses regarding what parents expected the MAI environment to be like, what they thought on the first day of class, and what they think now, is reflected in the next three sections.

#### MAI Expected Environment

Parent participants believed the MAI class atmosphere or environment would be stricter, vigorous, rigid, more disciplined, very regimented and militaristic, with an emphasis on instruction of martial arts techniques as opposed to a student or learner focus. One parent responded regarding a female participant, 13 to 16 years of age, with long term participation of more than five years:

The expectation of attending MAI class was perceived to be somewhat militaristic and regimented. We thought that some of the participants would be self-absorbed and egocentric (MAI Questionnaire Response).

#### First Day of Class Observations

On the first day of MAI class parents were pleasantly surprised at the student focused instruction and environment of the program. They responded with the following statements:

More teaching than cold coaching occurred (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I remember my first day of class well – as it was September 11, 2001. Mr. Hite started class by acknowledging the attacks (attacks on the New York City Trade Center, twin towers), and it was then that I knew that there was more to his instruction than just martial arts (MAI Questionnaire Response).

It was more “relaxed” (which was good) than I thought it would be but still it was obvious that there was learning going on (MAI Questionnaire Response).

On the first day all perceived stereotypes appeared to be wrong. The class was well run and the participants seemed to be enjoying themselves. The activity looked fun, and the instructor appeared knowledgeable and caring (MAI Questionnaire Response).

David’s class (MAI Program) culture and foundational beliefs and focus were much more than just Martial Arts training and development (MAI Questionnaire Response).

### Current Perceptions of MAI Program

This is a very important section of the parental responses with respect to the atmosphere or environment of the MAI program because it speaks of “consistency.” It provides input from the beginning of the MAI participants’ experiences up to the present. The MAI program endeavors to provide an encouraging, nurturing, and supportive environment based on concepts of care. This study seeks to verify these claims through the following parental observations, of the MAI program over the years, and their reflective responses:

The curriculum has been consistent and progressive (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I know that it (MAI Program) is a great program that brings people of all ages and backgrounds together. I know that my children are learning Christian concepts and how to apply these to their daily lives along with the teaching of martial arts. I know that the interest that Mr. Hite shows everybody in the class fosters their self-esteem and makes people feel good about themselves. It extends to the people in the class treating each other w/care and respect (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I would describe the atmosphere of the class now as: supportive, nurturing, encouraging, hopeful, helpful, challenging, inspiring, motivating, and uplifting. Learning Martial Arts is difficult, but in this class, you are never made to feel wrong for making a mistake or not being able to do something “correctly.” You

are made to feel that it is “safe” just to try something new. And because there isn’t an expectation of perfection, it is easier to try things and sometimes even surprise yourself at what you are able to do or accomplish (MAI Questionnaire Response).

This class has been encouraging for our daughter and edifying. It is obvious that any child is totally accepted and met where they are. From here the child is guided, as well as, encouraged, and supported as they grow as a student studying MA just as my daughter was. Very success oriented class (MAI Questionnaire Response).

David’s class culture (MAI Program) has provided an avenue to reach children and families in a completely positive manner, to allow for each student to improve in school, at home and on a social level (MAI Questionnaire Response).

### MAI Instructor-Student Relationships

The previous section on the atmosphere or environment of the MAI program can hardly be separated from this section on MAI instructor-student relationships because the atmosphere or environment of a program is highly dependent upon the individuals who administrate and execute the values, principles, and activity of the service with respect to the success of its participants. This is a reciprocal situation in that, success of the program depends upon the success of the student, and the success of the student depends upon the success of the instructor-student relationship. Therefore, a successful development and learning program of any kind is predicated upon a successful instructor-student relationship. The following statement captures the potential of positive instructor-student relationships with respect to academic success:

When we feel others care about us we are more likely to cooperate with them and try to please them. We are also more likely to do what they want us to do, and we are less likely to do some of the things that make their lives more difficult. In the classroom students who feel accepted by their teachers are more likely to do what the teacher asks of them (e.g. assignments) and less likely to do things that make teachers’ lives difficult (e.g. disrupt) (Morganett, 2001).

The MAI program believes this principle extends beyond academic activity to peer relationships and social interactions where any kind of positive exchanges are taking place that result in development, growth, and maturity.

Parental participants' responses in this section were unanimous and demonstrate that the MAI program instructors administrate, execute, maintain, and prioritize positive instructor-student relationships both individually and collectively. The success of the MAI program's instructor-student relationships is best told by the parents themselves:

Mr. Hite treats everyone, whether old or young, big or small, male or female, black or white, just like a respected family friend. He never talks down to anyone and treats everybody with kindness and a generosity of spirit. I commented to one of Mr. Hite's instructors about how I appreciated how nice he was. He said, "It goes with the territory!" meaning that since Mr. Hite was so kind and respectful that it rubbed off onto the fellow associate instructors (MAI Questionnaire Response).

We believe our son will have a longer lived interest in martial arts and will more than likely achieve more advanced levels due to the relationships & presentations of the instructors (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I think that my children and I are blessed to have these people in our lives, as we can see that they not only care about our progress in class, but they also care about other aspects of our lives. They share in our successes. My children and I have a lot of respect for the instructors (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I would describe the relationship that the instructors have with the students in this class as being: supportive, caring, motivating, encouraging, respectful, and dedicated. It is obvious to those that are in the class, and perhaps even to those who only watch their children take the class, that it is a high priority to the instructors that the students learn what is being taught. The emphasis is not on achievement, on true learning. I myself have felt the instructor change or shift the focus of what he is teaching if some aspect of it was difficult to the class. Instead of becoming frustrated or irritated with the class for not being able to pick something up, he would go about it a different way in order for us all to learn it. Also, the instructor is interested in the students as "whole" people, not just as karate students. He demonstrates this by having kids bring in reports cards or art work, etc. and praising them in front of the whole class for work done at school.

Also, before a new belt level test, parents are asked how kids are doing in school and at home (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I think that the instruction is excellent and that the instructors are genuine, caring, and have kids utmost in their minds wanting to see them succeed (MAI Questionnaire Response).

In the past 9 years since my first day of class, I have had the opportunity to witness the development of many students young and old. I have been blessed to be a part of something very unique and special through the relationship I have developed with David and the students in our class. I personally have developed as a parent, teacher, and manager of people through experiences and relationships our Martial Arts class has provided. As I progressed to the Black Belt rank and became an instructor, I learned the value of patience, understanding and insight to give back to the students in our class and the people I touch in my life everyday as a “servant leader” (MAI Questionnaire Response).

The theme is clear in the collective responses above that “C.A.R.E.” for others is at the core or heart of the MAI program and its instructor-student relationships. MAI believes that when care is employed with all of its concepts and expressions, students’ adopt these concepts, and development and learning manifested within the program itself will extend to other programs and environments as well.

#### Future Plans for MAI Participation

The ultimate measurement of the success of a program is the continued participation and support of its members. Parents enrolled their children in the MAI program with specific developmental and learning goals in mind, such as, discipline, self-confidence, self-esteem, and similar traits. The questionnaire responses of this research study verify that those goals were met and exceeded through the MAI program. The following are specific comments made by parents (that further substantiate the success of the MAI program), regarding their future plans for MAI participation:

My kids have shown nothing but benefit from Mr. Hite's instruction (MAI Program), and they continue to grow stronger of mind, body, and spirit; thanks to David Hite's class & instruction. My kids have no intentions of quitting, but if they did consider stopping their participation in this program, I would strongly encourage them to continue (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Our son will continue indefinitely. We would like to see him complete or apply these skills constructively in the distant future (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I would like to continue participating and attain Black Belt status. So I too can become an instructor/assistant. I would like my children to remain in classes until they graduate from high school and go away to college (MAI Questionnaire Response).

It is hopeful that she will, one day, continue with what MA (MAI Program) has to offer her as a life-long skill. One huge benefit that she has developed, which is a direct reflection from taking MA is her continued interest in physical fitness and the setting of disciplined goals for herself (MAI Questionnaire Response).

I plan to develop and hone my Martial Arts skill and teaching abilities to better serve our students. I will continue to learn life skills through teaching to improve as a "person" and to expand this in all areas of my life. I will strive to "model" the way to be an inspiration to the growth and development of our students and to support the positive culture of our teaching beliefs. My goals are to participate in the growth of our class to touch more lives and support David's (MAI Program) objectives and goals (MAI Questionnaire Response).

Further substantiation of the success of the MAI program is how parents' lives are affected positively in addition to their children's development. Parents bring their children to the MAI program for development and learning and find themselves experiencing the same. A number of parents have joined the program themselves after witnessing the benefits and growth in their children and have advanced to the instructor level. These parents have adopted concepts of care and are motivated to assist me in the development and learning of other children as well as their own.

### Summary

The main theme that emerged through the questionnaire parental responses were that children have a great need for self-efficacy; an “I can” attitude regarding developmental tasks. Psychologically, students can be hindered in their development and learning almost before a task has even begun due to an attitude of inadequacy, resulting from low self-concepts of themselves as well as their abilities. These mindsets are best changed positively when students’ individual value and worth are consistently reinforced through concepts of care; a caring relationship with instructors and teachers; a caring atmosphere and environment; and exercises and tasks that allow students’ current level of skills to be employed successfully, and yet challenges students and lead them into higher order engagements (James, & Jongeward, 1971). According to the reflective thoughts of parents of this study, the MAI program has successfully accomplished this goal. Parents believe that MAI does positively impact their children’s academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### Summary of Care

##### Benefits of Care

Educators have an awesome opportunity and privilege to participate in the successful development and learning of children of all ages, backgrounds, and dispositions, by simply demonstrating the value of each student. That is, genuinely caring for students from the heart (Hatton, 2005). This study has recorded the positive impact a martial arts program has had on its students by employing this very concept. Specifically, instructors sought to build positive caring relationships with each student and demonstrate their unique value as a participant of the program. The study also revealed that these relationships grew and expanded over time and the instructors became long term advocates of the students. That is, they became trusted individuals whom students could share matters of importance with and count on their honest support in other areas of their lives. Parents also benefited by gaining consistent support, from another institution, for the morals and values they were trying to impart to their children.

##### Attributes of Care

The goal of the study was to identify attributes of a care based martial arts program that promotes discipline and self-confidence in its participants and determine if these attributes transfer into other areas of the students' development. Specifically: academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions. Parents were key participants to the success of this qualitative research. They served as reflective

observers of their children's development relative to their participation in the martial arts program. The following is a list of attributes, identified by parental observers, that they believe their children learned or obtained growth through participation in the martial arts program: caring, confidence, determination, discipline, morals, motivation, obedience, patience, respect for others, responsibility, self-assurance, self-efficacy, self-engagement, self-esteem, and values. Parents also observed their children practicing these same characteristics in academic achievement, peer relationships, family and home-life behavior, and social activities, and believed this too was a result of participation in the care based martial arts program.

#### Manifestation of Care

Academically, students realized improved motivation, moral values and self-efficacy. They displayed determination and discipline within the classroom and readily accepted the authority of their teachers. Students ultimately gained a more mature appreciation for the educational system and its processes. Children became more accepting of others and gained a more caring attitude and patience relative to their peers. Improvements in students' families and home-life experiences were manifested in increased obedience to parents, parental bonding, and improved sibling relationships. Socially, the study revealed that students became more cognizant of their responsibilities towards society. They were observed as being more outgoing and concerned with helping others succeed. Parents attributed a significant amount of these successes to the development their children received through participation in the C.A.R.E. based martial arts program of this study.

## Limitations of the Study

### Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is instrumental in drawing out individual perceptions of phenomena. However, this same attribute can present limitations relative to observations of a personal nature. That is, due to our own innate biases and presuppositions, we are subject to unknowingly slant our personal opinions of certain observations or draw conclusions that fit our individual paradigms. Although, open ended probing questions were employed to minimize this possibility, there still exist an opportunity to exaggerate results. In addition to this, the use of surveys themselves can be sources of exaggeration or hesitation by participants because of the realization that their responses will be viewed and analyzed by others. These effects can be minimized by using larger research sample sizes; designing the study around combinations of surveys and verbal interviews; and increasing the number and types of interview questions.

### Sample Size

This study focused on 3 male and female pairs totaling 6 students across three periods of participation, short-term (3 months to 2 years); medium-term (2 to 5 years); and long-term (5 or more years). These criteria may not have been a large enough sample or a significant amount of time to represent larger populations of students within each category. However, the subject matter itself, development and learning and associated attributes, automatically imply broad applications. In other words, the needs of a small sample of students in these types of developmental categories—discipline, self-confidence, motivation, autonomy, and the like, usually represents the same needs in

individuals of larger populations. As a result, the sample size, while very important in research designs, becomes less significant than having uniformity of data across the various groups. The findings of this study were very consistent across age groups and gender relative to developmental needs and therefore may be applied to larger populations on a limited basis.

### Setting

The martial arts class environment and atmosphere is different by design from a school room and therefore may not represent fully the conditions that affect students' development and learning in the classroom. These may include but are not limited to, the ability to move around more freely in a martial arts setting, to be excused more readily for bathroom breaks, and the overall physical nature of the martial arts activity. Having said that, this study has argued that, in any classroom setting or environment where learning is to take place, the relationships between students and teachers will supersede the quality or lack thereof of the setting. Obviously there is a point where environmental conditions can hinder development and learning significantly, therefore we would assume that the educational setting meets basic standards of human occupancy. In that regard, caring educators have much more of an opportunity and ability to transform students positively in a standard setting, based on their relationships with them, than instructors who remain distant and impersonal with their students and who may have an above average or ideal classroom setting.

### Future Research

This study has shown that care must be active and expressed to students in such a way that they respond favorably to the initiator of such effort. Future research must maintain this initiative. That is, the success of development and learning programs should be based on measurable student outcomes such as, motivation, self-efficacy, self-engagement, and a clear adoption and demonstration by the students of the ethics and values promoted within the educational program. The research study herein has demonstrated that when the above criteria is followed, it is highly probable that students will realize positive growth, adopt the values and attributes of the educators, as well as the program, and transfer these attributes or characteristics into other areas of their development and learning.

As such, further research is needed that is longitudinal by design and capable of observing students from primary grades through college level development to determine the long term impact and consistency of these types of care based programs. These studies should also include input directly from student participants at periodic intervals that can be analyzed dynamically as students grow and mature. The researcher will gain significant insight through the students' responses since they will reflect direct development and learning experiences on a periodic basis. Similarly, students will have consistent formalized feedback on their individual growth and may be able to discover or discern difficult areas of their development, early on, and affect positive changes to overcome them.

Another area of interest and further study would be to investigate the impact of the C.A.R.E. model of this study on young and middle aged adults who have identifiable developmental and learning deficiencies. The goal of the investigation would be to determine whether or not these deficiencies can be significantly impacted in a positive way during later stages of life; and to what degree if any are these positive changes manifested in other areas of the participants' lives. The implication of this study is that when developmental programs are founded on concepts of care, especially C.A.R.E., students tend to respond favorably regardless of age. For example, some of the parent participants of this study noted that they had realized positive growth in their own development as they participated in the martial arts class with their children; and as a result were able to employ or transfer these attributes in other areas of their lives. The following is one parent's questionnaire response to the open ended question asking parents to describe the instructor-student relationship within the martial arts class:

In the past 9 years since my first day of class, I have had the opportunity to witness the development of many students young and old. I have been blessed to be a part of something very unique and special through the relationship I have developed with David and the students in our class. I personally have developed as a parent, teacher, and manager of people through experiences and relationships our Martial Arts class has provided. As I progressed to the Black Belt rank and became an instructor, I learned the value of patience, understanding and insight to give back to the students in our class and the people I touch in my life everyday as a "servant leader" (MAI Questionnaire Response).

In conclusion, the essence of the Hite C.A.R.E. model of learning and development can be summed up in the quote; "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." As educators our goal should be to first and foremost convince all of our students that we care for them unconditionally and as

individuals—from the heart. My hope for education in America as well as throughout the world is that care models and initiatives would be adopted by school systems and implemented without delay as early as possible in the lives of students and teachers alike. Also, that research and experiments pertaining to the implementation of these strategies would be pursued aggressively. This study suggests that these actions are capable of overcoming developmental hindrances of the past, sustaining and supporting positive learning foundations of the present and encouraging individuals to become “other centered” in order to meet the challenges and responsibilities of life, both today and in the future.

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## APPENDIX A

## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

**1 through 3 provide demographic information on participants.**

**1.** Gender : Female/Male (F/M); **2.** Age range; **3.** Length of participation: Short term (ST), Medium term (MT), Long term (LT); (ex: Short term response for a female student = STF, Short term response for a male student = STM)

**4. How did you or your child become interested in this Martial Arts class?**

STF - Media/Confidence

STM - Confidence (psychological)

MTF - Referral from student/Confidence

MTM - Exercise/weight control (physical)

LTF - Confidence (psych)

LTM - General Interest/flyer (psych)

**Theme/interest: Physical or psychological**

**5A. Any impact related to school/ academics? Please explain.**

STF - Confidence

STM - Memory

MTF - Confidence

MTM - Confidence

LTF - Confidence

LTM - Confidence

**Theme/academics: Confidence/self-efficacy****5B. Any impact on peer relationships/ friendships? Please explain.**

STF - Control/emotions/respect

STM - no

MTF - accepting of others/caring

MTM - Control/patient

LTF - Confidence

LTM - Patience/confidence

**Theme/peers: Patience/confidence/respect****5C. Any impact related to home/ family life? Please explain.**

STF - Control/emotions/respect

STM - no

MTF - Discipline/family values reinforced

MTM - Improved family relations

LTF - Parental bonding/respect

LTM - Family respect/discipline

**Theme/home: Respect/discipline/bonding****5D. Any impact related to community/ social interactions? Please explain.**

STF - Control/emotions/respect

STM - no

MTF - Confident in abilities

MTM - Confident/self-assured/outgoing

LTF - Parental bonding/respect

LTM - Listening/focus/patience

**Theme/social: Confidence/respect/patience = self-efficacy**

**6. How would you describe the atmosphere/ environment in this Martial Arts class?**

STF - Disciplined but Fun

STM - Diversified/enthusiasm, good will

MTF - no answer

MTM - no answer

LTF - no answer

LTM - Equal treatment/individual worth/build confidence/ discipline

**Theme/Atmosphere: Disciplined/confidence builder/enthusiasm****6A. What did you expect the atmosphere to be like?**

STF - Disciplined but fun

STM - More strict/more rigorous

MTF - More disciplined/rigid

MTM - Militaristic/very regimented/instructor-student distinction

LTF - Militaristic/regimented/self-absorbed/egocentric

LTM - Instructional for MA only/traditional/Son would lose interest shortly due to traditional style teaching

**Theme/Atmosphere expectation: Strict/rigorous/militaristic/regimented = rules & regulation oriented (the law)****6B. What did you think on your first day of class?**

STF - Disciplined but Fun

STM - More teaching than cold coaching

MTF - More instruction than Martial Arts

MTM - More relaxed/learning was obvious

LTF - Well run/participants enjoying themselves/instructor appeared knowledgeable and caring

LTM - Much more than martial arts training &amp; development

**Theme/Atmosphere, 1st day: relaxed/learning/instruction beyond MA, life skills/caring**

**6C. What do you think now?**

STF - Disciplined but Fun

STM - consistent &amp; progressive curriculum

MTF - Great program/diverse group/Christian concepts &amp; application along with martial arts/self-esteem building/transfers to treating others well

MTM - Supportive/nurturing/encouraging/challenging motivating/never made to feel wrong (bad)

LTF - Encouraging/edifying/supportive/success oriented

LTM - Positive class culture/improvement in school-home-social

**Theme/Atmosphere, now: Encouraging/ motivating/ disciplined/ challenging/ social = acceptance/value/ non threatening****7. How would you describe the relationship that instructors have with students in this Martial Arts class?**

STF- Respect/kindness/sensitive

STM - Instructors are there to benefit the students

MTF - no answer

MTM - no answer

LTF - no answer

LTM - Instructors are there for students' benefit/goal is to make a positive impact

**Theme/relationship: student focused/respect/ kindness/ sensitive****7A. What did you expect the relationship to be like?**

STF - Respect/kindness/sensitive

STM - Colder and more militant

MTF - Instructors would be more rigid

MTM - Strict/students bowing to instructors

LTF - Knowledgeable and caring/hoped instructors would be patient with students

LTM - Senior members teaching only/primary focus on belt promotions

**Theme/relationship expectation: colder/ militant/ rigid/ strict/ hoped patient/ belt promotions = focused on completing class material rather than student development**

**7B. What did you think on your first day of class?**

STF - Respect/kindness/sensitive

STM - Pleasantly surprised at mild demeanor

MTF - Answered!

MTM - Not as strict or regimented as I thought

LTF - Our concerns would be met/good safe place

LTM - Age range of upper belt instructors/impressed with skill level, focus, and teaching abilities/strong interest in students/ good social environment/comfortable for my son

**Theme/ relationship, 1st day: Impressed/ not as strict/ sensitive/ surprised at mild demeanor**

**7C. What do you think now?**

STF - Respect/kindness/sensitive

STM - Longer interest in his son/should achieve advanced levels/good relationship with instructors/good presentation of material

MTF - Blessed to have instructors in our lives/Instructors care about us in or outside of class/they share in our successes/lots of respect for instructors

MTM - Supportive/caring/motivating/encouraging/respectful/ dedicated/Student learning is a priority/Instructors adapt to the needs of the students/sensitive and interested in students as whole persons, not just karate students

LTF - Excellent instruction/genuine/caring/priority on student's success

LTM - Blessed to be a part of/unique & special relationships/I have grown as a parent-teacher-manager/learned the value of patience & understanding/the need to give back to others

**Theme/relationship, now: Good relationship/ genuine caring/ interested in students as whole persons/ motivating = Interested in whole student development in addition to material learning**

**8. What future plans/ goals do you have for yourself or your child's participation in this Martial Arts class?**

STF - Kids have grown stronger in mind, body, & spirit/kids have no intention on quitting, if so, I would strongly encourage them to continue

STM - Our son will continue indefinitely

MTF - I would like to continue to black belt and become an instructor/I would like my kids to continue until they go away to college

MTM - No response! (forgotten?)

LTF - Hopeful that she will continue one day/MAI had huge impact on her continued interest in physical fitness & ability to set disciplined goals for herself

LTM - Continue to hone my MA skills to better serve students/grow our class to touch more lives and support the goals of the class

**Theme future plans/goals: Continue/ grow as instructors/ continue & become instructors = Continue to improve self and give back to others (other centered mentality)**

APPENDIX B  
QUESTIONNAIRE PACKAGE

Martial Arts Instruction (MAI)  
Questionnaire

**Parents/Participants:**

Please complete the following questionnaire and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Please understand that your decision to participate in this research study must be fully voluntary. You may discontinue the completion of this questionnaire at any time. Please do not use names or other identifiers of your child or yourself as you complete this form. You may write on this form and/or use the enclosed blank sheets.

**Interview Questions:**

**1. Is your child male or female?**

Check one:    Male \_\_\_\_\_    Female \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What is your child's age range?**

Check one:    6 to 9 \_\_\_\_\_    10 to 12 \_\_\_\_\_    13 to 16 \_\_\_\_\_    17 or older \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long has/did your child participate in Mr. Hite's Martial Arts class?**

Check one:    Short-Term \_\_\_\_\_    Medium-Term \_\_\_\_\_    Long-Term \_\_\_\_\_  
                  (3 months to 2 yrs)            (2 to 5 yrs)                    (More than 5 yrs)

**4. How did you or your child become interested in this Martial Arts class?**

**5. What impact, if any, have you observed in your child since joining this Martial Arts class?**

- A. Any impact related to school/academics? Please explain.
- B. Any impact on peer relationships/friendships? Please explain.
- C. Any impact related to home/family life? Please explain.
- D. Any impact related to community/social interactions? Please explain.

**6. How would you describe the atmosphere/environment in this Martial Arts class?**

- A. What did you expect the atmosphere to be like?
- B. What did you think on your first day of class?
- C. What do you think now?

**7. How would you describe the relationship that instructors have with students in this Martial Arts class?**

- A. What did you expect the relationship to be like?
- B. What did you think on your first day of class?
- C. What do you think now?

**8. What future plans/goals do you have for yourself or your child's participation in this Martial Arts class?**

Martial Arts Instruction (MAI)  
Questionnaire  
(Blank Sheet)

Contact Letter

Dear Parent(s)/Participants,

You have been invited to participate in a Master's Thesis research project conducted by David Hite, Jr. through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give a signed agreement of your willingness to participate in this project. The attached parental consent/permission form provides information regarding the study to assist you with your decision to participate or not. Your decision to participate must be fully voluntary. If you choose to participate in this research, please sign the enclosed parental consent/permission form, complete the informed assent form, complete the questionnaire, and return all forms, within two weeks, in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you choose not to participate in this research, you may discard this package and its contents.

Thank you for your time,  
Faculty Sponsor,  
University of Northern Iowa

Parental Consent/Permission Form

Project Title: The impact of a C.A.R.E. based Martial Arts class on students' academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions.

Dear Parent(s)/Participants,

You have been invited to participate in a Master's Thesis research project conducted by David Hite, Jr. through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give a signed agreement of your willingness to participate in this project. The following information regarding the study is provided to assist you with your decision to participate or not. Your decision to participate must be fully voluntary.

This study is designed to investigate the importance of "care" in developing discipline and self-confidence in children. The relationship between care and the development of discipline and self-confidence has yet to be fully understood and adopted. This research seeks to identify attributes of a C.A.R.E. based Martial Arts class that promotes discipline and self-confidence in its participants and determine if these attributes transfer to academic achievement and social interactions.

The study design consists of a reflective questionnaire mailed to the parents of a sample group of students enrolled in a Martial Arts class. You will be asked open-ended questions regarding your observation, over a period of time, of the impact the Martial Arts class has had on your child. The questionnaire should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete and all of the data will be discarded at the completion of the study. The interview carries only minor risks of invasion of privacy as you describe the development of your child. You will receive no direct benefit for participating in this study and you may discontinue the questionnaire at any time.

All information obtained from this study, that could identify you or your child, will be kept confidential. The findings may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference, but no identifying information will be included. The University will be provided with information about C.A.R.E. based education and ways to improve learning and development, however, no identifying information will be included.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation in this study, you may contact Dr. Radhi Al-Mabuk, Faculty research sponsor of this study, Educational Psychology & Foundations, University of Northern Iowa (UNI) at (319) 273-2609. You may also contact the office of the Human Participants Coordinator, UNI, at (319) 273-2748, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.

Sincerely,

Principal Investigator, MAE  
University of Northern Iowa

\_\_\_\_\_ I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I also give permission for my child to participate as a subject of discussion in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent/permission statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent/participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of parent/participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of instructor/advisor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

University of Northern Iowa  
Human Participants Review  
Informed Assent  
For young child approximately 6-10 years old

Project Title: The impact of a C.A.R.E. based Martial Arts class on students' academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions.

.....

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been told that my mom or dad will complete a questionnaire regarding my participation and experience in Mr. Hite's Martial Arts class. I understand that my parents will be asked questions about my school activity, home-life, peers or friends, and social involvement. I do not have to answer any questions myself for this study.

I am allowing this because I want to. I have been told that I do not have to participate in this activity and can stop my part in the activity at any time. If I ask to stop or decide that I don't want to do this activity at all, nothing bad will happen to me. My treatment/care will not be affected in any way.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

University of Northern Iowa  
Human Participants Review  
Informed Assent  
For older child approximately 11-17 years old

Project Title: The impact of a C.A.R.E. based Martial Arts class on students' academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions.

.....

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been told that my mom or dad will complete a questionnaire regarding my participation and experience in Mr. Hite's Martial Arts class. I understand that my parents will be asked questions about my school activity, home-life, peers or friends, and social involvement. I do not have to answer any questions myself for this study.

I am allowing this because I want to. I have been told that I do not have to participate in this activity and can stop my part in the activity at any time. If I ask to stop or decide that I don't want to do this activity at all, nothing bad will happen to me. My treatment/care will not be affected in any way.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STUDENT SELECTION SHEET

**Project Title:** “The Impact of a C.A.R.E. Based Martial Arts Class on Students’ Academic Achievement, Peer Relationships, and Social Interactions”

**Project Description:**

This project seeks to identify attributes of a C.A.R.E. based Martial Arts class that promotes discipline and self-confidence in its participants, which may transfer to academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions.

**Research Question:**

*What impact does a C.A.R.E. based Martial Arts class have on students’ academic achievement, peer relationships, and social interactions?*

**Student Selection Chart & Parents/Participants:**

STUDENTS (Subjects of discussion)	AGE RANGE	LENGTH OF PARTICIPATION	PARENTS/PARTICIPANTS (Confidential)
1. Female	6 to 18 yrs	LT	Participant
2. Male	6 to 18 yrs	LT	Participant
3. Female	6 to 18 yrs	MT	Participant
4. Male	6 to 18 yrs	MT	Participant
5. Female	6 to 18 yrs	ST	Participant
6. Male	6 to 18 yrs	ST	Participant

Note: LT = Long-Term Participant (More than 5 years)  
 MT = Medium-Term Participant (From 2 to 5 years)  
 ST = Short-Term Participant (3 Months to 2 years)











