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Investigating teacher and administrator response to a care-based curriculum implementation

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Investigating Teacher and Administrator Response to

a Care-Based Curriculum Implementation

By

Piera Camposeo

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Investigating Teacher and Administrator Response to

a Care-Based Curriculum Implementation

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Piera Camposeo

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated participants’ openness to change when exposed to a teacher-led care-based innovative method of curriculum delivery, specifically the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design.

Answers were sought to four research questions. What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the *Schoolhome* with regard to theory and intent? How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design? What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design? To what extent would the teachers and administrators support an implementation of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design?

Data from surveys and interviews were analyzed using a theoretical framework derived from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological theory of human development, Martin’s (1995) caring educational philosophy, and Hawkin’s (2002) *I, Thou, It* concept of the three-way relationship between teacher, student and subject matter.

Findings showed that the teachers and administrators responded positively to the *Schoolhome* and would support its implementation at least in part. Findings also revealed concerns about logistical issues. Several implications can be drawn from the study results. First, one caring-based model will not work for all educators, and second, practitioners will need to update their theoretical educational knowledge prior to any implementation. Third, an in-service program should occur so that any innovation may be knowledge-based and carefully designed. Fourth, teacher education programs should develop a course on teacher-research practice and procedure. Fifth, study results also reveal a need to re-conceptualize change and caring.
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all my students who taught me that I needed to listen and study further to improve as teacher. In particular, I want to thank my 2016-2017 eight grade Italian class for their collaboration in creating and belonging to the Schoolhome. Your enthusiasm for discovery and innovation, and love for the Italian language was so inspiring. I will always remember each and every one of you. This dissertation began with you in mind and its completion is now dedicated to you, with affection and gratitude.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Students who can count on supportive adults, especially during the early years of adolescence, report higher levels of psychological and behavioral engagement with school (Wooley & Bowen, 2007), as well as greater academic motivation and fewer behavioral issues that lead to disciplinary action (Murdock & Miller, 2003). Students feel that it is important for their teachers to care (Alder, 2002), and they are more likely to be successful when they perceive that their teachers do genuinely care (Pattison, Hale, & Gowens, 2011). It seems these stronger teacher-student connections correlate with a motivation to do well: students are less likely not to do homework, arrive unprepared, or be disruptive. Take the element of care away and the opposite tends to prove true: students see homework as pointless, preparation as unworthy of effort, and focus on work as futile. These experiences support what many teachers intuitively believe: caring encourages positive academic outcomes (Dietrich, Dicke, Kracke, & Noack, 2015; Hackey, 2012; Roberts, 2010; Walker, 2010).

However, caring teacher-student relationships are not prioritized in school curricula and policy (King, 2013; Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 1995). For example, in New York City (NYC) middle and high schools, teachers report that scripted lessons, mandated curricula and other pedagogical impositions lead to more formal and tightly-controlled classrooms (Hawkins, 1973) and diminish the ability to establish relationships with students (Santoro, 2011). Moreover, technical and instrumental aspects of teaching overwhelm the pursuit of caring relationships (Noblit et al., 1995), despite the importance of the classroom emotional climate, student engagement, and academic achievement (Velasquez, West & Osguthorpe, 2013).
For Jane Roland Martin (1995), a care-based pedagogy emphasizes the social and emotional development of the students, which is the moral basis and the central idea of her educational theory. She envisioned an educational setting in which the academic and the domestic curricula are integrated, which she called a *Schoolhome*. Here, students are situated within a home-like environment where independent work, inquiry-led learning, and peer collaboration are encouraged. Martin refers to these elements as the 3Cs (care, concern and connection), and asserts that these curriculum objectives are just as important as the academic 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic). She includes self-care and home skills to raise the awareness and promote the rejection of gender and racial stereotyping.

Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome* theory emphasizes the centrality of the environment and gives it a teaching role. By placing community and caring within the environment, Martin echoes Montessori’s (1965) notion that classrooms can simultaneously be venues for education in the intellectual and moral sense, and thus partially compensate for a lack of care and concern at home.

In Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome*, students experience freedom of movement and choice. Students learn to respect each other as individuals and to care for their environment. The *Schoolhome* is in essence a miniature democracy. In today’s society, there is a need for development of moral reasoning and democratic values (Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001; Torney-Purta, 2004). Dewey (1963) believes that schools are gardens for growing the citizens for the future: “the school thus should not have to ‘teach’ children democratic skills and values; it should be democratic itself and in that way it will socialize children. So in order to be credible and successful, democracy must not only be the aim of education but also its means” (Dewey, 1963, as cited in Claes & Hooghe, 2008, p. 5). Despite the agreement about the value of caring
pedagogies promoted by thinkers such as Jane Roland Martin (1995) and Nel Noddings (1995), acceptance of approaches rooted in an ethics of care continue to be described as alternative, and their use is marginal (Kohn, 2006).

Models of implementation, based on caring and democracy, where attention and freedom engender in students a sense of investment in their learning, and also promote values such as initiative, empathy, responsibility, and social mutuality need to be developed. However, it is the element of teachers’ openness to change, which serves as the catalyst for the implementation of such formal care-based pedagogies models such as the Schoolhome.

**Statement of the Problem**

If the goal of education is to develop better citizens and prepare students to be competitive globally, they will benefit more from a holistic education than from a curriculum reduced to the basics (Gilbert, 2007). If we are to maintain our status as a nation of progressive thinkers, students must be motivated and engaged. Therefore, something must be done to correct the extent to which the public school system has solidified an ‘assembly-line mentality’ (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) which then spawns dysfunctional learning environments.

While innovation and progressive thinking *per se* may be lauded as desirable educational objectives, teacher-led educational reform requires support. A classroom environment like the Schoolhome, centered on caring and democratic principles, could be a way of eliminating the ‘assembly-line’. For an exemplar of care-based pedagogy to gain support, teachers and administrators must be convinced that the change is worth the time and effort required because “…doing things differently requires adjustments that range widely within organizations and those adjustments involve people and officials not directly tied to the change effort” (Myers, 1995, p. 8).
There has been extensive research on the importance of caring to teaching and learning and also on various models of caring pedagogies, but there is a dearth of research on implementing caring models. A classroom focused on both caring and academics could be a key to improving motivation and achievement, especially for students experiencing declines in these areas. A rich characterization of student experiences within such innovative school settings (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004) and distributed among the school district professionals where the implementation occurred, could be a first step towards buy-in of a greater use of such models.

**Purpose of the Study**

Educators may recognize that students need something more complex and nuanced than the traditional academic approach, which focuses on memorization or rote learning. However, ‘the cult of standardization’ has taken its toll and the traditional approach remains predominant, to the detriment of student engagement. Students vent their frustration and disappointment by ceasing to care. They do not realize that the teachers and administrators often feel as trapped as they do.

The model of education, which assumes that the mind is a receptacle where knowledge is deposited instead of being created from the learner’s experience, stifles the learner’s ability to think creatively and consciously (Freire, 2002). It also hinders the teacher’s capacity to be present, i.e., the teacher’s ability to link curriculum, activities, and learning environments to the students’ hearts, minds and abilities (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 280). From personal experience and professional interaction, I suspect this phenomenon is repeating in other classrooms, in other districts, other cities, other states. It falls to us, the teachers, to seek ways to
address and overcome this. The initial point for this seeking is to look inward and examine the existing knowledge about the proposed change and attitudes towards the process of change.

Even when teachers realize the value of establishing quality teacher-student relationships, integrating caring into their daily work by transforming the environment can be challenging and complicated due to structural circumstances: economic cutbacks, large class sizes, and the assignment of administrative responsibilities to teachers (Gardelli & Hertting, 2012, p. 33). While caring is generally presumed to be a critical aspect of the teacher-student relationship (Hackenberg, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Marlowe, 1999; Steinberg & McCray, 2012), academic curricula that emphasize care, concern and connection (the 3Cs) remain the exception rather than the norm. A critical look at curricula and pedagogy can help teachers change schools from ‘oppressive and uncaring spaces’ into classrooms built on mutual understanding, respect and trust. For a teacher to succeed in creating effective change in education, there first should be a clear examination of personal beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. This is important because these influence not only how the teacher will teach but also what the teacher will teach (Bruner, 1996).

One of the benefits of the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome is that it lends itself to a teacher-led adaptation that can be implemented on a limited scale, without necessitating broad school or district restructuring. Despite its neatness of scale, replacing the traditional classroom setting requires educators’ willingness to broaden their beliefs about student education and learning. “The curriculum is one of the most important components of education; each curriculum represents a choice as to how to approach the education of students” (Irez & Han, 2011, p. 261). As both a method of curriculum delivery and a guide for designing the classroom environment, the Schoolhome represents a belief about how learning occurs and is facilitated by
the teacher; what curriculum objectives are worthwhile; what kind of content is most important and the way it should be organized and presented, and how educational progress should be defined and evaluated.

Research has shown that care-based pedagogies bring a positive quality to student-school and student-teacher relationships. However, research about the application of care-based pedagogies is typically focused on early childhood rather than secondary and higher levels (Velasquez, West, Graham, & Osguthorpe, 2013), but the older the students get, the harder it is for them to feel they are cared for in the school (Johnson, 2009). In light of the strong connections between self-perception and student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes (Alexander & Zimmerman, 2000; Caraway, Tucker, Reinke, & Hall, 2003; Fan & Williams, 2010; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Walker, Greene, & Mansell, 2006), educators should realize that students’ social and emotional needs are as important as their intellectual needs (Arum, 2011; Cohen & Hamilton, 2009; Walker, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the care-based pedagogy of the Schoolhome Instructional Design in an upstate New York suburban non-alternative school district for middle and high school levels, and to question whether exposure to a different teaching style in their own district will inspire them to modify their beliefs and attitudes and to alter their own learning environments. Although at this early stage it would be premature to expect a large-scale adaptation of the Schoolhome’s Instructional Design, an understanding of teacher and administrator knowledge and attitudes about it is a vital first step since they are part of the context in which the Schoolhome pedagogy may thrive. It is therefore necessary to identify and recognize how teachers and administrators perceive the choices that were made in the Schoolhome model.
The ultimate goal of this study was to provide an understanding of how to foster caring relationships in the classroom and to provide the field of education with a strategy for implementing a caring pedagogy.

**Significance of the Study**

Given the dearth of research on caring curriculum implementation, this study addressed potential translations of Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome* concept for other subject areas, other grade levels, and across a range of contexts. A multi-perspective exploration into the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design delivery adds to the literature by providing information and insights concerning the adaptation of care-based pedagogies within non-alternative, real classroom environments.

Additionally, the contemporary policies requiring standardization have drawn attention away from what schools and educators are doing (or not doing) to transmit values such as altruism, respect for freedom and human dignity, tolerance and acceptance of others different from themselves. This investigation returns attention to these areas. Teachers and administrators who are considering exploring ways of implementing a moral-centered teaching philosophy in a non-alternative school setting with traditional academic curricula, may discover common concerns and questions within this investigation.

This study adds to the scholarly research in the field by using the *Schoolhome* model as an example of how to move to a care curriculum, away from the traditional. The methodology of implementation is missing from the literature and this study also examines the participants’ attitudes towards and ideas about applying the *Schoolhome* theory.

Practice may be improved by introducing the caring theory and showing one example of implementation to the study’s participants who may be inspired to try it. The caring theory may
then be adapted for other subjects and levels. Further, being exposed to new approaches stimulates imagination and thinking and may spur additional innovations.

This study also encourages policymakers to examine new approaches and support teacher-researchers. Policy may become more bottom-up and less top-down when input from the teachers is given serious consideration.

**Research Questions**

Given the gains achieved by the *Schoolhome* model implemented in the district where I work, the question becomes whether these gains can be discerned by colleagues through video footage and artifacts, enough to influence their attitudes towards the *Schoolhome*’s Instructional Design. "It can be argued that the major reason for the resistance to change on the teachers' side could be the difficulty (if not the impossibility) for teachers to comprehend the theoretical framework of the reform” (Irez & Han, 2011, p. 264) and so, this study sought responses to the following questions:

1. What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the *Schoolhome* with regard to theory and intent?

2. How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design?

3. What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design?

4. To what extent would the teachers and administrators support an implementation of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design?
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in the works of the psychologist Urie Brofenbrenner (1979), the philosopher Jane Roland Martin (1995) and the psychiatrist David Hawkins (1973). Each is separate in approach but also interconnected as the following discussion will show.

Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Bioecological Model is drawn from his ecological theory of human development and socialization. This model maps the social environments as structures, depicting them as nesting layers and illustrating the degree and scope of their influence on human cognitive and psychological development. These environments are the *microsystem*, the *mesosystem*, the *exosystem*, and the *macrosystem*. The microsystem has the most profound impact on human development and socialization. Within the microsystem, Bronfenbrenner identifies four environments directly responsible for individual development: home, school, neighborhood and religious setting. Such placement implies comparable if not equal impact upon the child’s development. If relationships at the microsystem break down, the child will lack the necessary tools to navigate other layers of the environment. That deficiency may manifest as a lack of self-discipline, antisocial behavior, and an inability to self-direct. A prevalence of these behaviors among young people can be attributed to the instability and unpredictability of home life resulting from socio-economic changes that place family life and workplace demands at odds (Addison, 1992). Since the home and school are equally important parts of the microsystem, a lack in one can potentially be compensated by the other.

Martin’s (1995) idea of the expanded role of school works well with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) definition of the microsystem, which highlights the similar functions of the school and home as they pertain to the immediacy of their influence on human and social development.
Although Martin (1995) does not mention Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model in her discussion, she describes the *Schoolhome* as a school environment where care, connection and concern go hand in hand with curricular and instructional goals.

Hawkins (1973) defines learning as a three-part simultaneous, sometimes overlapping, relationship between the teacher (*I*) the student (*Thou*) and the subject matter (*It*); the setting is implicitly integrated into these elements. Hawkins characterizes the *It* as: “some third thing which is of interest to the child, and to the adult, in which they can join in outward projection ...[to] create a possible stable bond of communication, of shared concern” (Hawkins, 2002, p. 60). From this statement, we can derive the following implications about his philosophy of education:

a) Facilitator: The teacher is not the source, but a facilitator of and a simultaneous participant in learning. The roles of the teacher and the learner are in constant flux; they contemplate each other’s input as they contemplate the subject matter. The teacher shares what she knows about the world with the learner. At the same time, she engages in a study of the learner to determine how to become a better teacher in ways that only time and experience can give. Hawkins explains that teachers are themselves seekers of knowledge: “Part of what a teacher learns along that thirty-five-year pathway is quite literally taught by his students” (Hawkins, 1973, p. 11). The teacher and learner roles, in other words, are dynamic and mutually non-exclusive.

b) External loop: Interest plays a crucial role in initiating and sustaining the learning process: “So the first act in teaching… is to encourage… engrossment. Then the child comes alive for the teacher as well as the teacher for the child. They have a common theme for discussion; they are involved together in the world” (Hawkins, 2002, p. 60).
This common focus of interest is a key ingredient in building trust (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 275). Although different authors use different terms to describe interest (inter-subjectivity, connectedness, presence, mutual meaning-making), the main message is that the teacher needs to be fully present in the process of learning, i.e., in the moment. “The adult’s function in the child’s learning is to provide a kind of external loop, to provide a selective feedback from the child’s own choice and action” (Hawkins, 2002, p. 56). This external loop concept is a central component of caring and part of the teacher’s moral responsibility towards the learner (Noddings, 1995 as cited in Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006). Through this loop, the child partially discovers the world.

c) Communication: This is a central component of the teacher-learner relationship, because it is the only way for a child to gain competence and knowledge, and to realize that he is competent, and a ‘knower’ (Hawkins, 2002, p. 55). The teacher draws upon his or her knowledge to assess how the child is learning about himself, the human world, and the non-human world. The part that she loans (external loop) to learners extends their powers, enabling them to explore and also to complete their discoveries. This loan, Hawkins explains, is considered repaid when students are able to construct their own knowledge, and become their own teachers.

In Hawkins’ (2002) I, Thou and It, the I supposes that nourishment happens when the teacher and the student are fully engaged with the It, and are therefore looking in the same direction instead of watching each other. It is a stance that will eventually allow the student to be no longer dependent on the teacher's guidance, empowering him to go on and become his own teacher. It is important to clarify that Hawkins also admits that dependence on the teacher is a necessary starting point in the learning process, provided that the relationship does not become
stuck there. The student, at first, will require the teacher to bridge connections and fill in gaps in knowledge. The question is - and this brings us to a reflection on teacher wisdom - how does the teacher know when the student is ready to be pushed? It is not always easy to tell, especially since a student is likely to want to stay within his comfort zone and may resist even the possibility of autonomy. The teacher-learner relationship comes to an end when the learner becomes capable enough to be his own teacher. By then, the learner is ready to sustain the process of discovery independently, moving towards more complex contexts and more sophisticated content.

By situating learning and instruction as events that occur within interactions between members of a certain community, Martin (1995) is supported in her claim that the *Schoolhome* does not compromise intellectual development when it attends to emotional development. Martin’s *Schoolhome* (1995) upholds a moral approach to education, much like Hawkins’ (2002) framing of the teacher-learner relationship. However, where Hawkins’ triad comprises the teacher, the learner, and the subject matter, Martin’s (1995) triad comprises the 3Cs, care, connection, and concern. This study’s framework (Figure 1) shows how the 3Cs fit into the space between the learner, content, and teacher within the process of education, and displays the factors that shape instruction and learning.
Figure 1. Integrating the I-Thou-It framework with the Schoolhome concepts of the Cs.

Martin’s (1995) care component parallels Hawkins’ (2002) notion of respect, implying a commitment to the other’s well-being (moral, intellectual, emotional, etc.) without aspiring to replace the role of the parents and the home. Connection corresponds with communication in Hawkins’ view, where the teacher and learner engage in a two-way process of engrossment and shared understandings. Concern could be described as an ongoing awareness of what would benefit the other - what Hawkins has characterized as the teacher’s moral imperative to use his control not to exploit, but: “to enhance the competence and extend the independence of the one controlled” (Hawkins, 1973, p. 9).
According to Hawkins (1973), “teaching lies inescapably in the moral domain and is subject to moral scrutiny and judgment. If teaching is good or bad, it is morally good or bad” (p.8). For Hawkins (1973), describing a method of teaching as ‘a moral approach’ is redundant because all teaching is ‘inescapably’ moral since it “involves an offer of control by one individual over the functioning of another” (p. 9). For him, this control is justified when the educator assumes control for the purpose of enhancing the learners’ competence, so that the learner can eventually be independent, capable of generating his own thought. Using this standard, performance-oriented schools and curricula are morally deficient because they require that the teachers control students’ behaviors according to a detailed timetable. By depriving students of autonomy, self-direction and independence, performance-oriented curricula degenerate the teacher-learner relationship into that of master and slave (Hawkins, 1973).

Freire (2002) concurs with this view pointing out that the difference between true education and a banking model of education is that the former is “A” with “B”- learning is neither a gift nor an imposition, but a collaboration. For Freire, true education involves the practice of freedom through dialogue. Allowing the learners’ voices to matter is a way to give them significance as human beings: “It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world nor attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours” (p. 96). More importantly, moral education engages the learners’ spirits, the inner processes which are not subject to control (Hawkins, 1973). Ultimately, its goal is to help the learner develop independence.

Hawkins’ (2002) I, Thou, It, with its focus on context will enable a broader approach to caring theory. By consolidating the various caring pedagogies into the complex idea of context, the environment now encompasses the classroom, the teacher, the students and the curricula. It
also becomes clear that any change in the context will require understanding, commitment, time and effort.

Bronfenbrenner’s (1993) systems model underscores how deeply embedded each of us is within our different environments. At every level of human ecology, there are assumptions and events that continuously shift our positions in relation to the world. Sometimes, these changes are too subtle and too complex for us to understand, but they exert their influence on our beliefs, behaviors, and relationships. Context impacts practice by determining who we are, and what we believe to be true at the moment that we enter a particular situation. This then influences how we perceive the different interactions within that situation, and in part, how we assimilate the knowledge that is presented within these social and cultural activities.

**Summary**

Many educational thinkers highlight caring as an essential ingredient of the teaching-learning process. My framework demonstrates how Bronfenbrenner (1979), Martin (1995) and Hawkins (2002), though focused on different facets of the teaching learning process, are actually interconnected. Yet, current educational reforms ignore caring and instead center on cognitive standards. Additionally, no models of caring pedagogy implementation exist, making it even more difficult to put into practice. I have developed a model implementation of a caring pedagogy. This study’s objective is to determine how teachers and administrators respond to this model as a change from the traditional approach to a caring approach in the classroom.
Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to ensure an understanding of the terminology in the study. I created those definitions not accompanied by a citation.

Caring – the continuous process of ‘engrossment’ (Nodding, 1988) between the caring and the cared-for through a constant attention to students’ needs and wants. Caring relations offer the best basis for moral education. Teachers show students how to care by engaging them in dialogue, overseeing their practice in caring, and supporting them as they become their best selves.

Chaordic – Is the term is created by combining the words 'chaos' and 'order' to describe their harmonious co-existence. A chaordic organization is a system that exhibits characteristics of both chaos and order but is dominated by neither (Hock, 1999).

Democracy – an ideological stance that values human dignity and freedom (Nussbaum, 2012). In this study, the term is used to denote practices and policies that allow members of the school/classroom community to exercise choice and autonomy over their learning.

Engagement – “the student’s willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process” (Bomia, Beluzo, Demeester, Elander, Johnson, & Sheldon, 1997, p. 294).

Metacognitive awareness – what an individual knows about his or her cognitive process and how learning is achieved and retained through this process (Young & Fry, 2008).

Moral – an approach to pedagogy that considers one or more components of morality (as enumerated by Haidt, 2012): harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity.
Motivation – individuals are moved toward actions by recompenses. There are two kinds of motivation: external (extrinsic) and internal (intrinsic). Any stimulus generated from an outside source is external motivation. When the influence originates within the individual it generates fulfillment and gratification.

Presence – “a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step” (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 266).

_Schoolhome_ Instructional Design – a design using a caring pedagogy in which the curriculum content is delivered in a home-like setting and integrated with home-like activities with the goal of encouraging citizenship simultaneously with learning content.

Traditional classroom – in this study, the term is used to refer to any instructional environment that conforms to the expectation of what a ‘normal classroom’ looks like: the teacher at her own desk; the students sitting at tables and desks arranged geometrically; the room, and classes conducted according to the format prescribed by the school district, and with the teacher as expert authority.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the three facets of a Schoolhome which define it as a moral, student-driven and teacher-led innovation for curriculum delivery: these are caring, democracy, and openness to change. A focus on curriculum delivery that is caring-based and therefore democratic in essence necessitates a review of the caring literature and the literature that explores democracy in education. Since I was proposing that caring pedagogy replace, at least in part, the traditional pedagogical approach, literature concerning openness to change is also part of this review.

Each category of the literature review is structured as an argument. The facets of caring and democracy are the bases for the various physical, social, and instructional characteristics and goals which differentiate a Schoolhome from the traditional classroom environment. Understanding the ways in which caring and democracy are translated within the Schoolhome Instructional Design leads to a consideration of how (and possibly, why) these characteristics are able, or not able, to appeal to educators.

Therefore, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome with regard to theory and intent?

2. How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the Schoolhome Instructional Design?

3. What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the Schoolhome Instructional Design?
4. To what extent would the teachers and administrators support an implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design?

Proponents of educational reform consistently point out that education needs to rise above the production line mentality, and that requires an examination of pedagogical assumptions and how knowledge is valued (Kincheloe, 2008; Martin, 1995; Nussbaum, 2012). As this investigation sought to explore whether a pedagogical space for a Schoolhome could be found in the district, the facet of teachers’ and administrators’ openness to change was directly connected to this inquiry.

**Facet of Caring**

*Schoolhome*, a term coined by Martin (1995), describes an educational setting that supports students beyond the three Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic) by incorporating the three Cs (care, connection, concern). Martin’s theory is care-based and maintains that when a learning environment incorporates the comforts and values of an ideal home, a productive academic climate is created that encourages peer collaboration, independence, and the rejection of stereotypes.

In her book, *The Schoolhome: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families*, Martin (1995) explains that Maria Montessori’s (1964) *Casa dei Bambini* was one inspiration. Montessori’s academic background was medical rather than educational, and she stumbled upon an effective learning model, departing from the conventional school classroom environment by integrating home and family elements. The *Casa dei Bambini*, which Montessori founded in 1907 in a rehabilitated slum in Italy, was intended to serve the purpose of what most would recognize today as a daycare for very young children. Those children were from the poorest families in the city, and Montessori observed that the...
children, left unsupervised by their working families for most of the day, were idle and getting into trouble.

In the *Casa*, the children were regularly bathed, fed and assigned chores and activities in a child-sized environment. Montessori (1964) and the other adults in the *Casa* began observing positive changes in the children’s attitudes and demeanor: they were blossoming into caring, considerate beings engaged in discovery and learning. These changes were so notable that they drew the attention of educators not only in Italy but also around the world.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Montessori (1964), published *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all’educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini*, a book explaining her interest-led and learner-centered pedagogical philosophy. As the Montessori movement has become globally known and respected, its central tenet has remained unchanged: children possess the spark that makes them agents of their learning, and this potential is realized when they are in an enriched, supportive environment allowing discovery, exploration, and creativity.

The main challenge for a Montessori teacher is to prepare the classroom by presenting an engaging array of materials that afford authentic learning opportunities and target specific areas of the curricula. The key word here is “supportive” – meaning the Montessori environment blurs many of the conventional divisions between school and home. A sense of family and community is considered an integral part of the learning environment.

Today the Montessori method is a highly-regarded approach to education, and is founded on the belief that people construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through experiences and reflections. In the Montessori method, learning is best done by doing. An observer in a Montessori classroom will see learners of different ages, since students remain in
the same group for several years. Only the oldest move on to another class. As students become more capable, they help care for the school environment and for the younger children, just as in a real family. Children are encouraged to treat others with kindness and respect; bullying and shunning behaviors diminish since self-paced learning minimizes the need for comparison and competition.

The day is spent working individually, in pairs or in very small groups using Montessori-designed materials. Students freely move around the room and choose materials to use. There are few whole group lessons, because the focus is on the children’s individual progress and development, not on the teacher’s teaching. Although students have freedom of movement and choice, the Montessori curriculum is highly individualized, with scope and sequence and clear-cut domains. Students select work that captures their interest but the teachers also draw their attention to new challenges and areas of inquiry, and students must eventually master basic skills. As to discipline, students are redirected promptly and firmly away from inappropriate behaviors, such as disruption and distraction (Rambusch & Stoops, 1992).

In Montessori (1965), the environment is the subject-matter, and the focus of teaching is on the child’s process of discovery, rather than the transmission of knowledge. The child learns, not from what the teacher says, but by observing what the teacher does, and through experiences with the prepared materials. The curriculum is delivered through the environment, consisting of the design of the classroom layout and carefully chosen materials. In her book *The Montessori Method* (1964), Dr. Montessori explains that even something as mundane as the choice of furniture in the classroom has an impact on the child’s development. The environment provides opportunities for cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skill development.
Montessori students rarely use texts or workbooks; they study real things or concrete models to bring abstract concepts to life. For example, to learn about volume, a Montessori teacher might provide a pot of water and a variety of containers with different shapes and sizes – as the child pours liquids among the different containers, he eventually realizes that the tall, thin vase holds the same amount of water as the short, fat one.

Montessori materials are called manipulatives and are designed to allow the learner to intuit whether the task is being done correctly. For example, as a child solves math problems using pegs and spindles, the physical arrangement of these objects on a math board provides a visual, allowing the child to check for correctness. For more complex tasks, rubrics and checklists are used so students can evaluate whether the lesson’s objectives were met, instead of relying solely on the teacher’s assessment. When teachers need to intervene more directly in the child’s learning, Montessori (1965) instructs that these lessons should be characterized by “conciseness, simplicity, objectivity” (p. 108). Her notion about the subject-matter is similar to Hawkins’ (2002) *It*, meaning a third thing that is neither the teacher nor the learner: “the lesson must be presented in such a way that the personality of the teacher shall disappear. There shall remain only the object to which she wishes to call the attention of the child” (p. 108).

The success of the Montessori *Casa* in providing the slum children with a home more ideal than their familial ones was what drew Martin’s (1995) interest, and prompted a comparison between the deprived conditions of the slum, and the current socio-economic conditions that have created a moral gap in children’s education. From the glimpse of life inside the *Casa*, it is evident that the Montessori *directress* (teacher) is illustrative of the facilitative role, providing attention and concern like that typically given by a loving mother to her offspring. Martin maintained this notion of the teacher as a mother figure in her *Schoolhome*.
vision, using it as the cornerstone of her framework. As Martin (1995) states, the school and the home have historically divided the task of education. Children studied the three Rs (the academic curriculum) at school and they learned the three Cs, (the domestic curriculum) at home. When both parents are working, no one is home to teach the three Cs, thereby hastening an end to the traditional specialization in curricula between home and school.

In *Cultural miseducation: In search of a democratic solution*, Martin (2002) agreed with Mannheim (1952), finding that the transmission of cultural heritage from generation to generation is a continuous process as older generations are replaced by the younger generations. Martin pointed out that cultural stock consists of both assets and liabilities. While many ‘guardians’ have the capacity to transmit cultural stock, there is no assurance that guardians will maximize cultural asset in the transmission of knowledge. It is crucial to ensure that cultural guardians maximize the transmission of cultural assets and omit cultural liabilities. This continuous process is what Martin defines as “the educational problem of generations.” Here, the term ‘educational’ is used broadly, meaning how culture ‘teaches’ younger generations about society’s beliefs and values.

The educational problem of generations, Martin (1995) asserts, is urgent because it leads to cultural bankruptcy unless older generations prevent educational agents from passing down the cultural liabilities. The American, nay the human society is currently in a state of cultural poverty. Unfortunately, the current guardians of our culture too often choose to transmit liabilities instead of assets, as for example, sensationalizing crime and violence by the media, rather than presenting positive human achievements. To address this dilemma, Martin proposes expanding the school’s role in the child’s education. Instead of a traditional pedagogy focusing exclusively on cognitive development, Martin proposes a moral approach using a concept she calls
the *Schoolhome*, in which domesticity and life skills are integrated within the curricula. Martin (1995) theorized that combining home and school in the classroom encourages an enriched curricula and a climate of caring among the individual students, which will in turn, socially transform the classroom into a community characterized by love and belonging.

From the implementation perspective, Martin’s (1995) interpretation of the home-like learning environment of Montessori’s *Casa*, does not match the formal expectations of the contemporary Montessori classrooms as defined by current authorities of the Montessori method. Martin (1995) does, however, maintain focus on interest-led learning, peer collaboration, and domesticity, expanding the Montessori model by adding a feminist lens. Martin (1995) advocates a multi-, cross-disciplinary approach like that of liberal education, contending that studies in literature, history, arts and foreign languages promote students’ cognitive abilities. However, the core of Martin’s *Schoolhome* lies not in content *per se* but in the *selection* of content to include diversity, reject stereotyping, and provide a solid foundation in the 3Cs. The *Schoolhome* is only tangentially about domesticity. Its main intent is to bring the culture of the home into the school in order to develop student respect for gender differences (Mulcahy, 2003) by addressing the unspoken ways in which the traditional school system reinforces and perpetuates misogyny and intolerance.

As so-called front liners in the delivery of education, classroom teachers are uniquely positioned to assess student needs, implement targeted teaching interventions, and navigate reform implementations by creating classroom communities that can be expanded districtwide. In what is now a classic essay, Parsons (1959) pointed out that while the classroom is part of the larger organization of the school, both the school system and individual students recognize the classroom as the actual place where formal education takes place. Martin (1995) is of a like
mind, even framing the teacher’s role as evolving into the moral substitute of mother. Implicit in this conceptual role is the competency and compassion to determine and provide what is best for the student, not only academically but also personally. Given Martin’s maternal notion of the teacher’s role, her model allows the classroom teacher considerable room for interpretation, providing opportunities to modify the Schoolhome and emphasize particular teaching contexts and learning needs, a distinct contrast to the prescribed and pre-packaged instructional methodologies that make adaptation of care-based approaches very difficult.

Noddings (2012), another educator who gained recognition for her ethics of care in education, provides further inspiration. Noddings’ (2012) philosophical stance parallels Martin’s (1995) in that they both believe that school should include personal, social and life education in their curricula rather than exclusively fostering business and economic skills. Noddings (2012) theory of care argues that the development of caring teacher-student relationships is central to supporting students’ academic achievement. Like Martin (1995), Noddings calls for a more ‘informal’ mode of education: for “schools, as far as possible, to use the sort of methods found in the best homes …” (p. 289). She cites four key components of education from a care perspective: modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation. Schools need to be more than buildings where children come to learn skills and acquire knowledge; they should be venues for teaching students to become desirable members of the communities to which they belong, this function implying that educators ought to provide emotional as well as academic support.

Students’ emotions affect learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2003). Teaching that includes both intellectual and social-emotional aspects of learning can help children become adults who are humane and decent, able to make ethical decisions, show empathy to others, and appreciate diversity (Darling-Hammond, 1997 as cited in Folsom, 2009). From the context of
second language acquisition, the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Brown, 2002, as cited in Altenaichinger, 2002, p. 8-9) suggests that language is acquired more easily if certain emotional factors are met. This underscores the importance of a positive classroom atmosphere for students of foreign languages.

Another component of a caring teacher-student relationship is intersubjectivity, wherein teachers and students develop shared interests and common understandings of each other (Tharp et al., 2000). Intersubjectivity requires the teacher to create a shared intellectual space with their students. A joint negotiation of meaning in concepts and activities demonstrates the teacher caring for individual students and for the subject matter itself (Goldstein, 1999).

Jerome Bruner’s body of work provides invaluable assistance for approaching curriculum planning. In particular, his book *The Process of Education* (2003), presents four themes which are useful guiding principles for designing curriculum:

1. Lessons must be arranged so that they build upon each other. There must be a “story” being told. The logical order of the story (the narrative) will help the students grasp more complex ideas later.

2. There is no idea that is too difficult to teach; the teacher just has to figure out the students’ readiness for learning a topic and discuss ideas at this level. Later on, the basic ideas can be revisited and repeatedly built upon until the student finally achieves understanding. This is the reasoning behind the spiral approach in curriculum design.

3. There is value in both analytical thinking and intuitive thinking. Analytical thinking uses logic and reasoning to arrive at an answer, while intuitive thinking arrives at a solution without going through the same steps. Some students have described intuitive thinking as ‘an intelligent guess’ or a ‘gut feel.’ For example, in foreign language study
where each rule has many exceptions, students need to develop an intuitive sense because that indicates that they are connecting to the target language. Analytical thinking would provide them with competency in the formal aspects of the language but intuition will help them gain an intimacy with it and lead to fluency.

(4) The best motivation for learning is a sincere interest in the material to be learned, not external goals like grades or competition with others. This idea connects to the importance of understanding students’ interests and learning needs, a task which should be easier within the Schoolhome than in a traditional classroom because the more informal, home-like environment encourages conversation and collaboration.

It would not be until The Culture of Education (1996) that Bruner would hone in on learning as a social activity, firmly embedded in a cultural context. He explains that learning is essentially *intersubjectivity*: a collaborative process where everyone involved is engaged in creating a shared social, cultural, cognitive and emotional understanding. Bruner (1996) asserts that for a teacher to succeed in creating effective change in education, he or she must begin with self-examination. The teacher should honestly identify personal beliefs about teaching and learning. Recognizing these assumptions is important because it will influence not only *how* the teacher will teach but also *what* the teacher will teach.

In *Culture of Education*, Bruner (1996) discusses two concepts. The first is *Folk Psychology* which refers to people’s intuitive, instinctive and cultural ideas about how minds work. The second is *Folk Pedagogy* which refers to people’s ideas of what children’s minds are like, and how to help them learn. According to Bruner, educational practices in the classroom are often based on such folk beliefs of which some have subtle or obviously negative effects on the
child’s welfare. In order to improve education, educators must advance their understanding of how children’s minds really work.

Any innovation in teaching has to involve changing the assumptions theories based on folk psychology and folk pedagogy, because the teacher’s concept of what a learner is influences the mode of teaching. To change these assumptions, they first have to be identified and examined, for which Bruner developed four models of the mind:

1) Seeing children as imitative learners: the acquisition of ‘know-how’ - The teacher demonstrates skills so the child can learn by imitating. An example of this teaching model is the apprenticeship, where an expert teaches skills to the novice. This model assumes that human competence consists of talents, skills and abilities rather than knowledge and understanding. Studies show that learning by imitation alone does not provide the learner with flexible skill. Practice is best combined with conceptual explanation. This simple imitation theory is more applicable to a ‘traditional’ society, than to an advanced one.

2) Seeing children as learning from didactic exposure: the acquisition of propositional knowledge - Didactic teaching involves presenting facts, principles and formulas which the student has to learn, remember and apply. It views the child’s mind as a tabula rasa (blank slate) that the teacher fills with knowledge. It sees the child from outside, with no attempt to enter her thoughts (a third person perspective). Didactic teaching is one-way teaching: the information flows from the teacher to the learner. This model of the mind is the easiest to measure using standardized and objective testing.

3) Seeing children as thinkers: the development of intersubjective interchange - This is a more modern approach in folk pedagogy. The teacher is concerned with gaining a first person perspective: understanding what goes on inside the child’s mind during the process of
learning. The teacher recognizes that the child is also capable of reasoning and reflection, and is not an ignorant being needing to be ‘fed’ everything. The child is encouraged to discuss and collaborate with teachers and other students so that she can be exposed to other points of view. She also learns that it is permissible to hold differing views. This perspective on teaching and learning is being addressed in four lines of recent research: (a) **intersubjectivity** – the development of the children’s ability to know what other people are thinking or feeling; (b) **theories of the mind** – the child’s recognition of other people’s beliefs and opinions are true/right or false/wrong; (c) **metacognition** – what children think about learning, remembering and thinking, including their own, and (d) **collaborative learning** – children’s beliefs change as they interact with others. These four lines of research explore the child’s own folk psychology.

4) Seeing children as knowledgeable: the management of ‘objective’ knowledge. Teaching should help children understand the difference between their personal knowledge (what the child holds to be true) and cultural knowledge (what society holds to be true). The teacher introduces materials and class exercises that help the child reach beyond his own impressions and broaden knowledge. Examples are reading and discussing classical works and relating them to the class’ own version of ‘knowledge’.

The four models of the mind discussed above can be seen as two dimensions. The first is the **internalist-externalist**, or simply ‘inside-outside’. The second is the **intersubjective-objectivist** dimension. Externalist theories emphasize what adults can do to foster learning from the outside, while internalist theories focus on what the child can do, what the child thinks he or she is doing, and how learning can be based on intentional states. Objectivist theories tend to see
children as different from the teacher/adult, while intersubjective theories apply to both children
and adults.

The achievement of skill and knowledge is no longer enough. The child is an active,
intentional being. Modern pedagogy is increasingly accepting the belief that children should
become more aware of their own thought processes, and that both pedagogical theorists and
teachers should help the child achieve metacognition. One way to do this is by actually teaching
students about theories of mind/mental functioning.

My assumptions about teaching are represented by Bruner’s (1996) third model of the
mind: ‘seeing children as thinkers’. This assumption is grounded on the personal belief that a
student is capable of constructing his own model of the world, which is why it is possible for the
teacher and the students to connect through mutual thinking and shared understanding. This
capability of building shared understandings ties in with the facet of caring, because to care for
students is to see them as unique beings with great potential. To accept intersubjectivity as a
valid, guiding concept in one’s pedagogy is to care, to accept students as active participants in
their learning, and to value their contribution to the teaching process. It translates to caring for
the quality of students’ experiences within the instructional context. Both Martin’s (1995) and
Noddings’ (2012) ideas make it obvious that caring is a process, and a complex one at that. It is
not so much something that teachers feel as it is something that teachers do. “To care is to take
an ethical stance” (Bartell, 2011, p. 54).

Considering the dearth of research on caring pedagogy implementation beyond the
elementary level, I also turned to dissertations published in the United States since the year 2000.
In a study by Banks (2009), a qualitative approach was used, specifically phenomenology, to
investigate caring from students’ perspectives. He sampled 12 college students and interviewed
them about their high school experiences. Findings showed that caring fell into two dimensions: pedagogical care and nurturing care. From these dimensions, Banks developed a typology of caring and uncaring teachers. This research was personalized by Banks’ inclusion of his own history and also a personal reflection of the study. One criticism of this study is its use of interviews which required recall: memory can be unreliable. Also, Banks focuses only on caring; he does not address the issue of non-caring teachers. Even though the participants of the study were assessing the teachers in terms of caring qualities, the teachers themselves were not included. A teacher perspective is lacking. My study contributed to the literature of care-based pedagogies by focusing on both teacher’s and administrator’s willingness to implement the Schoolhome’s caring approach.

In another study, Caballero (2010) used a quantitative approach to measure whether teachers’ ability to create a positive relationship with the students directly impacts achievement. Student participants (158) in 7th and 8th grade were given the Teacher-Student Relationship Questionnaire (TSRQ) about their previous year’s language art teachers and it was compared to their scores on the previous year’s California Standard Tests (CST). The results were mixed. A comparative analysis showed a significant relationship between student perception of teacher-student interaction and academic growth, while a statistical analysis did not find a significant relationship between the two. There are a number of problems with this study. Caballero only used one data collection tool, the TSRQ survey which required students to recall their previous year’s experiences. Caballero did not speak with nor interview the participants. There was no possible member-checking. Also, none of the teachers of the students was interviewed or observed, leaving the teacher’s perspective entirely missing. My study filled this gap in
knowledge by including both teachers’ and administrators’ perspectives regarding the implementation of a caring pedagogy, the *Schoolhome*.

In another study, El-Amin (2015) used a descriptive case study to explore pedagogical caring in a K-9 charter school to study how the teachers understood and showed caring and how this aligned with Noddings’ (1988) four categories. Data obtained from observations and interviews showed that participants (ten) did align with modeling and confirmation, but not with dialogue and practice. There are several issues of concern with this study. First, student perspective was absent except for references to a study by Velasquez et al. (2013). Second, teachers were observed for only one day and interviewed once. Third, El-Amin does not address the physical environment as caring in and of itself. My study added to the knowledge by addressing issues of resistance to change and including teachers of grades 6-12 subjects and administrators as participants. Further, the location of my study was a public not a charter school.

In Daniels (2010) study, a qualitative instrumental case study was used to investigate teachers’ pedagogical practice in an urban school. Data collection included observations and interviews of two teacher participants dealing with marginalized students. The study explored the roles of caring, hope and ‘armed love’ in shielding students against oppression. Findings showed how essential understanding, relationship, community and caring are in helping struggling youth. However, the study centers on the perspectives and practices of only two experienced teachers considered the best. The students were not incorporated in the research although the researcher did interact informally with students. Also, Daniels’ study did not address the implementation of a caring pedagogy. My study added to the knowledge by focusing on teachers’ and administrators’ giving attention to a caring pedagogy, specifically the *Schoolhome*, and encouraging reflection on its implementation.
In the four dissertations discussed above, the teachers were the focus, reminding me that the traditional, authoritarian view of the classroom teacher subtly persists. Further, none of the studies was investigating a specific caring pedagogy, e.g. the Schoolhome, rather, they were teachers looking for teachers exhibiting caring behavior.

**Facet of Democracy**

From a discussion of caring, where teachers are motivated to embrace instructional strategies and practices that value seeing students as having unlimited potential, the discussion proceeds to the second facet of connection, democratic attitude. The basic tenet of democracy is its conviction that every human being - regardless of gender, race, social standing, ability / disability, or ideology - has a right to human dignity. For Freire (2002), the actualization of dignity is reached when the individual has been educated to perceive reality as it is, rather than as a semblance filtered through the agenda of hegemony.

In *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (2002) explains that the oppressed do not possess their own consciousness. They have only an illusion of consciousness because their minds are ‘hosting’ the consciousness of their oppressors, lulling them into a state of contentment with their oppression and acceptance of their inferiority. Worse, they are conditioned to see their oppressors as their benefactors, rather than users of the institutions of society to protect the status quo. When these illusions are kept alive through societal norms and institutionalized assumptions, the oppressed are deprived of the benefit of a full human experience. Freire uses the term ‘limit-situations’ to describe these barriers.

Limit-situations abound in traditional pedagogy and in the educational system as a whole, but Freire (2002) warns that their presence can be very subtle since they are integrated into many of the beliefs and assumptions long accepted as true. For example, there is the dangerous notion
that education and pedagogy can be objective and neutral, when the reality is that education itself is a political act. Ignoring this leads to an inadequate understanding that educational policies can harm. An example of limit-situation is the stereotype that sciences and math are masculine subjects, while languages and literature are feminine. Even now, there are lower expectation of boys when it comes to the humanities, while girls are encouraged to think themselves inferior in technical skills and analytic abilities.

Freire (2002) warns that unless the oppressed individual realizes that he is living within a limit-situation, he will continue to live a naïve existence. The oppressed need to question the institutionalized practices that created the limit-situation, and work to dismantle these practices and make way for social change that is just. The achievement gap among children from poor and minority backgrounds is a prime example of a contemporary limit-situation. For the oppressed to be liberated from the limit-situations in which they are trapped, they need transformative education. Unlike traditional education which uses the banking method of education - wherein the teacher deposits knowledge into the minds of the students, thereby constraining their ability to think creatively and consciously by creating “a false consciousness in relation to their perception of reality” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008, p. 8) - transformative education involves critical pedagogy, which trains students to question and analyze. The contemplation of universal experiences being lived throughout different human conditions, afforded by a liberal arts curriculum, is one such instance of a pedagogical bid for transformative education.

Kubow and Kinney (2000) identify the following features of a democratic classroom: active participation, avoidance of textbook-dominated instruction; reflective thinking; student decision-making and problem-solving choices; controversial issues; individual responsibility; recognition of human dignity; and relevance, all characteristics of a caring Schoolhome.
Unfortunately, these can be challenging to fit within educational spaces that are heavily shaped by federal and state mandates. “The classroom teacher can easily lose sight of what is truly important in the classroom” (Baker, 2006, p. 25).

Freire (2002) reminds us that “it is necessary and even urgent that the school become a space to gather and engender certain democratic dispositions, such as the disposition to listen to others – not as a favor but as a duty” (p. 116). When educators choose to be democratic, “they live the difficult but possible and pleasurable experience of speaking to and with learners” (p. 144), enhancing their ability to understand and respond to the learners. When learners feel seen and understood emotionally, physically and spiritually as well as cognitively, they know what it is to feel safe. This makes them secure enough to be “drawn to risk because of the discoveries it might reveal; [to] the excitement of discovering one’s self in the context of the larger world rather than the worry of losing one’s self in the process” (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 267).

Martin’s (1995) Schoolhome theory with its inclusion of caring, and the resulting sense of security and acceptance that it nourishes, provides a mechanism for increasing students’ interest in learning, and helps them gain confidence to try more difficult tasks. This is impossible without an ongoing process of meaningful engagement between the teacher and learner. To initiate and sustain this process, the teacher has to be fully committed to what is going on in the moment: how the learner is absorbing information, how the material can be presented to fit with what is already known, and what other resources can be deployed.

Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) define this commitment as presence, a state that is the cornerstone of reflective teaching. Presence equips the teacher “to respond diagnostically and helpfully to a child’s behavior, to make what he considers to be an appropriate response, a response which the child needs to complete the process he’s engaged in at a given moment”
(Hawkins, 2002, p. 56). Presence is what elevates the teacher-learner relationship to more than master and slave. Presence requires the teacher to lend part of herself, to bridge a connection between the student, the subject matter, and the many contexts in which they interact until ultimately, the student learns how to be his own teacher (Hawkins, 1973). The eventual freedom from the teacher’s beneficent control gives the student the opportunity and the skills to seek meaning and dignity in his own existence.

Gattegno (1978) discusses a two-way exchange between teacher-student, which he calls feedback. The teacher shares what she knows about the world with the learner; at the same time, she engages in a study of the learner to learn how to be a better teacher. For Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006), this is accomplished through the use of presence, where the teacher is at full attention. Both notions - presence and feedback - are mechanisms through which the teacher directs attention to the learner, activating responsiveness to the methods and goals of instruction. When the learner is allowed to impact instruction rather than being a passive receiver, the teacher and the learner are, in effect, engaged in a shared process of meaning-making, similar to Hawkins’ It.

Rodgers (2006) mentions three levels of presence to be practiced: presence as self-awareness, presence as a way of connecting with students, and presence as a connection to subject matter and pedagogical knowledge. Presence, for her, is closely tied to caring and trust as the basis of the teacher-student relationship. She mentions the use of the external loop, where the student provides clues that inform the teacher about the ongoing process of learning. Gattegno’s (1978) concept of feedback is somewhat related to Rodgers and Raider-Roth’s (2006) ideas of the external loop but Gattegno has a more practical approach: Rodgers and Raider-Roth use the
external loop to emphasize the moral aspect of teaching but for Gattegno, feedback helps the teacher be more effective in the day-to-day decisions to be made in classroom teaching.

Palmer (1998) explains that good teachers possess a talent for making connections together with a wide repertoire of methods, including lectures, experiments, Socratic dialogues, group work, but he emphasizes that “the connections are not held in the methods but in teachers’ hearts – meaning heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self” (p. 11). The value of connection to student outcomes cannot be denied; more than two decades of research show that the more students feel connected with their teacher and classmates and subject-matter, the more likely they are to learn, stay in school, and attain academic goals (McClenner, Marti, & Adkins, 2012).

Palmer (1998), described ‘teaching from the heart’ as being dependent upon the teacher’s willingness to be vulnerable. Unless a teacher is willing to care, and to construct connections between his and the students’ hearts and minds, it is virtually impossible to arrive at a state of shared understandings and meanings. To strive for intersubjectivity is to allow the student to know one’s beliefs and assumptions, which are part and parcel of the store of knowledge that the teacher draws upon to share with the students, which Hawkins (2002) describes as “a lending of self” (p. 56).

Just as Freire (1998) believes that the context and the activities in which students learn are fundamental to what they learn, he also argues that what teachers feel about the work they are doing, and whether their practice harmonizes with their assumptions about teaching are major factors influencing the climate of the educational environment. A teacher who believes in what she is teaching is able to lend herself to the learner (Hawkins, 2002), to allow herself to be in a position of vulnerability and teach from the ‘heart’ (Palmer, 1998). Without integrity, it
is impossible for a teacher to be truly present in the moment: to maintain an alert awareness of connection and receptivity towards the learner, the subject matter, and the environment in which instruction happens (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006). In teaching, therefore, integrity - the ability to be fully honest in the moment - is crucial for a teacher to find fulfillment in one’s role as a teacher.

Palmer’s (1998) idea of integrity depends on authenticity in all aspects of the self. “If the work we do lacks integrity for us, then we, the work, and the people we do it with will suffer” (Palmer, 1998, p. 16). For a teacher, integrity means being able to practice teaching according to one’s personal and professional beliefs, assumptions, and strengths. The freedom to be true to one’s self is an important aspect of a full human life, which is why it is considered the holy grail of democracy. The desire for integrity, according to Freire (2002), is what elevates human beings above animals. People need to be engaged in pursuits and occupations that lead them to a love of life. Unlike animals who do not have the capacity or the desire to question why they exist, human beings are always hungering for purpose, and for opportunities for fulfillment.

While educators, government leaders, gatekeepers, and stakeholders from various walks of life have been participating in intense, multi-layered, and overlapping debates about what should be done within classrooms, students are engaging with a world vastly different from what these elders have known (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). The current system of education was designed during and for an earlier era. As Dr. Milton Chen, one of the more visible innovators in education today, expressed: “The world has moved ahead in dramatic ways, but our schools remain caught in a web of educational thinking and systems that originated a century ago: the instructional model of the teacher and the textbook as the primary sources of knowledge, conveyed through lecturing, discussion, and reading” (as cited in Barron & Darling-Hammond,
Persisting in this stagnant instructional model, he bemoans, deprives the students of an education that prepares them for a full and productive life in the 21st century. To succeed in what Gilbert (2007) calls the ‘knowledge society’, students must acquire a complex set of competencies encompassing the mastery of technology, the ability to communicate across cultures, and a capacity for collaboration, critical thinking, creative thinking and complex problem-solving.

Nussbaum (2012) claims that keeping democracy healthy depends upon the directions that are taken in national education; and with the state of education in America today, it is time to consider how our outdated notions of democracy have been hindering our pursuit of human dignity and happiness. Viewing, equal access as the basis for democracy uses a very limited lens that does not account for the unequal distribution of power and capital in society. Equity, not equality, is the true goal of a nation that believes that all human beings deserve happiness and dignity. Whereas equality only requires that resources be fairly divided among all, equity requires that resources be divided so that all may reach full potential. If citizens are to have a chance to lead meaningful lives, they need resources. Some of our citizens will need more than others due to their circumstances; test scores cannot adequately communicate the story of their need, their efforts, struggles and achievement.

Standardization of knowledge as an approach to education only makes sense congruent with a belief that the global society is “structured, ordered, and more or less stable” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008, p. 7), which it is not. As a nation centrally situated within the knowledge society, this era requires the ability to create resources. The nation has a better chance of survival through diversity rather than uniformity and conformity. “Equipping learners would entail different models of thinking, clusters of concepts and different strategies that individuals could
deploy to establish relationships and to negotiate positionings in complex, changing, and uncertain environments” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008, p. 8).

So how can things be changed for the better? Should curricula be revamped based on more recent data? Schools re-organized? The Common Core discarded? The tendency to think in forms of large-scale, dramatic reform is another manifestation of institutionalized thinking. This is another example of what Freire (2002) calls a limit situation.

It is not just that society is trying to meet the future by using the strategies of the past, but that decision-makers have mostly confined their analyses to what is lacking in education and instruction, and neglected to examine the positive as well as the social, political, and historical contexts. They have mostly ignored the fact that these contexts are nestled within the democratic assumptions of the nation. It is not enough to consider how social, political, and economic consciousness can be elevated to make equitable education possible: a true paradigm shift is not possible without a sea change in how people think about democracy, and how these ideals translate into our milieu.

Lortie (1975) and Tyack and Cuban (1995), in their respective examinations of the evolution of the system of education in the United States, were able to trace many of its practices and assumptions to motives of efficiency and economy. Underlying these motives, however, are the deeper implications of an educational system built on the democratic premise of equal rights and equal access for all. Before government-funded free public schools were established in the different states, education was a privilege that few enjoyed. Based on the belief that education empowers people to lead a meaningful existence, America deliberately designed a wholesale system to serve more students but provided limited national resources. Unfortunately, there is often a wide gap between the aspirations of democracy and its ability to deliver.
Throughout history, those in positions of power succeeded in instituting practices of access and inclusion while overlooking those whose access was being compromised by the practices intended to enable. For example, ‘hyperactive’ children were being medicated so they could be included in and conform to the prescribed behavior of our graded schools and conventional classrooms (The RSA, 2010). Standards are used to dictate what schools teach across all demographics to ensure quality equal instruction, even while knowledge crucial to certain groups is omitted. Stakeholders from private sectors, corporations, lobby groups, etc. are given voice in determining how education should be regulated and implemented, often at the expense of educators’ professional opinions and sentiments.

Ravitch (2003), in *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*, cites another instance of undemocratic control citing the purportedly well-intentioned but ultimately myopic censorship of educational materials in order to remove anything that might be considered controversial or offensive, which when taken to extremes deprives the students of valuable exposure to facts and other realities. Over time, the scope of these reviews has extended to the censorship of words, concepts and ideas that reasonable persons would not classify as biased, resulting in what Ravitch characterizes as a pervasive dumbing down of textbooks and other instructional materials.

On the same topic, Chomsky (2004) in the *Dialogue on Miseducation* discusses the deep level of indoctrination that happens in schools in the United States. He offers a descriptive account of how intellectuals have often conspired with those in power and worked for specific interests. There were ‘rebellious’ intellectuals punished because they had different views from the powerful, who were using immoral means to suppress ideas disagreeable to their own. He further explains that objectivity is something that should be embraced in the pursuit of the truth,
but pretending to be objective while distorting facts and spreading misinformation should be condemned.

The sanitizing of reality is unwarranted. When adults are careful to protect children from confrontations with social issues and inequality, they perpetuate the cowardice that has allowed such issues to fester. Worse, by closing off the conversation, the impression is given that adults do not need to take sides. Children need to learn how to develop their own moral compass, by having trustworthy adults model how they hone their own. When there are teachable moments concerning ethical dilemmas, for instance: “teachers [need to] take a position and make it understandable to their students. They do not, however, have the right to impose their positions on the students” (Nussbaum, 2012, p. 11).

Students must learn that things and beliefs need to be questioned, not simply taken for granted, which corresponds with one of Andreotti and de Souza’s (2008) educational approaches: combining ‘think for yourself and choose responsibly what to do’ with the idea of knowledge having many possibilities. This results in “different (and partial) ways of thinking and doing things, and puts the responsibility of the decision in terms of what is right in what context back to the learners themselves” (Andreotti & de Souza, 2008, p. 9).

According to Andreotti and de Souza (2008), education needs to teach us how to honestly and objectively examine our own roles within the global community. Contemporary times require education to include “new models of thinking, learning and ability that will emphasize the learner’s capacity to negotiate change, to reflect on their own positionings, to learn and to know in all kinds of situations and with all kinds of people” (p. 7). When asked what the purpose of education is, the answer ought to be that it should produce the following abilities in its citizens: “the ability to think well about political issues affecting the nation… to recognize fellow
citizens as people with equal rights… to have concern for the lives of others… to imagine well a
variety of complex issues affecting the story of human life as it unfolds… to judge political
leaders critically, but with an informed and realistic sense of possibilities… to think about the
good of the nation as a whole… to see one’s own nation, in turn, as part of a complicated world
order” (Nussbaum, 2012, p. 25-26).

To truly teach and learn democracy is to first live it. Chomsky (2004) believes that
students should not be seen as audiences - they should be treated as part of a community and
encouraged to participate in constructive ways. This should be second nature to any teacher, not
only to intellectuals and writers. Students do not learn by just repeating what has been said to
them. True learning comes through discovery. It is the obligation of a teacher to help students
discover the truth and also not to suppress information. It is an important requirement since the
educated classes have mostly supported the propaganda of those in power.

The educated class is generally a specialized class made up of a small percentage of the
population. The rest (the mass) of the population has been called by Walter Lippmann the
‘bewildered herd’ (as cited in Chomsky, 2004). The people who run the government and make
political, economic, and ideological decisions belong to the educated class. Aside from elections,
the bewildered herd is often just a spectator of democracy rather than an actual participant. When
the masses want to be more than spectators, a ‘crisis of democracy’ happens. Therefore,
indoctrination (or brainwashing) is one way used to control the ‘bewildered herd’ so that they
can be kept in line by the educated class, and brainwashing is done via propaganda.

Chomsky (2004), further asserts that censorship in the American society may not be as
obvious as in totalitarian countries, but there is some auto-censorship occurring through the
socialization process. Schools teach children what they are supposed to believe, rather than
mentoring them to learn how to think on their own. TV and other media distract people from understanding the true problems of society and democracy, keeping them entertained and obsessed with consumerism. The media manipulate and censor information according to their own interests, and the educational apparatus is under the control of what Freire termed ‘commissars’- intellectuals who work primarily to reproduce, legitimate, and maintain the dominant social order because they profit from it.

Educators were never meant to be commissars, but rather guardians entrusted with the future of society, passing down the cultural heritage to the next generation (Martin, 1995). Teachers should not be asked to deliver instruction that indoctrinates children in the sense that Freire (2002) described. Students need to learn how to think for themselves, to negotiate to reach solutions, and to express their freedom but not impinge upon others’.

According to Chomsky (2004), the United States prides itself as being the most democratic society of the First World, but its schools remain extremely undemocratic when they discourage independent and critical thinking. Principals are appointed, not elected and the curriculum promotes the dominant ideology. The best way to discover how a functioning democracy works is to practice it, but schools do not give students much chance for such experience. The masses have been brainwashed into thinking that all live in a classless society, so that the country can become a well-functioning state for the rich. Schools have been an instrument of this propaganda, resulting in what Chomsky calls “miseducation.”

Darling-Hammond (2008) (as cited in Umphrey, 2009) contends that the role of the federal government should not be to remotely run our schools by prescribing programs or strategies to be implemented, nor should it administer prescriptive accountability systems like the Race to the Top. The most important role of the government is to protect civil rights and
promote equity in access to education. The federal government has to be proactive in making sure that students of all backgrounds have equal access to the public school system, and are treated fairly and on equal terms with everyone else. Specifically, this includes fixing the results of segregation, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to learning, and that sports and all other learning activities are gender free. Research and statistics have already proven the link between poverty and school performance, and that standardized tests are biased against minorities and underprivileged populations inasmuch as the questions require knowledge and skills more likely to be possessed by students from privileged backgrounds. The government should realize that using performance on such tests to determine the amount of money a school receives will hurt the most disadvantaged students.

Darling-Hammond (2011) asserts that it is the federal government’s responsibility to collect data and report on the state of education in the country. There is a need for high-quality federal research to inform investment and policy-making, so that practitioners can avoid the waste of trial-and-error discovery. There must be ways to evaluate student and teacher performance, ways that address the outside factors affecting learning and teaching, Darling-Hammond says. The government should not close down schools just because the students enrolled at those schools do not test as well as their counterparts in other schools. Instead, the government should look into and fix the conditions which prevent the students from doing as well as they should. Darling-Hammond (2008) (as cited in Umphrey, 2009) also cautions that a national curriculum is bound to fail because ‘one education does not fit all’ and standardized testing is only a method for testing cognitive output; it has been misused as a stand-in for a national curriculum.
Darling-Hammond (2013) believes that a national curriculum turns teachers into automations, frustrating creative and intelligent teachers and driving them out of teaching. A national curriculum magnifies mistakes and misrepresentations in teaching while ignoring the cultural wealth of society and forcing the schools to transmit only a small segment of that wealth. Martin (2002) compares this mentality to Socrates’ ideals for an Educative Society Mode, which attempted to bring society closer to an ideal by using partial censorship. This ensured that children only encountered positive influences during their early years. Socrates advised caution in determining what children saw or heard because their exposures shaped their character. He believed that stories and tales could leave their marks on children and that the wrong choices could lead them to choose unworthy heroes. While this caution may be valid, it is flawed because all humans are fallible: no one can know with absolute certainty what knowledge is positive or negative. A national curriculum, in essence, allows the question of what should be taught to be held in the hands of a very few, limiting perspectives derived from the wide range of available cultural wealth, and magnifying the impact of errors in judgment, where they occur in curricula (Martin, 2002).

The knowledge society requires educators to become more versatile, just as it requires students to possess the proficiency to apply knowledge across various contexts. According to Freire (2002) and Hawkins (1973), instruction following a unidirectional flow of communication (Freire’s banking model of education, where teachers *deposit* information into students’ minds) can stunt versatility and proficiency because it neglects the inner processes which allow the learner to gain independence, autonomy, and self-control. “You grow as a human being by the incorporation of conjoint information from the natural world *and* of things which only other human beings are able to provide for in your education” (Hawkins, 2002, p.
For children to benefit optimally from instruction, the teacher must facilitate the learner’s negotiation of the human and non-human world. In addition to subject matter knowledge, the teacher’s ability to link curriculum, activity and environment to the learner’s minds and abilities is contingent upon presence – the attentiveness to how students respond, and a sincere, non-judgmental acceptance of the learner and his capacity to learn (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006).

Freire (2002) asserts that it is contradictory to demand that education espouse democracy and its ideals when the framework for instruction discourages professional autonomy and creativity, which would allow educators to demonstrate that democracy permits individual expression of talents and abilities in the service of society. When educators’ judgments are undermined by policies, their own experience of human dignity is effectively curtailed. Decisions made for the common good need to pay more attention to how individuals thrive within the boundaries that are being wrought, or the ‘good’ purpose is defeated. Freire adds that politicians and administrators have to soon realize that this test-centric focus is harming both students and teachers, making it more challenging to create spaces for joy in learning and teaching. It is not enough to consider how social, political, and economic consciousness can be elevated to make equitable education possible: a true paradigm shift is not possible without a change in how educators think about democracy, and how these democratic ideals can be translated into the educational, social, and political milieu. This paradigm shift needs to reverberate within all levels of society. For example, the administrators’ input of state policies can only be pertinent if informed by the experiences and opinions of the teachers they lead. In turn, teachers cannot present an enlightened view of curricula reform without the benefit of authentic and meaningful student input.
Tyack and Cuban (1995) warn that educational reforms tend to minimally impact social change, but part of the way educators can choose to contribute to a re-framing of education is by focusing on what can be done instead of being overwhelmed of the enormity of the task. Hence, the action-research Schoolhome Instructional Design was created and implemented, and I decided to be present within a care-based pedagogy.

**Facet of Openness to Change**

The third facet of connection in education is openness to change. No reform can succeed unless obstacles to receptivity to change are seen and managed. Change moves us away from what is familiar, towards something less understood, so it should not be surprising that change can produce resistance, even anxiety. Just like students who shy away from new challenges, teachers and administrators also manifest this behavior because it is part of human nature.

Resistance to change is not necessarily a negative trait. Resistance to change acts as a deterrent to ill-considered reforms. For example, some teachers and administrators may resist an innovation because they remain unsatisfied that all potential pitfalls have been considered, while others are merely safeguarding the school community from educators who want change for the sake of change. Some who resist can be valuable resources by lending their experience and judgment to augment the arguments. In this study, resistance is treated as an element that can illuminate areas of improvement and contribute to the refining of the Schoolhome.

However, as resistance to change motivated by complacency is a negative thing: "Teachers… feel that … there is nothing more for them to learn. They resist change as it shatters their sense of security. Often, they fail to understand the rationale of suggested changes. They therefore reject innovations without making any effort to understand them" (Saraswathi, 1991, as cited in Bailey, 2006, p. 278).
Hawkins (1973) observed that the teaching art has been allowed to become too attached to the formal institutional framework which promotes positivism, standardization and quantification. “…we in America are sometimes inclined to the view that nothing is known which is not known to a group of people campaigning to have it decided that they are the official knowers” (p. 8).

Hawkins (2002) is concerned that instruction has moved too far from the sources of knowledge that existed “long before there were such things as schools” (p. 55), when adults managed to be teachers without the benefit of theory. He mourns that “we forget the unique importance of the human role” (p. 56). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) emphasize the need to be mindful of “the fundamentals of classroom life, and that the relationships, the affective and cognitive interactions among students and teachers, the construction of genuine learning experiences and a hospitable school climate are all essential elements that need to be preserved because these are the very elements of classroom practice that are threatened by the current educational trends” (p. 266). Darling-Hammond (2011) observes that high-quality teachers are a result of dedication and preparation, and training requires a lot of effort and time and resources. In order for students to receive quality instruction in the classrooms, the education workforce should be encouraged to commit to continuing education and career advancement — not told that it isn’t important. Or have someone else decide what they need.

The main assumption of this study, as stated in chapter 1, was that the teachers and administrators recruited as participants are invested in exploring methods that will benefit the students. Throughout years of association with the educators in this school district, it became obvious that optimizing students’ outcomes is a common goal. This school district is fortunate in that, despite nuanced variations in teaching philosophy and style, teachers and administrators
have a history of collaboration and collegial support. An appreciation for the developmental stages of the students that they teach is also evident.

Therefore, I was relatively certain that resistance, if any, to the potential implementation of the Schoolhome within different levels in middle and high school, and/or across different subject areas could be productively gauged against what Pechman and King (1993) identified as the six factors critical to successful school reform: (1) stability and safety of school environment; (2) central-office support for reform initiatives and collegiality; (3) on-site teacher leadership; (4) faculty cohesiveness; (5) faculty commitment to the change process, and (6) ongoing involvement of a facilitating principal to collaborate with faculty and staff.

In Curriculum as Conversation, Applebee (1996) highlights the importance of a curriculum based on knowledge-in-action, which he explains “is learned through participation in living traditions of knowing …” (p. 126). He pointed out, however, that in the history of American education, the curriculum has mostly focused on knowledge-out-of-context. This means that instead of providing students with the opportunity to experience different traditions of knowing, the curriculum limits them to learning about topics of interest. The ideas about curriculum design and language acquisition lead to these questions: how can a teacher come up with ways to make learning more effective for the students? How can theoretical knowledge be used to come up with practical strategies that can be applied in the classroom so that student outcomes can be directly and demonstrably improved?

These ideas and the questions they stimulated emanate from the desire to be better teachers. By identifying students’ needs and formulating curriculum responses to these needs, improved performance should follow. Martin (1995) teaches that students crave nurturing and
emotional attachment, and that learning can best take place when the teacher is able to create a space where students feel safe and supported as they take risks (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

As a classroom model, however, the adaptation of the Schoolhome admittedly drew upon personal inspiration and experiences that relate to Montessori’s (1964) and Martin’s (1995) notions. While the values they espouse (such as collaboration, community, self-directed learning, and discovery) are universal, there is the question of whether these values can be translated to those who may not be fully invested in their work. If the Schoolhome is to succeed as a teacher-led reform, then it must to be in harmony with teachers’ and administrators’ sensibilities. That is what this study sought to understand.

Fear and Doberneck (2004) discuss how extreme specialization, inclination to work alone, generational gap, personal agendas, lack of civility and stress for time impede faculty engagement. They state that the social movement approach could be useful since it banks on “the informal power of flexible networks that gain momentum through their committed members…[i.e.] the power with” (p. 12) by engaging one another allowing a more voluntary participation and active collaboration which is ‘egalitarian’ in nature. An interdisciplinary environment is creative and productive per se and is more likely to create action and change. As a result, the organization becomes the scene where self-organization, non-hierarchical leadership, internal values are ways to enhance new values in its culture.

Fear and Doberneck (2004) identify five kinds of involved leadership: a) energize others through the power of invitation and understand that work is invigorated by the energy of volunteers; b) enable participants to create something together; c) accentuate the power of discovery; d) encourage imagination, experimentation and freedom from tight control; e) affirm and practice the qualities of the post-heroic leader. With these principals in mind the authors
introduce a new terminology: ‘chaordic’ which combines the words chaos and order to explain that individuals are most inspired, resourceful and enthusiastic when they are allowed to follow ideas they value, and use means they feel more comfortable with as they work towards a goal or within guiding principles. The chaordic situation should display self-determination, open participation and low boundaries, ease of operation, decentralized leadership and egalitarian ownership. These principles enable educators to trust one another by listening, valuing dialogue and being open to the new and unfamiliar. The process could bring teachers and administrators to abandon their ‘old’ positions in favor of learning something ‘new’.

According to Balci, Ozturk, Polatcan, Saylik, and Bil (2016) socialization in organizations is a life-long practice and it has a direct outcome on educators’ performance. Their study examined what hinders and supports change, and showed a positive relation between organizational socialization and organizational performance. Higher socialization levels were shown to be due to the following factors: performance proficiency, people, history, organizational goals, values and politics, with higher levels of organizational performance shown by females and those having greater seniority. On this topic, Wang, Lin, and Yang (2011) specify that there is a notable relationship between organizational socialization and job fulfillment, and between organizational commitment and performance. While, Yanfei, Xi, and Fantini (2011) determined that socialization and performance are related to a feeling of belonging. They also emphasized that organizational socialization of teachers should be accentuated because it encompasses an overall improved growth of professional knowledge, skills and perspectives that are oriented toward the learning process in educational organizations.

Hickman, Moore, and Torek (2008) describe how the key to sustainable improvement is linked to voluntary teacher leadership through the practice of ‘servant leadership’. The authors
reported that when teachers are required to follow mandated changes (e.g., alternative scheduling, observation of other schools) but given the opportunity to design and facilitate the transition, they began to collaborate and support one another. During the re-organizational phase, teachers expanded their interest in their profession and showed a greater sense of responsibility and trust which led to risk-taking and innovative behavior, even though these required additional time and energy. Servant leadership has the primary goal of improving the school by empowering staff through commitment. Growth and success come from a continuous opportunity to share which then sparks, new ideas, adding value to the improving process.

In his study, Murphy (1999) investigates elements of change in four suburban high schools in Virginia. His findings revealed that principals who invested in shared creation of change showed a greater interest and care for school and staff on a professional and personal level. The involvement of the staff in the transformation process led to new attitudes towards the school culture fostering growth and improvement.

Blanchard, Bowles, Carew, and Parisi-Carew (2001) believe that collaboration and teamwork lead to a stronger effort and develop congruence. They assert, “if you don’t have some good reason for being together that is important enough to get people fired up, as well as sharing values and goals, then you haven’t a hope of ever having a great team” (p. 68).

On the other hand, Myers (1995) identifies self-study as the means to construct and analyze knowledge of practice in order to enable change and improvement. When faculty is resistant to self-study and change, it could be also due to inhibitors such as inertia, structure and organization, personal attitude, the vision of what change is and the amount of time, energy, resources and hassle involved. Waller (2008) agrees with Myers and explains how teachers’ self-reflective practices - enhanced by administrator support, allotted time and training - increase self-
efficacy. Beck (1992) investigates the transition of school culture toward a task-oriented learning environment. Findings showed that hindrances to change included constraints on teachers' time, teachers' different perspectives that caused a lack of focus, a technocratic mindset, and educators' rejection of theoretical discussions. Nevertheless, teachers developed more reflective and committed attitudes by investigating principles for change.

A review of dissertations showed that there are three kinds of change: 1) mandated change, 2) mandated change with collaborative implementation, socialization change, and 3) educator inspired change such as action-research. Rougle (2004) showed that change grounded in the social and initiated by teachers was a powerful tool for helping students gain through discovering more meanings. DePaulo (2000) believes in the use of socialization as part of staff development to assist change since teacher cooperation and informal conversations proved to have the highest influence on receptivity to change. Findings also described other important factors that impact openness to change such as school size, age of staff members, gender, experience and degree earned.

Bigby (2009) concluded that administrators need to understand the style of their teachers and match the information styles to change. Understanding change styles could stimulate teachers’ awareness of their own attitudes toward change and provide them with opportunities to become more open to change. According to Kisner (1993) administrators and teachers are not different in having a preferred style of change. Administrators and teachers need to assess their own change styles and flexibility. Veteran teachers should use their know-how to help foster the change process.

Finally, Connelly (1988) describes professionalism as the most important element affecting change. He defines a professional as belonging to professional organizations, attending
in professional conferences, reading professional literature, maintaining contact with other educators within his or her discipline, and contributing to the profession.

Summary

Any approach to education that conditions students to be unquestioning recipients of knowledge keeps them from the experience of being truly human (Freire, 2002). Meaningful learning happens when the teacher relates to the students in a responsive manner rather than treating them as trainable machines. However, as Palmer (1998) warns, for meaningful learning to happen, a teacher must be willing to be vulnerable, to open up to risk, to be ‘more teachable’ (Hansen, 2004). Inasmuch as the Schoolhome calls for caring and democracy to have a larger presence within classrooms, it also requires being open to joining with the students as they head in directions that they have determined for and amongst themselves.

Administrators also need to be more teachable and responsive. School policies and planning must give more attention to what the teachers are experiencing within their environments "not only for the sake of the children whom they temporarily house, but also for the teachers who are their long-term residents" (Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 284).

All three facets - caring, democracy, and openness to change - are necessary for the Schoolhome to find its space within the district. Without a willingness to assume a moral stance as a caring educator, including domesticity and the emphasizing community may come across as distractions from ‘real’ learning. Without a commitment to cultivating students’ democratic dispositions in preparation for humane citizenship, the entire process of participatory decision-making might seem an inefficient mode of classroom management. Most important, unless educators are open to change, the Schoolhome may be dismissed without contemplating what it can offer.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In our schools, students are not engaged and do not feel connected. School reform should focus more on the whole child and less on standardization with its predominant cognitive approach. Schools should move away from the traditional authoritative approach to a democratic caring approach, but how it should be done is problematic. There are no caring models implemented in research. One theoretical model is Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome*. I implemented her version of the *Schoolhome* in an instructional design to examine the feasibility and outcomes of using such an approach. Upon completion of the implementation, much of what Martin had theorized, had occurred. Why then are caring pedagogies not more widely accepted?

To address this concern, I chose to conduct a qualitative study. The goal of a qualitative study is to understand the forces that act on events, not just to describe them. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013), qualitative research is complicated by many factors. These include heavy labor and time consumption, frequent data overload, a high degree of researcher integrity required, inadequacy of a small sample size, non-generalizability of findings, quality and credibility of conclusions, and usefulness of findings to policy and actions. However, since qualitative research is solidly anchored in real life, especially in a particular situation or locality, it has the potential to reveal complexity by using ‘thick descriptions’ that are vivid, real, and can strongly engage and impact the reader. Qualitative research is also flexible in duration and method of data collection, allowing a more complete understanding of the reality. It enables the discovery of the meaning people ascribe to the events of their lives and illuminates how they
connect to the social world. Therefore, qualitative research is an excellent tool to discover, explore, develop and test hypotheses.

The goal for a qualitative researcher is to generate results and construct theories that are understandable and credible. Creswell (2009) pointed out that one of the reasons educational research does not have much impact on practice is that quantitative research does not connect with teachers’ experiences of classroom reality. The goal of this qualitative study was to investigate the participants’ responses to the Schoolhome care-based Instructional Design implementation with the intention of encouraging improvement in existing polices, programs and practices in the district.

In this study, I used a presentation of the caring curriculum implementation to stimulate the participants’ responses and analyzed those against the following research questions: 1) What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome with regard to theory and intent? 2) How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the Schoolhome Instructional Design? 3) What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the Schoolhome Instructional Design? 4) To what extent would the teachers and administrators support an implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design? These questions focus the participants’ attention on a curriculum delivery that is different from the traditional delivery, allowing the stimulation of what Mezirow calls ‘a disorienting dilemma’ (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Anfara, & Mertz, 2006).

Mezirow’s theory of transformational learning states that significant learning in our lives involves meaning-making that can lead to a transformation in our worldview or in our personality. This is a multi-step process that is triggered when we are confronted with a disorienting dilemma that causes us to self-examine, share these thoughts with others, and then
explore new roles, relationships and actions, ultimately resulting in a new way of looking at things. In this study, the intended triggers for such a dilemma are the contrasting teachers’ and researchers’ perspectives, which draw on different values, assumptions, and attitudes.

As Ball and Forzani (2007) point out, there are certain kinds of knowledge that only teachers can unlock from their fortuitous perspective. This places on teachers the special responsibility of selecting directions of inquiry that illuminate such knowledge. By participating in this study, teachers and administrators fulfilled that responsibility by expanding their knowledge of an education innovation and thoughtfully considering its value and applicability to their own practices.

**Research Design**

I chose to conduct a qualitative grounded theory study, a method which is used to describe and understand, rather than evaluate and measure. Grounded theory research seeks to discover patterns that develop as a result of interactions of perspectives and actions (Patton, 2002). Researchers using a grounded theory learn by speaking with (interviewing) and listening to participants belonging to the group being studied. In this way, the use of grounded theory enables the participants’ voices to be heard and the contexts in which they work to be given consideration and fully described. For Charmaz (2003), grounded theory “assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and viewed, and aims toward an interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings” (p. 250).

The theoretical foundation of grounded theory in education is built upon John Dewey’s (1902) belief in the importance of human experience and active learning in the generation of knowledge. For Glaser and Strauss (1967), the purpose of theory is to explain and to predict. Grounded theory is useful for my study because the goal is to investigate secondary level
educators’ (of all subjects) reactions to caring pedagogy and acceptance of its use in their own practices.

As a method, grounded theory aims to inspire social change and social analysis through the creation of theory. This qualitative approach entails a constant comparative method requiring the researcher to move in and out of the data and analysis process, continually refining and reflecting upon meanings and conclusions.

With respect to the various concepts discussed in Chapter 2, there were two in particular which served as bases for all components (concepts, literature, data collection and analysis strategies) of this investigation. They were Hawkins’ (2002) *I, Thou, It* framework and Bronfenbrenner’s (1973) Bioecological Model. The theoretical foundation was derived from Hawkins’ (2002) framework of *I, Thou, It* because its use as a lens assigns considerable weight to the critical role of the teacher in the student’s learning. This stance highlights the crucial nature of the classroom locale allowing me to attend also to the larger forces - political, economic, social, and spiritual - that impact teacher practice and student experience.

From an operational perspective, Hawkins’ (2002) framework allowed a reasonable limitation of the focus of the study to the interactions that occurred between the teacher, the students, and the content within the *Schoolhome* exemplar.

**Population and Sample**

All participants of the study belonged to the same school district, Golden Feather District (GFD), a non-alternative suburban district located in upstate New York. According to the New York State Department of Education, (2016) the district serves 4,860 students (50% male, 50% female) from primarily white (77%) affluent families. Economically disadvantaged students with reduced lunch comprise only 18% of the entire district student population.
This study targeted middle and high school teachers (grades 6-12) of all subjects who are employed by the GFD, all of whom hold master’s degrees. The study also targeted GFD middle and high school principals, assistant principals and the department chair administrators (English language arts [ELA], reading and social studies; math, science and technology; world languages and English as a new language [ENL]; business and music; art; health and athletics), all of whom hold NYS SAS certification. Demographically, the sample population is diverse in age, experience, gender, race and ethnicity.

The sample for this study was limited to ten middle and high school teachers (grades 6 to 12) across every department, and five administrators (principals, assistant principals and department chair administrators) who are involved with day-to-day ‘school life’. The sample size totaled 15 participants, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Sample Middle and High School Teacher Population (N=10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math &amp; Science</td>
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<td>Math</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Sample Administrator Population (N=5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rationale for limiting the sample size to 15 participants was that the number was large and heterogeneous enough to be representative of the target population, but not so large that the amount of data generated would become unwieldy. However, the 15 participants did generate enough data that the inductive strategy of grounded theory was possible. Qualitative studies typically do not necessitate a large number of participants. In fact, Marshall (1996) specified that “the number of required subjects usually becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or explanations stop emerging from the data” (p. 523). This suggests that a smaller sample size of participants is sufficient as a study begins. As Creswell (2009) states, grounded theory research has sample size guidelines that range from 15 to 20 participants.

For this study, the participant sample as well as the site and setting were selected using purposive sampling so that the sample was representative of the target population (Table 1) which encompassed the educational staff of the district middle and high schools. Purposive sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling where the respondents are chosen as they agree to participate. In this study, purposive sampling was used because it is more appropriate for a grounded theory qualitative study than a random selection from the entire population (Urdan, 2005). A purposive sample is chosen within set boundaries and the conceptual frame of the study, i.e., the sample is defined with a purpose in mind, but is neither random nor entirely pre-specified (Miles et al., 2013). This study’s sample is purposeful because the recruiting flyer was distributed only at the middle and high school. I discovered after collecting the data that the sample was indeed representative, since teachers from all subjects decided to participate in the study.

The rationale for including high school teachers along with middle school teachers was linked to the necessity of broadening the study to verify whether it applied to high school as well
as middle school. Many non-core teachers travel between the middle and high school, and therefore may be teaching several grades. Since grades 7-12 are considered secondary level, it seemed logical to include all in the sample. Finally, core teachers remain in one classroom, while other subject teachers such as ESL, foreign language, physical education, music and art often share a classroom which might make the kinds of changes of the *Schoolhome* difficult.

Substitute, first year and elementary teachers were excluded from the sample population. Substitute teachers were excluded because there was no way to predict when and for how long they would be at a site. First year teachers were excluded because they are still becoming acclimated to their jobs. Elementary teachers were excluded because research shows that caring pedagogies are already prevalent in primary education (Velasquez et al., 2013). District office administrators were also excluded from the sample because the focus of the study was limited to participants who work more closely with the students. District administrators are usually involved with budgets, security, human resources, transportation, etc., and do not deal on a day-to-day basis with students on such issues as classroom management and designing lesson plans. It is the assistant principals and department administrators who resolve discipline issues, oversee the curricula and observe teachers for their evaluations. Students were not included as part of the sample because this study was meant to investigate teachers’ and administrators’ openness to change.

**Pilot Study**

This current study used as an exemplar my *Schoolhome* pilot study, *Exploring the Impact of the Schoolhome Model upon Student Engagement, Metacognitive Awareness, and Learning Outcomes* (2016). The pilot implemented Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome*, a care-based educational theory advocating that a home-like environment be created in order to encourage peer
collaboration, independence, and the rejection of gender and racial stereotypes. The pilot study was an action research investigation to determine whether a project-based curriculum delivered in a home-like setting would positively influence students’ engagement, metacognition and achievement. If so, caring environments should be encouraged for broader use in the educational system.

The conceptual framework of the pilot study was derived from both Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Martin (1995). Bronfenbrenner asserted that when any layer of an individual’s social environment breaks down, it can result in negative traits such as a lack of self-discipline, antisocial behavior, and an inability to self-direct. Martin’s Schoolhome emphasizes the qualities of safety, caring, self-exploration, choice, connectedness and citizenship as crucial to the learning processes. These themes were brought together in my Schoolhome Instructional Design. The purpose was to investigate the impact of the Schoolhome Instructional Design upon student engagement and metacognitive awareness, as well as to understand how these aspects were affected and could be measured.

The pilot study used action research, where the teacher is the investigator of her own practice. This method accommodated the exploratory nature of the pilot, while allowing the immediate observation of the impact of the Schoolhome upon the students. The inquiry was conducted in the White Birch Middle School, a non-alternative middle school in the GFD in New York State, with 29 eighth grade Italian language students in their third year of Italian study.

The nine-week pilot compared a unit of instruction delivered traditionally to a unit patterned after Martin’s (1995) Schoolhome, both selected from the district-approved 8th grade curriculum. The traditional phase of the study occurred during the first four weeks. In the
traditional unit, students were instructed using lectures and teacher-prepared resources. All work was teacher-led and limited choice was given. My teacher-role was that of authority.

The traditional phase was followed by an interim week spent changing the physical environment into a home-like setting. Students made decisions about how the Schoolhome should run and what should be studied. The final phase, the Schoolhome unit, also spanned four weeks. The Schoolhome unit objective was to provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful and authentic tasks having real-life relevance. Therefore, a webquest integrating geography and culture was chosen where students worked both individually and in pairs to create a virtual trip. All were allowed to work at their own pace and given rubrics and checklists to help track progress. There were no lectures or homework assigned by me. My teacher role was that of a facilitator.

Increasing achievement, metacognition and engagement became evident as the pilot progressed. Students appreciated being physically comfortable, able to ask for help and talk with each other, and joining in the final assessment process. These factors helped eliminate grade and performance pressure.

As the pilot was ending, the class expressed a desire to continue the Schoolhome setting and began to organize the necessary chores and supplies. They especially wanted to continue having recess and lunch together. Ultimately, they voted to continue the Schoolhome, with some changes, for the remainder of the school year. These responses affirmed Martin’s (1995) theory that bringing aspects of home into the school environment does indeed encourage more communication, engagement, independence and joy while simultaneously discouraging discipline issues.
Martin (1995) theorized that combining the domestic curricula of the home (3Cs), with the academic agenda of the school (3Rs) is a solution to the neglect of children’s moral development. In my research adaptation of the Schoolhome, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Bioecological Model inspired another dimension: social mutuality. Bringing elements of the home (3Cs) into the school (3Rs) had a synergistic result - a community developed.

The Schoolhome experience was positive and encouraged me to share with others in the school district as the Schoolhome was progressing. Most colleagues were curious and interested, especially as the students began to demonstrate more positive outlooks in their other classes. Teachers of other content areas noted that students from the Schoolhome pilot displayed warmer attitudes towards their peers, including those with whom they did not usually associate and even held tutoring sessions with each other for other content areas outside of classroom school hours.

A teacher’s willingness to take risks, add democracy and autonomy to the curriculum, and enhance communication opportunities can lead to student gains in performance and behavior. Despite the apparent gains in student performance and behavior, acceptance of the Schoolhome was mixed outside the classroom. While the teachers and administrators were pleasantly surprised by the positive changes, they were less enthusiastic about the amount of effort needed to create the Schoolhome and questioned whether the amount of time and work required was worth expending. These reactions led to my realization that exploring responses to the Schoolhome from district and teacher perspectives would be crucial if the Schoolhome were to be widely used. For one thing, "teachers need time - and a community - to support their capacity to organize sustained project work” (Barron et al., 1998, p. 12). It is therefore useful to understand the factors that can influence this support.
The current study used the *Schoolhome* implementation as an exemplar to engender awareness about a caring instructional design among the educators of the district. By tapping the participants’ experience and knowledge, the feasibility of implementing the *Schoolhome* for other subjects and at various levels was explored. It was hoped that *Schoolhome* awareness would spark innovative ideas among other educators, encouraging them to become teacher-researchers motivated by the desire to evaluate and enhance their own practice.

**Procedure**

In this current study, the recruitment process began by contacting the school district in which the caring *Schoolhome* Instructional Design implementation occurred to obtain permission to conduct the research in the middle and high schools. I secured an appointment with the superintendent of GFD, and during the meeting I presented and discussed the study proposal. The superintendent approved the proposal and sent it to the board of education of GFD for final consent. When the board concurred, I proceeded to contact the *Schoolhome* pilot study participants (8th grade students) and their parents/guardians in order to gain permission to use students’ images in a ten-minute video of the *Schoolhome* in action. A permission/opt-out form for the parent/guardian to sign and an assent/opt-out form for students were sent as attachments via email.

The primary purpose of the parent/guardian email contact was to explain that the goal of the new study was to extend the knowledge and potential use of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design to other teachers and administrators in the district. Parents/guardians were informed that a video of the *Schoolhome* would be created, using images collected during the *Schoolhome* implementation of December 2015 to February 2016. Therefore, permission to use the students’ images was needed from both the parent/guardian and the students. Parents/guardians who did
not respond to the first email were sent a second email after two weeks. To increase the response rate, a follow-up email reminder was sent to those unresponsive to the first two emails, after two weeks had passed. None of the parents/guardians or students opted out.

Teachers and administrators were recruited using an explanatory flyer (see Appendix A) which contained general information about the proposed study, the amount of time required of participants, and researcher contact information. To comply with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) procedures, I did not contact participants directly; instead, I handed copies of the flyer to the main office secretaries to be placed in mailrooms, lunch rooms, main offices and teachers’ and administrators’ mailboxes. The distribution of the explanatory flyer within the district led prospective teacher participants to contact me about the study via email.

Teachers and administrators who agreed to participate in the study were given a consent form to sign. The consent ensured them of the following constraints. (1) Participation was voluntary and respondents were assured of anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. (2) Participants could drop out at any time. (3) No profit would accrue to the participants, aside from learning about the innovation and being part of the research study. (4) No harm to the participants was foreseen.

Then I created a written synopsis (see Appendix B) of the Schoolhome implementation that was a retrospective of the entire process. I also created a video (see Appendix C) showcasing one entire day in the Schoolhome, from beginning to end, to show the pedagogical nature of the Schoolhome. The purpose of the video was to illustrate the variety of experiences of different students as they were involved in the 3Cs and the 3Rs, so that viewers could gain a fully defined impression of the caring curriculum in action.
Data Collection

In this study, descriptive data was collected using open-ended research methods such as surveys and semi-structured interviews, and then analyzed inductively in order to build a naturalistic account (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of teachers’ and administrators’ opinions and abilities/inabilities to alter teaching strategies and classroom settings. Semi-structured interviews were specifically selected because they allow the researcher to sustain consistency about the concepts that are stated in each interview and ensure that the same topics are mentioned in each interview. Participants are allowed to add new concepts to the interview if they believe it is appropriate to the conversation and the researcher can probe further questions to elucidate different topics and to examine additional thoughts about these concepts.

There were two phases to the data collection process in this study. The first phase was conducting two online surveys for teachers. The second consisted of audio-taped interviews with the administrators. Patton (2002) states that “the use of the tape recorder does not eliminate the need for taking notes. Taping allows you to concentrate on taking strategic and focused notes, rather than attempting verbatim notes” (p. 383). I took notes during the interviews in order to think of additional and follow up questions, and also to serve as a backup in case the recorder malfunctioned.

In the first phase, teachers who had questions about the study were welcomed to discuss the pertinent details. The questions received were primarily about the amount of the time that would be required by the study. Those who agreed to participate were sent via email an online link to the Schoolhome Instructional Design synopsis, the ten-minute Schoolhome video, and the two surveys. The teachers were instructed to complete the pre-presentation survey (see Appendix C) first, then to read the pilot synopsis and watch the video. After completing these steps, they
were asked to respond to the post-presentation survey (see Appendix D). The online surveys took approximately 30 minutes.

In the second phase of the data collection, administrators who agreed to participate were sent via email an online link for accessing the Schoolhome pilot synopsis and the ten-minute Schoolhome video, the same materials the teachers viewed. Rather than completing surveys, the administrators were asked to schedule an interview (see Appendix E) with me following their review of the Schoolhome implementation synopsis and video. Interviews were conducted at the administrators’ schools (offices or conference rooms). The interviews took approximately 30 minutes and were audio-recorded.

Online links (to the Schoolhome synopsis and video) were shared via Google Drive, which the district uses as its official communication tool. The district has a shared Google account for all employees and students. Google Forms is the format of choice for survey creation and sharing information within the district.

Both surveys were pilot tested by the district technology liaison to ensure accuracy of the distribution and collection process since email was the chosen form of contact. This liaison also ‘took’ the pre- and post- surveys to verify clarity and completeness of these instruments. She also assisted in working out the distribution of the exemplar synopsis / video which needed to occur prior to the post-survey. A consultant was used to pilot test the interview questions for completeness, clarity and accuracy.

Surveys and interviews began immediately upon receiving contact from the participants. Teachers and administrators who demonstrated an interest to participate in the study but did not complete their surveys or schedule their interviews were contacted via email two weeks after being sent the link to the Schoolhome materials. If they did not respond, a second email was sent
after two more weeks. Those who did not respond to the second email were considered to have withdrawn from participation.

The appropriateness of the survey instruments was ensured through the use of comprehensive survey questions that allowed teacher participants to fully describe their reactions to the Schoolhome materials. The first survey consisted of 19 items which included both semi-structured and multiple choice questions. Participants were asked to describe their backgrounds, assignments and teaching styles (project-based, formal, informal). The questions aimed to elicit their knowledge and opinions about care-based curricula, and the quality of their student-teacher relationships. The survey also sought to discover opinions about choice, connections and classroom environment. These questions aligned with the research questions because they assessed participants’ attitudes and responses towards caring models and their openness to a change in teaching style or method of delivery.

The second survey was divided into three sections, and the questions were primarily open-ended. The first section asked participants to describe the differences they saw between the Schoolhome as depicted in the video and their own classrooms. The teachers were asked about changing their classroom environments, and whether they were able to do so. The second section focused on the caring-curriculum model of the Schoolhome and sought to learn what caring and engagement behavior they observed in the video. The third section asked participants to evaluate the Schoolhome for use in their practices. Since the Schoolhome pilot was a teacher-research study, the survey also sought to determine the participants’ interest in these kinds of research-based innovations.

The appropriateness of the interview instrument was ensured through ten semi-structured questions which enabled the administrator participants to share their perceptions and
understanding of the Schoolhome Instructional Design in their own words. First, background information was gathered. Then, I sought to determine the administrators’ knowledge about caring pedagogies and their assessment of the Schoolhome in action as it compared to what they usually observed in their school’s classrooms. They were also asked to describe their impressions of the students and teacher interactions in the Schoolhome. The interviews also sought to determine the administrators’ openness to teacher research projects and willingness to support innovative classroom practices.

In order to encourage in-depth responses, I used two techniques: silent probe and echo probe. In a silent probe, the researcher waits after the initial answer, giving time for deeper thought and fuller responses. In an echo probe, the researcher will repeat what the participant has just said and ask for elucidation (Josselson, 2013).

Data Analysis

Data analysis began immediately upon the collection of all participants’ responses. Qualitative data for this study was comprised of surveys, interviews and memos. After the pre- and post- surveys were gathered, and the audio interviews transcribed, the analysis began. Data was aggregated across all participants, and by characteristics (e.g., professional title, gender, experience, location).

The three-step grounded theory coding process as delineated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was followed: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Each step was revisited as new concepts emerged.

Nvivo 10 software was chosen to assist with the analysis because it is especially suited for evaluating qualitative data through pattern-based coding, and for handling large volumes of text quickly, isolating patterns and applying them to the next wave of data analysis. Nvivo 10
allowed me to develop the findings through theme discovery and description. Broad categories described what occurred against what I expected and uncovered unusual themes by including multiple perspectives, quotes and useful dialogues.

The analytic process began by reading all the documents (data) to gain a general impression, and then selecting the one that seemed the most interesting and reflecting on its underlying meaning. This process was repeated until I had a clear sense of several participants’ perspectives. Then I proceeded to open coding.

Open coding is a procedure to identify, label and categorize the phenomenon found in the participants’ responses. Charmaz (2006) states that “careful word-by-word, line-by-line, incident-by-incident coding moves you toward fulfilling two criteria for completing a grounded theory analysis: fit and relevance” (p. 54). Since there are no a priori codes used in open coding, I divided the text into segments and then generated and assigned codes to label them (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this way, the coding frame was determined.

The data was grouped into clusters (words, sentences or entire paragraphs) which became the preliminary codes. A list was made of the themes being uncovered, keeping the research questions in mind to guide the initial phase of open coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). At that point, I returned to the data and re-grouped the texts according to the codes.

The second step was axial coding, a procedure for discovering the relationships among the categories determined in step one, using inductive and deductive thinking. Charmaz (2006) explains that “axial coding gives coherence to the emerging analysis” (p. 60). Axial coding let me aggregate data that was broken during the open coding phase. The axial coding phase provided coherence to the new emergent analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2015) categorize four tasks in axial coding: a) laying out the properties of a category and their dimensions, a task that
begins during open coding; b) identifying the variety of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences associated with the phenomenon; c) relating a category to its subcategories through statements denoting how they are related to each other, and d) looking for cues in the data that denote how major categories might relate to each other (p. 126). Charmaz (2006) notes that axial coding offers a ‘frame’ that researchers can use.

Redundant codes were reduced to avoid overlapping and to combine similar codes into one category. The data clusters that seemed especially meaningful were used for further grouping into organizational and theoretical categories (Maxwell, 2013). The process was repeated until the categories became distinct. Saturation was achieved by a continuous comparison of information (axial coding) until no new data was interconnected. Then the dimensions of the categories were ascertained and relationships among them validated.

The third step of the analysis process was to apply selective coding, a procedure that involves choosing a single category as the core to which all other categories will relate. Strauss and Corbin (1998) specify that a core category must clarify and bring other categories together to develop the descriptive whole. The linkage of categories is required in order to develop a theory.

Final steps were taken to consolidate the patterns and categories into statements, which helped to finalize the conclusions reached in the earlier stages, and also enabled connections to the framework theories. Nvivo 10 was also used for data display, organization and compression, making it easier to draw conclusions using tables and matrices. Following Miles et al.’s (2013) display method, clustered matrices were used to describe the data. Visual images of data (diagrams) with comparison tables enabled the interpretation of findings. Finally, a model for the theory that emerged was presented.
Throughout the coding process, memos were regularly written while thinking about the data in order to facilitate and record analytic thinking. “… the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding… a sentence, a paragraph or a few pages… exhausts the analyst’s momentary ideation based on data with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration” (Glaser, 1978, p. 83). Reflecting via memos assisted in comparing the coded data and in developing final theoretical propositions.

By using a grounded theory approach (i.e., understanding the data and what is relevant, and to use insight during the analysis), I also developed theoretical sensibility. Theoretical sensibilities include professional and personal experience of an event (Schoolhome), of the analysis process (concepts, meanings and relationship) and knowledge of the literature. Theoretical sensitivity helped me stay focused when dealing with data.

**Validity of the Findings**

Standards of validity appropriate to qualitative research were applied. With respect to internal validity, the trustworthiness of the observations, interpretations and generalizations as well as the truth value or credibility of findings were evaluated by checking the measures used in order to ensure that the data was empirically grounded in the participants’ perspectives. Experiences were explored in detail and clarifications sought for ambiguous statements.

Internal validity was enhanced by the use of triangulation, i.e., the collecting of information from a diverse range of individuals and settings and using a variety of methods to reduce the chance of systematic bias and chance association, is also necessary. The use of tables and graphs to display diversity within the setting and the population being studied provided a frame of reference when approaching the ‘unusual’ or ‘uncommon’. Gathering data under
different conditions enhanced opportunities for comparison, e.g., data from different settings but collected at different times, or similar data collected from different sites.

External validity was ensured by providing sufficiently detailed descriptions of the participants and the context under study, so that the reader can evaluate the findings’ usefulness for other settings.

There are two main threats to validity: researcher bias and reactivity. To avoid bias, the researcher’s theories, beliefs and perceptual lens must be examined for their possible influences upon the study’s conduct and conclusions. Reactivity is impossible to eliminate, referring as it does to the influence the researcher has on the setting and participants of the study. Therefore, I took steps to understand how I may have affected the validity of the study.

My role as a researcher in this study necessitated the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset, because I was gathering the data concerning the teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the Schoolhome’s care-based Instructional Design. I have been working for the same school district since 2008 in various capacities. My academic knowledge and experience teaching various subjects to diverse students enhanced my awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to the problem of the study and also assisted my working with the participants. Inasmuch as my personal bias could affect my view and understanding of the data, I recognized the need to set aside personal experiences and to be open to the thoughts and opinions of the participants in the study.

Researcher affect is an unavoidable variable in qualitative research because “each of us as researchers occupies multiple positions that intersect and may bring us into conflicting allegiances or alliances within our research sites” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 55). Another factor that could affect the study was the level of my influence within the site and the profession, which
each have taken considerable investment to establish. When a researcher is also deeply entrenched in the site’s context and micropolitics, these become additional filters for both action and analysis. “Micropolitics includes the behind-the-scenes negotiations over material resources, vested interests and ideological commitments … [and] what gets talked about in private among practitioners … Micropolitics often exists within the silences that are created in institutions. It is as much about what doesn’t get said as much as what does” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 78).

Nevertheless, I employed a qualitative research design because its thick descriptions serve to illuminate the details of the focus elements, something difficult to achieve using other research vehicles. The nature of this research cannot be captured using quantitative methods, a legitimate and valid reason to conduct qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

With respect to reliability, the following strategies were used to enhance the trustworthiness of this study: (a) criteria of adequacy - the number of participants involved, and the amount of data collected; (b) appropriateness of data - data met the theoretical needs of the study (the use of semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to express their views authentically, and I have attempted to represent their views fairly and accurately in this study); (c) a meticulous record of the process of the study was maintained - a so-called audit trail that allowed for retracing the steps that led to the conclusions, which, in addition to the raw data, included evidence of how data was reduced, analyzed, and synthesized as well as ongoing thoughts, hunches, and reactions; (d) external audit - an external consultant reviewed the materials and assessed the findings and interpretations for consistency; (e) member checks - informants were presented with the interview transcripts, so they could confirm the accuracy and credibility of their contributions and reflect and elaborate as needed (Creswell, 2009); (f) triangulation - multiple and different sources were used to cross-check and corroborate evidence;
(g) peer review - a colleague was asked to be the critical reader; (h) the online survey instruments were pilot tested.

To maintain credibility, I remained intensively involved in the study. When the researcher knows the setting and the participants well, it is less likely that premature associations and theories will be drawn and more likely that findings and observations will be informed. Collecting rich data over time helps prevent seeing only what prejudice dictates. As the interviews occurred, participants’ validation was ongoing in order to verify the accuracy of the data being gathered and interpretations being made. Searches were done for discrepant evidence and negative cases, as was playing the devil’s advocate by looking at the study from a critic’s perspective, and asking colleagues and the advisor and committee for feedback.

**Delimitations**

Critics of increasing standardization in education, such as Martin (1995) and more recently Darling-Hammond (2010), express disappointment that the grammar of schooling – a term used to describe the expected forms and practices of educational institutions (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) – is largely motivated by a bureaucratic desire for efficiency. Although administrators and teachers are constrained to comply with in-place practices and policies that push for these objectives, the main assumption of this study was that educators continue to possess a strong moral and pedagogical compass that sustains their capability to balance student interests against mandated performance expectations. This capability is present no matter the level of education and experience, or the diversity of personal, social, and political background. Their perspectives were therefore given equal weight in this study and evaluated without considering rank.
I defined the problem and the criteria of the study, narrowed the scope to the remainder of 2016 through 2017, and the location to the upstate New York suburban non-alternative school district where the Schoolhome had been implemented. The sample of the study was limited to 15 participants. These included female and male middle and high school teachers with differing years of experience teaching a variety of subjects, and it also included building level administrators. The study followed a qualitative research approach, specifically grounded theory. It involved a descriptive examination of the participants’ perceptions of the care-based Schoolhome Instructional Design implementation of the pilot study.

In qualitative research, the results cannot be generalized. The focus was narrow (caring theory as expressed in the Schoolhome Instructional Design) and the sample was limited in number (15 educators), and in the population from which it was drawn (an affluent community school district serving mostly white students and located upstate New York).

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles of worthiness, competence, informed consent, benefit, honesty and trust guided this study. Without trust, participants will not share deeply, which will result in poor data; it is crucial that privacy, confidentiality and anonymity be guarded. Therefore, security measures were taken to prevent the misuse of data (Miles et al., 2013). Also, ongoing checking and renegotiations were performed to enable responsiveness to unanticipated developments and reliability.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) caution researchers that “respect is shown in how you act toward your participants” (p. 98). In this study, I followed specific ethical practices, such as behaving in a polite manner, expressing appreciation to the participants and my doctoral committee.
chairperson for their help, honoring the individual’s time and schedules, and valuing integrity by reporting accurately the intent, options and perspectives of the participants.

Peshkin (1991, as cited in Maxwell, 2013) strongly recommends that all researchers systematically monitor their subjectivity as well as the research relationships. The concept of ‘reflexivity’ means that a researcher cannot avoid influencing or being influenced by the social world that he studies (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, I clarified assumptions, personal beliefs and background, any potential gains from the research, etc. through the process of memo writing.

Beyond an unanticipated breach of security that could have occurred despite measures taken to protect data, there was no risk to the participants. The school and all individuals in the study were assigned pseudonyms. All digital data linking pseudonyms to individuals was stored in a password-protected encrypted folder on a password-protected computer. Therefore, any breach of the study documents should not have revealed the real identity of any participant. Only the researcher collected, viewed and coded the collected data. Furthermore, all paper data, as well as audio-taped and video/photo materials were stored in a locked box in the ETAP Department, School of Education, University at Albany and destroyed upon completion and presentation of the study during the 2017 Summer Semester.

Time spent by subjects completing the research study procedures varied. Teacher participants were expected to use approximately forty-five minutes to complete the study procedure: fifteen minutes for the pre-survey, fifteen minutes to watch the video and read the synopsis of the Schoolhome Instructional Design, and fifteen minutes for the post-survey. Administrator participants were also expected to use approximately forty-five minutes: fifteen minutes for watching the video and reading the synopsis, and thirty minutes for the interview. Teachers could complete the pre- and post- surveys at school or at home, while administrators
were interviewed in the location of their preference in the school district. Neither teachers nor administrators were compensated for their time or inconvenience during their participation.

There were benefits expected to accrue from this study. For example, the sample participants may benefit from knowledge and insights gained through exposure to and consideration of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, an innovative caring pedagogy. Participants learned about action-research and may be encouraged to engage in action-research themselves, and to explore other teaching innovations which may lead to increased student engagement, achievement and metacognition. Administrator participants may be more inclined to encourage teachers to explore non-traditional methods. Researchers may envision a new area of investigation concerning classroom environment and metacognitive awareness. Policymakers may come to recognize that alternative settings can lead to more self-aware, caring students who connect well with each other and thus positively affect the school climate, and even society as they carry their understandings into adulthood.

Ethical issues may arise during the qualitative process (Creswell, 2009). Since such research involves collecting data from and about people (Punch, 2005), participants must be protected, and the researcher must maintain integrity and guard against misconduct. This enables trust to be developed (Creswell, 2009). First and foremost, the researcher is obligated to respect the participants. Since sensitive and deep answers to questions are solicited and meaning extracted from these answers, the participants become vulnerable when the data is shared. Measures to protect the participants were taken: a) participation was voluntary and withdrawal allowed; b) the research objectives were shared; c) written consent was obtained; d) the data collection process was monitored; e) participants had access to written data transcriptions and interpretations; f) the participants’ rights and wishes were given foremost consideration.
Summary

This study shared the Schoolhome caring curriculum Instructional Design information and results with teachers and administrators in the district where it occurred. The gathering and analysis of the data enabled the researcher to discern their responses to the Schoolhome Instructional Design and its potential for use in different subjects and on various levels. Lack of information, misconception and conflict with personal and professional assumptions are significant barriers to any change. Therefore, to ascertain the teachers’ and administrators’ understanding of the Schoolhome’s underlying caring theory was a crucial first step in the change process. To discover teachers’ and administrators’ attitudes was especially critical for buy-in to occur.

Ultimately, sharing the study’s findings with teacher- and administrator-participants may encourage wider implementation of the caring curriculum. Apart from contributing to the research into real-world applications of care-based pedagogies, especially beyond early childhood settings, this study enriched my own understanding about the potential development and expansion of the caring Schoolhome Instructional Design. By expressing and comparing the participants’ opinions and concerns regarding the Schoolhome Instructional Design, the findings and their projected applications were detailed and nuanced. This study connected to a larger body of literature and contributed to a broader perspective of caring pedagogy.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings are organized by the four research questions, with teacher and administrator findings discussed separately, then compared, and followed by summaries.

Research Question One

The first research question of this study was: “What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome with regard to theory and intent?” This research question sought to discover whether the teachers and administrators knew about and understood the caring pedagogy.

The pre-survey questioned the teachers’ positions; teaching styles and philosophies; their knowledge of caring curriculum theory, the scholar Jane Roland Martin, (1995) and the Schoolhome caring curriculum, and their interest in new teaching methods. Analysis of the pre-survey answers indicated that the majority of the teacher-participants did not know about the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome. Ninety percent had not heard of the caring pedagogy, and 80% had not heard of Jane Roland Martin and/or the Schoolhome theory. Only two teachers, both middle school, of the ten teacher-participants, indicated that they had heard of Jane Roland Martin and/or the Schoolhome. No high school teacher-participant knew the Schoolhome theory.

That the majority of teachers did not know about caring pedagogy is not surprising given the lack of research focused on implementing caring pedagogies at higher levels. Research has shown that caring pedagogy is prevalent at elementary levels but diminishes as the level of schooling rises from elementary through middle and high school (Velasquez et al., 2013).
Moreover, students in secondary school report that they feel that are not cared for (Johnson, 2009). The high school teachers’ lack of knowledge of the caring curriculum theory suggests its absence in teacher preparation programs for the secondary level. Furthermore, the current focus on efficiency and performance in education (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005) is a consequence of educational policies centered on standardization and high stakes testing rather than on achieving learning outcomes beneficial to students’ citizenship (Martin, 1995).

Two of the teachers who did know about the *Schoolhome* offered these opinions. Ms. Crawford, a middle school French teacher stated, “I think the idea of Schoolhome is very interesting.” She did not explain what she meant by ‘interesting’ nor what she understood of the caring theory. Similarly, Mr. Franklin, a middle school math and science teacher, said, “I think some parts of the theory are valid.” He did not explain what parts are ‘valid’ nor what ‘valid’ means to him. Neither teacher discussed their opinions about caring theory in any detail, simply giving one-word answers, indicative of their self-described lack of caring theory knowledge. Most teachers saw themselves as caring for the students and for the subjects, but the caring theory is broader than that. Caring is not a feeling but rather a complex process (Martin, 1995; Nodding, 2012) and, as Bartell (2011) pointed out, to care is to stand on ethics.

Teachers were asked to define their current teaching styles using the list given in the pre-survey. Several chose more than one style, particularly project-based learning, cooperative learning and hands-on activities, as Figure 2 displays. The majority of middle (86%) and high school (77%) teachers defined their style using the following terms: ‘caring-based’, ‘facilitative’, ‘hands-on’, ‘cooperative learning’, ‘project-based’, ‘caring-based’, ‘student leadership facilitator’ and ‘play-based learning’. Such terms are considered student-centered and innovative.
This led me to notice that the teacher-participants perceived themselves as more non-traditional than traditional and more current in their teaching methods and practices.

The pre-survey results also showed that 14% of middle and 23% of high school teachers defined their style as caring. Even though teachers were not knowledgeable about the caring pedagogy per se, they perceived themselves as caring. For example, Mr. Hart, a high school English teacher, described his teaching style as ‘caring-based’, although he did not specify whether he meant the pedagogy or his behavior with the class. Ms. Tillman, a high school music teacher, described her style as ‘cooperative and caring based’. While these teachers said they did not know the specifics of Schoolhome theory, their self-identified teaching styles contained features associated with caring pedagogy, e.g., cooperative-based learning which fosters students’ interaction and collaboration, and is therefore student-centered. Martin’s (1995) view is that using such techniques as interest-led learning, peer collaboration and hands-on activities creates an environment that is enriched and supportive, allowing exploration and creativity and in which children can become independent learners.

![Figure 2. Self-reported teaching style per level taught.](image-url)
When describing their classrooms at work, the teachers named components like those found within Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome* theory in which the 3Cs are paramount. Teaching that includes both intellectual and social-emotional aspects of learning can help children become more human and decent adults (Martin, 1995), an outcome supportive of implementing a moral approach, such as the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. “Past research suggests that the relationship between teacher and student is a keystone in achievement, motivation and engagement … not just a frill or a ‘feel-good’ aspect of schooling, [but] an essential feature of learning” (Rodgers, 2006; Raider-Roth, 2005a & b in Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006, p. 266). Other researchers concurred, including Midgley, Feldlaufer, and Eccles (1989), Pianta, (1999) and Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000).

With respect to engagement, Ms. Henderson, a high school science teacher, described her classroom at work as “One where the students are actively engaged in their own learning - however this is achieved.” In a similar vein, Ms. Young, an ELA middle school teacher, said, “My classroom is usually full of conversation, students actively engaged together in an activity or task. Teachers are acting as guides, helping when needed.” Both teachers’ classrooms as described would be considered non-traditional: students working and talking together, and the teacher as a facilitator, rather than the authority standing in front of a quiet room full of students sitting in rows. These teachers’ self-described styles and classrooms exhibit many of the same characteristics as Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome* in which the connection between the teacher and students and among the students is central. Students learn to work together through project-based activities, and learning such skills as collaboration will be beneficial to these future world citizens. Hawkins (2002) asserts that the students’ focus should be on learning the *It* rather than
on the teacher teaching, and in their responses the teachers did highlight students’ focus on the work, the *It*, in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design.

Teachers were also asked whether students were able to work productively with minimal teacher supervision. Of the ten teachers, six responded either ‘A great deal’ or ‘Almost every time’, while four teachers responded, ‘Occasionally/Sometimes’. Participants did not explain what ‘a great deal means’ and their answers lacked specificity. This is important to note since it shows teachers may not have reflected on their answers, e.g., they did not explain if they meant each student, each time. Still, their answers showed that teachers noticed the great attention and motivation students displayed in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. The fact that the students in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design showed strong independent learning and management skills demonstrated the positive effect of combining cognitive and affective approaches to education (Hawkins, 1979). The teachers’ responses implied that they saw students not just attending school but in charge of their education and responsible for their learning outcomes.

Their answers indicated that all teachers were using group work, and students were productive at least part of the time, demonstrating students’ ability to work independently and show agency. These answers also indicated that even though teachers may not have had prior knowledge of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, their teaching methods included features similar to those included in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design: student leadership, group work, students’ agency.

Administrators’ participation was solicited through interviews. Their responses also indicated a lack of prior awareness of the caring pedagogy underlying the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Four said they either had no knowledge of the caring curriculum theories or that their knowledge was based on reading done to prepare for this study interview. For example,
when asked “What do you know about Jane Roland Martin’s *Schoolhome* philosophy?” and “What do you know of other caring theories?”, Mr. Long, a middle school principal with 19 years of experience in public education, said, “Just what I’ve read from your work.” When asked that same question, Ms. Macbride, a high school assistant principal with a ‘long’ teaching experience in social studies, stated, “No, I don’t have any background in that. Seeing what was implemented in the video was different and new to me; something that I was not [previously] exposed to.” These answers highlight a lack of knowledge of the *Schoolhome* caring pedagogy and also indicate a probable absence of this pedagogy being learned and or taught in these administrators’ academic histories. This is an example of a ‘limit-situation’, in which a subtle oppression is occurring (Freire, 2002), i.e., not being exposed to multiple ways of doing things, in this case, pedagogical theory: how we teach will affect what students will be able to learn.

In summary, to the first research question “What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the *Schoolhome* with regard to theory and intent?”, the data revealed that some teachers and administrators did have a basic awareness of what caring means and achieves in pedagogy. The review of their comments revealed 13 instances in which participants stated that they had limited prior knowledge of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, while two had no knowledge. Those 13 participants cited details about the layout and structures of classroom activities they had personally used or observed that were similar those of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, but they did not know specifically about the caring pedagogies.

These responses were not surprising given the dearth of research on caring pedagogy theory and implementation. In my own experience, there was no exposure to caring pedagogy. I stumbled upon it in my quest to extend my teaching repertoire. Teacher education programs do
not focus on caring and moral education. This is also not surprising, because caring in teaching and learning is valued less than assessment, despite the existence of strong connections between self-perception and student engagement, motivation and learning outcomes (Caraway et al., 2003; Fan & Williams, 2010; Walker et al., 2006). Perhaps the term ‘caring’ as used in education needs clarification as to meaning. Caring is a complex process, not so much what teachers feel as what they do, i.e., caring equates to action not emotion (Martin, 1995; Nodding, 1988).

Research Question Two

The second research question for this study was: “How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the Schoolhome Instructional Design?” This question sought to learn what the teachers and administrators discovered by reading the synopsis and seeing the video of the Schoolhome and also how they felt about this instructional design. Understanding the opinions of the participants is important in determining whether implementation of a Schoolhome Instructional Design, in whole or in part, is possible. The responses to this question fell into two central themes: Tradition and Classroom Atmosphere. Within the theme Classroom Atmosphere, two sub-themes emerged: Physical Layout and Home-Like Environment.

Tradition

Tradition as a theme emerged because participants in their responses were comparing what they saw to a traditional classroom, i.e., what a ‘normal classroom’ has always looked like.

In the post-survey, teachers were asked for their observations of and reactions to the Schoolhome Instructional Design. One question was, “Why do you think the Schoolhome is considered a ‘caring model’?” When answering, teachers compared what they saw to a traditional classroom model. For example, Mr. Cabo, a middle school technology teacher with 13 years of experience, made the following observation:
Students are not forced into traditional classroom set-ups, not so rigid, other real experiences are incorporated into the classroom, students get to care about the Schoolhome and become part of the experience. Students are not merely part of the audience.

Ms. Young echoed this sentiment, observing that the Schoolhome “…clearly functions as a family would as opposed to the didactic, traditional classroom…” In their responses, both teachers compared the Schoolhome Instructional Design to what would be found in a traditional classroom, which they described ‘rigid’, ‘didactic’ and where students become an ‘audience’.

In the Schoolhome Instructional Design, the students had the freedom to comfortably sit and relax without being told what to do and when to do it, could get food or play with the pet or go to the restroom, all without asking for permission. They also felt comfortable enough to ask for help when needed. They organized and used the classroom space to sit around and eat and play and converse with each other about any topic, welcoming everyone, thereby enhancing an atmosphere of comfort, caring and concern like that of a family, as Mr. Cabo and Ms. Yong commented upon. To Brofenbrenner (1979), the family and the school are the most influential and lasting influences upon the child’s social development, enhancing cognitive and emotional skills and enabling them to navigate the other social environments. The Schoolhome Instructional Design prepares the students for a future in the real world by creating multi-directional relationships as the basis for a child’s cognitive and emotional growth.

Administrators gave similar responses when describing their observations of and reactions to the Schoolhome Instructional Design. For example, Mr. Long said:

You're describing two different organizational systems in my mind. You have the factory-model approach, which is very regimented: rows, and desks; students sitting in a
certain manner, with a certain posture, and with understood expectations - that's how our educational system (Western) trains you, for a lack of a better word. The untraining of that is fascinating to me; to see how students can be untrained and taught to adapt to new types of behaviors, of learning.

In his comment, Mr. Long highlights the different ways of learning between the Schoolhome Instructional Design and traditional classrooms. It is interesting that he defines learning in a traditional classroom as ‘training’ and sees a clear difference in how learning occurs in the Schoolhome Instructional Design, via participation rather than reception. As Chomsky (2004) said, students are not an audience but rather a participatory community. Freire (2002) and Hawkins (1973) would agree, since they believed that the unidirectional flow of information, from teacher to students inhibits students’ versatility and expertise by limiting opportunities to question and share.

Mr. French, the English, social studies and reading administrator at the high school level who has career military experience, described the work being done in the Schoolhome Instructional Design as follows:

It’s not just like: "Hey, we're going to do group work right now", because we are used to receiving direct instruction. You know what I'm saying? In your model, there was a natural part rather than like "I'm going to do group work today", where it's like a change from the norm [instead of an integral part of the class dynamics]. I'm not sure if I'm making sense.

Mr. French’s comment focused on the lack of direct instruction and noticed that the work seemed to flow and was integral to the classroom purpose. Mr. Pierce similarly commented, “In any classroom, the agenda is set by the adult. The expectations are that students are going to follow
the adult instruction and keep pace with the activities and tasks and work being done in that environment.” He later went on to compare this traditional approach to what he saw in the video, commenting “I'm really, really intrigued by this; I love what I'm seeing in the video in terms of students working independently, respecting the environment and each other.”

Mr. Pierce noticed that the students did not wait for directions but had assimilated what needed to be done and did it. They had assumed responsibility and taken ownership. As Martin (1995) asserted, by incorporating the caring curriculum in the classroom, specifically adding comfort and ideal home values, students gain independence, security and ability to take risks.

While other participants commented on the design, Mr. Pierce went further, noting how the students were respecting the environment as well as fellow students. He observed the environment influencing students to interact with it and each other in a respectful way. Democratically assigning chores to each other and doing them together as well taking care of the pet encouraged their interaction, collaboration and sense of belonging leading to the mutual respect participants were seeing. The Schoolhome Instructional Design expanded Hawkins’s (2002) It (the subject matter) to encompass the environment, which Mr. Pierce not only noticed but ‘loves.’

Before the Schoolhome Instructional Design had been set in place, I had envisioned a comfortable family-like classroom in which the students would be given options, support, direction and help. I had to let go of the control, be flexible, welcome suggestions and trust the students. As a facilitator, prior to the Schoolhome Instructional Design, I set the overall goal, planned in detail the various ways the learning might unfold, considered the many ways students might proceed to their own learning goals within the overall goal. Consistent with Montessori’s (1964) theory, I planned to maintain an unobtrusive role in the classroom, conceptualizing an
environment and method that would encourage self-discipline and emphasize both cognitive and social development, since the students would choose their work and set their own learning pace. Thus, a facilitator role is very different from that of the authority role where the teacher is always in control and uses methods like lecture, overseeing group work, with all methods primarily unidirectional.

The three administrators quoted above (Long, French, Pierce) all saw a distinct difference between the Schoolhome and other classrooms they had experienced. The greatest difference each noted was the teacher’s role change from authority to facilitator, which they described as ‘fascinating’, ‘a change from the norm’ and intriguing – all positive reactions.

The teachers and administrators concurred in their descriptions of a traditional classroom as one in which students lack choice and agency, unlike what they saw in the Schoolhome video. Some focused on the students making decisions. Ms. Hurt, the music and business department administrator with a doctorate in educational leadership and 15 years of educational experience, noted: “But here within this model, they were choosing where they can sit, when they can eat, who they sat with, when they were getting their work accomplished.” In contrast, Ms. Macbride’s comment focused more on the teacher enhancing student’s independence:

I saw the teacher as engaged with the students in a different way: allowing them to be proactive and blending; you know, blending in with the learning where you were facilitating or supporting the learning that was going on. But it was in a different manner: you were at their level, being on the carpet with them. It just created a different structure.

Overall, the emphasis on the difference between a traditional approach and the Schoolhome Instructional Design is one theme emerging from teachers’ and administrators’ descriptions of their reactions. Ms. Macbride, who commented about my sitting on the carpet with the students,
was noticing what Martin (1995) would have seen as meaningful engagement. Freire (2002) saw the disposition to listen to others as democratic; he also said that speaking with and to learners is difficult but pleasurable. As the teacher being described on the carpet interacting with students, I can attest that it was both engaging and pleasurable.

**Classroom Atmosphere**

Classroom Atmosphere, the second theme, is an abstract quality, a component of the environment which is the context in which the teacher and students interact. The post-survey distributed to teachers contained questions about the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design delivery style, the difference between the *Schoolhome* and the teacher-participants’ classrooms and what caring behavior was seen in the video. Similar questions were also asked during administrator interviews. By questioning the style of delivery, classroom design and caring behavior, I sought to elicit focused opinions about the context of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Two sub-themes emerged from the responses: Physical Layout and Home-like Environment.

**Physical layout** was the first subtheme of the Classroom Atmosphere. When comparing the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design to their own classrooms, seven of the ten teachers concentrated on the physical layout of the classroom and its impact. For example, Ms. Crawford noted that the “classroom had different types of seating, appliances, the class pet, and carpeting.” Ms. Tillman also noted “Carpet, seating, sink, cooking appliances, pet” as key classroom differences, as did Ms. Henderson who saw the room as offering choice: “… there was a rug set up in the room where students could sit and work when working on individual material…” More comments about the physical layout were made when teachers were asked why they thought the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design was considered a caring model. For example, Mr. Cabo said, “Students are not forced into traditional classroom set-ups, not so rigid…” Implicit in his
comment is that students are experiencing more freedom in the *Schoolhome*.

Montessori (1964) asserted that even the furniture has an impact on the child’s development, e.g., having child-sized furniture to ease changing places and positions. To expand upon this idea, having a rug on the floor and pillows encourages a more informal, relaxing environment which lowers the barriers between the students and teacher and encourages conversation and collaboration. The teacher-participants’ comments seemed to corroborate Montessori’s (1964) belief that the environment has a strong impact on the child’s growth, that the teacher needs to prepare the classroom for learning.

That the physical layout of a classroom can impact the teacher’s connection with students was voiced by Mr. Dickerson, a social studies middle school teacher with 19 years of experience: “During class she was moving around the room and sitting down next to them to talk.” Ms. Ricardo, a social studies high school teacher with 18 years of experience, made a similar comment, “The teacher circulated and consulted with students.” Yet another teacher noticed the “Teacher on the floor working one on one with students…”.

In these comments, the teacher is seen as freely moving through the space and connecting one-on-one with the students, modeling trust, freedom and democracy. According to Palmer (1998), good teachers have the talent to connect and be vulnerable which Hawkins (2002) might describe as a lending of the self to students. In such a space, students become socialized into ways of behaving democratically. For example, I eased our teacher-student communication by, having the students ask questions of me and each other which broadened breadth and depth of the possible questions and answers. It also inspired creativity, independent thinking and problem solving. The focus was on students learning and not on the teacher teaching (Rodgers, 2006)

Administrators also recognized how the difference in the *Schoolhome* Instructional
Design layout influenced the interactions among the students and teacher. For example, Mr. French noted that “Kids are sitting wherever they want … there’s a degree of fluidity. The classroom was appealing; the environment is not just limited to the instructional setting, but it seemed to transcend that.” Ms. Macbride articulated the importance of the physical space of the classroom to the comfort of the students. According to Montessori (1964), the environment creates the opportunities for cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skill development.

Both teachers and administrators also identified the ways in which the physical space of the classroom differed in comparison to their experiences of traditional classroom settings. Administrators especially noticed and commented upon the inclusion of home-like items like the appliances and the pet as differences. Like the teachers, administrators used words connoting freedom: ‘fluidity’, ‘not limited’, ‘not forced.’ In a traditional classroom one will find group- or row-seating configurations, in marked contrast to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design which was configured into sections (cleaning; food; pet; rugs, pillow and comfy seats; desks and chairs). Such an environment encourages interaction where, as Hawkins (1973) said, teachers find many ways to interact with students until their interest is captured and they seek meaning, and only then will students attain autonomy and gain the dignity which results from self-respect and being respected.

**Home-like environment** is the second sub-theme of Classroom Atmosphere. Martin (1995) theorized that by adding the 3Cs to the 3Rs, the learning environment would contain some of the comforts and values of an ideal home and encourage peer collaboration, independence and student choice. Martin (1995) also suggested that the *Schoolhome* could recreate a community characterized by love and belonging and rejecting stereotypes using domestic chores.
Post-survey data showed that eight of the ten teachers focused on the strategies they saw being used in the *Schoolhome* video, e.g., changing seating arrangements to facilitate student interaction and use of group work. Ms. Tillman stated that she uses “many different seating arrangements … I also change the physical space frequently.” She cited the use of “different family groups [that] change each month [doing] cooperative learning, group assessment and problem solving as well as peer tutoring.” A similar classroom set-up was described by Ms. Henderson, who said that her students were “seated in groups of four to aid in collaboration.” She also said that she used “activities … to help encourage collaboration such as Think-Pair-Share.” These comments show that teachers were comfortable changing space and encouraging student interaction. The comparison of their own strategies to those of the *Schoolhome* showed that they accept and value these non-traditional strategies that closely relate to Martin’s (1995) caring theory, i.e., by encouraging students to collaborate and become independent learners and thinkers. According to Martin (1995), by setting these strategies in place, the classroom will be socially transformed into a community, with underlying qualities of safety, caring, self-exploration, choice and connectedness, which are crucial for teaching the whole child.

Both teachers and administrators noticed the home-like atmosphere within the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Mr. Dickerson noted, “There is a home-like atmosphere, more socially natural. Lot of good food, comfortable focus on communing with one another while learning.” Ms. Henderson also referenced the home-like environment, saying “The goal was to try to make the environment like home and with everyone having a chore in the class…” Several commented on the connection between chores and the home-like environment. For example, Mr. Robinson said, “They worked on projects as a team, as well as collectively taking care of their learning space; vacuuming, dividing the chores, caring for ‘Biscotti’.” This connection shows
that the incorporation of traditional home-like aspects (chores, e.g., washing and feeding the pet, keeping the classroom clean) can encourage a home-like environment in the classroom. Ms. Young said “The atmosphere created resembles a more home (caring) safe environment. It clearly functions as a family would as optional, opposed to the didactic, traditional classroom where everyone has a role.” The Schoolhome Instructional Design is the soil that has been prepared for the seed to grow: the students are in a comfort zone, where they are safe and cared for. Here, they do not have to impress nor be impressed. They are free to learn and in caring, a super human being is revealed academically, emotionally and spiritually (Montessori, 1964).

What teachers saw occurring parallels what Martin (1995) theorized would happen: that a caring curriculum is crucial for the child’s social and emotional development and encourages the very things missing from schools today: engagement, caring and respect for one another, development of moral behavior. Therefore, by incorporating the curricula of the home into the curricula of the school, engagement, caring and respect for others are encouraged in ways that the traditional classroom does not, and perhaps cannot do. Moreover, these behaviors were visible to the participants, as attested by their comments.

Administrators also observed how incorporating chores helped create the home-like environment. For example, Mr. Pierce said:

Having some [of the] more home-like comfort features: carpet on the floor, pillows, and things like that for kids to use; a list of chores, and students playing the prominent role in making sure that chores get done, that transitions from one task to another occur. Those, to me, are things that change the dynamic from a traditional classroom learning space where the adult typically takes on those things and where home-like features and home comfort features are less prominent.
Mr. Long enlarged upon Mr. Pierce’s observation about the *Schoolhome*’s difference from a traditional classroom. He tied the chores to classroom management, as follows:

Assigning students responsibilities to create ownership in their learning environment is a good way to organize your classroom, and also to manage students. Not only are you giving them a choice in what responsibilities have to happen when managing a classroom, now they’re taking ownership over some of those tasks.

Ms. Macbride shared Mr. Long’s sentiment about the role of chores, commenting “What I saw in your video was more of an ownership of the classroom; a different way of using the word 'chores', which is something you normally correlate to home.” These three administrators singled out the chores as important in establishing the home-like atmosphere, and also in enabling choice and encouraging ownership of the physical space. In fact, chores were seen as having an important role, teaching some skills needed for future living and fostering citizenship. Such skills are considered crucial in Martin’s (1995) educational philosophy since they are part of the child’s development and are not often being taught at home. Therefore, the school is the place where children need to be exposed to these learnings. This idea is supported by Brofenbrenner (1979) who identifies the home along with the neighborhood, the religious settings and the school as the four most profound influences upon the child’s social development.

In summary, to the second research question: “How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design?”, the data revealed that both teachers and administrators viewed the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design in a positive way. This was exemplified by participants emphasizing the physical layout of the classroom as contributing to the home-like environment they saw, and being part of the learning experience. That both teachers and administrators reacted as they did, so positively, can be seen as promising for a
future implementation of a *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Noddings (2012) advises schools to become more ‘informal’, to incorporate methods of teaching similar to those used at home. She said that schools should help students become desirable community members, which suggests that educators should provide both emotional and academic support.

**Research Question Three**

The third research question was: “What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design?” To learn about the differences should enable a more accurate assessment of the potential for implementing a *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Teachers are focused on students and curriculum delivery, and spend most of their time with the students. Administrators have a broader focus, dealing with discipline, supervision, security and safety of students and building, and budget. The successful implementation of a new *Schoolhome* Instructional Design program requires input from all stakeholders.

Analysis of post-survey responses of the teachers revealed more similarity than difference. For example, when asked if they thought the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design as seen in the video was caring, eight teachers said, ‘Yes’ and two said, ‘No’. Asked why they thought the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design was considered a caring model, four of the eight teachers reflected on inclusion. Mr. Hart said “It seems like the community that is created is owned by everyone.” Chomsky (2004) would encourage teachers to relate with students as a part of the community, and promote their constructive participation. Ms. Henderson felt “…it helped to include all students and to make all students feel included and important within the class.” These remarks indicate the teachers did see caring occurring in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Of the two teachers who answered ‘No’, Ms. Henderson acknowledged the goal of
caring but did not say whether she saw caring occurring nor did she define caring. Mr. Robinson saw the students exhibiting caring behavior by taking “ownership of their learning environment … working together, tending to classroom tasks, and taking care of the pet. They worked on projects as a team, as well as collectively taking care of their learning space; vacuuming, dividing the chores, caring for ‘Biscotti’. And the instructor clearly is a guiding part of the family.”

These remarks parallel what Kubow and Kinney (2000) describe as the qualities of a democratic classroom, i.e., students participating, making decisions, solving problems, and taking responsibility. Montessori (1965) recommended that teachers prepare the classroom to give students multiple opportunities for choice, as I prepared the Schoolhome. Once the classroom is prepared, the teachers’ role is to assist the students in their learning discovery through what Rogers (2006) called ‘presence’. This type of learning environment enables maximum choice and interaction so that conversation and collaboration can occur. Mr. Hart saw the Schoolhome as a community, while Mr. Robinson called it a family being guided the instructor, which reinforces Martin’s (1995) notion of the teacher as having a nurturing mother-role.

The teachers described additional instances of caring that showed cooperation and concern. Ms. Young noticed “Students working together and keeping each other both informed and on task.” Mr. Robinson, a high school math teacher with 18 years of experience, noted “… students working together, tending to classroom tasks, and taking care of the pet.” Similarly, Ms. Crawford commented, “Students were helping each other; students were helping their teacher.” These responses exemplified togetherness: students were taking care of each other, the teacher and the pet.
All ten teachers also saw students as engaged in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Seven described the engagement as ‘High’ and three as ‘Medium’. Those who ranked engagement as medium did not explain what was lacking nor what they thought of as medium engagement. The teachers characterized engagement as seeing students working with each other, the teacher, the pet and the chores. These kinds of engagement were also characterized as caring. Student engagement and motivation are strongly connected to learning (Caraway et al., 2003; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003), and therefore teachers need to remain aware that the social, physical and emotional needs are equally important to the intellectual needs of students (Arum, 2011; Cohen & Hamilton, 2009; Walker, 2010). These observations concur with Martin’s (1995) *Schoolhome* philosophy that the 3Cs need to be combined with the 3Rs to create a classroom in which care, comfort and connection receive equal attention to the academics.

The administrators’ impressions of the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design focused on students’ taking ownership. For example, Mr. French stated, “At a glance, it gives the kids more ownership of their own learning … it’s about kids having a greater investment when their learning becomes their environment.” Similarly, Ms. Macbride commented, “I saw some kids taking leadership and ownership.” Ms. Hurt saw ownership as follows: “…you have to think about how each of those children are interacting with others, and giving each one responsibility and home chores…” Mr. Long saw ownership occurring also, but noticed that “… there's not only the ownership but the space also allows them to create their own learning opportunities differently.” Freedom of choice as well as responsibilities through chores - and trust - enhanced ownership and collaboration among students. The environment encouraged learning since freedom of movement and comfort enhanced students’ motivation. For Bruner (1996), learning is a social activity and is contained in and part of the environment. Within the environment there
are multiple opportunities for connection. Years of research have shown that the more opportunities provided for students to connect with each other, their teacher and the subject matter, the more likely they are to reach academic goals (McClennen et al., 2012). In the Schoolhome Instructional Design, the environment provides these kinds of opportunities.

When administrators compared the concepts of the Schoolhome to their own learning experiences, four (Mr. French, Mr. Long, Ms. Hurt, and Ms. Macbride) were analytic, reflecting upon the strengths and weaknesses of the model. One administrator, Ms. Macbride, showed a deeper understanding, but revealed that her own successful experience with other methods prevented her from fully embracing the Schoolhome. Her comment illustrates the presence of the generation gap that can hinder acceptance of a new teaching method (Fear & Doberneck, 2004).

The barriers between students and teachers, older and younger teachers, and novice and veteran teachers, are often described as generation gaps. However, this is not the only explanation. There are reasons other than age difference, e.g., training and learning (teachers teaching the way they were taught), teacher’s personal history and varying experiences. However, Ms. Mcbride also identified the Schoolhome strengths and weaknesses she saw:

We all know that students learn best when they are comfortable in the classroom; how we achieve that can take different ways, whether it's the aesthetics of the room, whether its group work, or a lecture. So I think different content areas, in essence, get to that model, if that makes sense?

Ms. Macbride’s response showed that her belief that different disciplines reach the essence of the Schoolhome Instructional Design, but she does not explain the ‘essence’ nor how it is reached. Throughout the interview, Ms. Macbride continued to reflect on what she observed in the Schoolhome Instructional Design, without specifically connecting to her personal
learning/teaching experiences. Similarly, Ms. Hurt discussed the *Schoolhome* analytically, especially noticing opportunities for choice:

But here within this model, they were choosing where they can sit, when they can eat, who they sat with, when they were getting their work accomplished. They knew they had to do it, but they had choices when to do it; and those choices are very important to any child, but particularly children at this age.

Ms. Hurt focused on the importance of choice as did Andreotti and de Souza (2008) who recommended providing opportunities for students to think for themselves and then choose what to do, placing the responsibility of the decision upon the student. Doing so prevents one of the ‘limit-situations’ described by Freire (2002) where the teacher determines what is taught and how it will be learned. The *Schoolhome* Instructional design enabled maximum choice so that students could develop skills like ownership and agency, qualities that Martin (1995) considered essential for the child’s future.

Mr. Pierce compared what he noticed to his own personal learning experience in college in order to understand this unfamiliar teaching model. Montessori (1965) theorized that people build their understanding of the world by reflecting upon their experience. Mr. Pierce remembered his need to learn to be independent in study behaviors which he accomplished by observing other students studying in the common dorm space. He said:

I needed some adult behaviors; I had to learn them regarding that kind of independent study. Here, it's been modeled and kids are actually able to achieve that. I find that really stirring for me as an educator.

Mr. Pierce continued by relating a recent learning experience involving golf, explaining his use of prior knowledge (baseball techniques) when learning the new skill of golf:
A student's experience should always include that kind of thing where somebody who is knowledgeable gets to ask them: What do you want to learn? Which is another way of saying: if you've already met with struggle, what things are hard? So when kids struggle at the beginning, maybe that's necessary? If you follow it up pretty quickly with: ‘Can we talk about what things are hard?’ Then we give people permission to go ‘pfft!’ Right?

Mr. Pierce’s comment relates the need for dialogue, and for students to realize that gaining knowledge is not easy, that it takes work and struggle. When the classroom is modeled with freedom in mind, students naturally interact, thinking and sharing ideas, struggles and successes, all actions that enhance deeper understanding. To Hawkins (2002), communication is the way students gain competence and knowledge, becoming knowers. Ultimately, they develop the ability to construct their own knowledge, becoming their own teachers.

The similarities among the administrator responses were primarily characterized by comparison to traditional models encountered in their own experience. Only one, Mr. Pierce, explained his response in depth. It is possible that the other administrators (French, Long, Hurt, and Macbride) understood deeply as well, but this was not expressed in the interviews. The administrators all commented about the variety of choice-making and collaboration opportunities available in the Schoolhome Instructional Design, which led students to become more independent thinkers. The purpose of the Schoolhome Instructional Design was to create an environment where knowledge-in-action could occur (Applebee, 1996).

The survey and interview data reveal both similarities and differences between the teachers and the administrators. The notable difference was that teachers enumerated aspects of their classrooms that were similar to those portrayed in the Schoolhome video. However, one of the administrators, Mr. Pierce, focused on what he had seen in the video as follows: “… a pet …
carpet ... pillows, ... chores ... change[d] the dynamic from a traditional classroom learning space where the adult typically takes on those things and where ... home comfort features are more prominent...easy to see the difference.” Mr. Pierce’s comment spotlights how different the Schoolhome is from a traditional classroom where there are not pets or carpets, just chairs and rows and the teacher in front. In the Schoolhome, all the activities are student-centered while in the traditional pedagogy they are teacher-centered.

Both teachers and administrators pointed out parts of the environment, such as home-like comfort, family groups, peer tutoring, student agency, interaction and conversation, teacher as guide, all features conducive to learning: Martin (1995) and Brofenbrenner (1979) both pointed out how profound an effect the environment has on the learner. The Schoolhome was also seen as enhancing freedom of movement, interaction and choice, creating the kind of environment that Dewey (1938) described as a garden for growing the citizens of the future. According to Dewey, schools are the places where students make the connections that will help them become independent learners who are also able to work in teams, and Martin (1995) theorized that the Schoolhome enables freedom of choice and self-regulation which lead to independence.

In summary, to the third research question: “What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the Schoolhome Instructional Design?”, there were more similarities than differences revealed. The responses showed that the teachers focused more on the students and what was occurring in the classroom than did the administrators, who focused more on analyzing the model. Eight of the teachers felt that the Schoolhome Instructional Design was authentically caring and saw the students as engaged. The difference between administrators’ responses was the level of understanding displayed. One of the five administrators showed a deeper level of understanding regarding the Schoolhome Instructional
Design by applying the structure to his own personal learning experiences.

Administrators described the Schoolhome as exhibiting freedom, respect, choice, and connection, which they saw in stark contrast to a traditional classroom. The democratic quality of the Schoolhome was summarized by Mr. French: “there is a feeling of decentralization; there’s no sense of I’m the power figure and you are all here to listen to what I am going to tell you … there is this equal playing field.” Overall, both teachers and administrators saw students and the teacher working together in a milieu highlighting freedom of movement and choice for all.

**Research Question Four**

The fourth and final research question of this study was: “To what extent would the teachers and administrators support an implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design?” Before any change in practice or procedure can be successfully implemented, it is necessary to gauge the existing attitudes and willingness of the stakeholders to accept the kind of change being proposed. Therefore, this research question is phrased as a continuum rather than as ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, not only to assess acceptance but also to discover potential problems seen by those who were reluctant. According to Tyack and Cuban (1995), educators can contribute to change by focusing on what is possible, i.e., what pieces can be accomplished, rather than becoming overwhelmed by an entire project. The aim of the post-survey and interview questions was to determine teacher’s and administrator’s support for the implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design. The responses of both teachers and administrators generated two constraining themes: State and District Standards, and Mechanics.

There were ten teacher-participants: five middle school and five high school. Of these, five were male and five were female teachers. When the teachers were asked if they wanted to change their classroom into a Schoolhome, three of the ten said ‘Yes’ while seven said ‘No’. All
ten, however, would incorporate some components of the Schoolhome Instructional Design.

No teacher-participant rejected the Schoolhome outright.

The three teachers who would fully implement the Schoolhome explained their reasoning as follows. Mr. Cabo said: “I already think my classroom has many features of this approach - but I like - for instance - the idea of students articulating and leading others through the assignments and tasks. I would like to personalize the room for the students and our specific needs.” Ms. Crawford, seemed to agree, saying: “Giving the students more comfort will help them be more productive. Some students like to sit, others prefer standing. I think the Schoolhome model makes children feel like the learning is in their hands and not institutional.” However, Ms. Ricardo, would: “… introduce some aspects of comfort to the classroom...not necessarily the chores as much.” These three emphasized the positive aspect of personalizing the room to increase comfort, and providing choice to assist students to become independent learners. In such a context as the Schoolhome Instructional Design, the object (It) that the child was contemplating became foremost rather than the teacher’s personality (Hawkins, 2002). Students learned to interact with the subject matter and also with the classroom physical space as if it were their own. They also learned to share the space, take care of it and practiced interacting in the small society of the classroom.

State and District Standards

Of the seven who would not adopt the Schoolhome Instructional Design in its entirety, each expressed appreciation of the style but expressed concern about the impact of New York State and District standards and assessments and also space and safety issues. All these are ‘limit-situations’ (Freire, 2002), which pose obstacles to development and are linked to the educational thinking and century-old buildings that fail to meet students’ 21st Century needs.
(Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). However, according to Freire (2002), people can accept limit situations or they can take action to change the limit situation. Before change becomes possible, teachers and administrators need to become aware of the obstacle and endeavor to see beyond it. Still, the grip of tradition and habit is strong (Martin, 1982).

Required assessments have a strong effect on what and how the teacher teaches. For example, Mr. Dickerson said: “… it would be nice to do but would be difficult with the space I have and knowing how much content I have to teach.” Mr. Robinson also worried about losing instructional time for content, stating “I barely get through the curriculum now …”

Ms. Henderson and Mr. Franklin, both science teachers, discussed the environmental requirements, noting the lack of space and the additional safety requirements of the laboratory. Ms. Henderson added: “I don't see this being feasible in a high school setting”, referring to lunch and free time being used for chores. Mr. Franklin said: “I do not believe I could achieve all of the goals I have for my students with the Schoolhome”. However, they both said they liked the idea and some of the components of the Schoolhome. Mr. Robinson specified the state standards, explaining:

I noticed you used lunch and after school as the time for students to do chores. I use both of those times for students to receive extra help. I'm not sure I could sacrifice that extra help time for Schoolhome time. Also, I have difficulty covering all of my curriculum in the allotted time before the NYS Math exam so I definitely couldn't use class time for the chores.

These teachers liked the aspects of comfort and they liked the Schoolhome Instructional Design, but they believed the model would require too much time for chores and the pet. The physical classroom itself presented issues, and existing time schedules also were seen as
prohibitive. Mr. Robinson’s comment seemed to validate Hawkins’s (1973) assertion that being attached to the existing institutional framework further promotes standardization. Freire (1998) stated that “critical reflection on practice is a requirement of the relationship between theory and practice” (p. 30). Freire (1998) asserted a necessity to be activists and question those practices that are constraining. Freire (1998) believed that “…teacher preparation should go beyond the technical preparation of teachers and be rooted in the ethical formation both of selves and of history” (p. 23). Freire’s (1998) ideas are essential in light of educators having the most powerful socializing influence on the students.

Mr. Hart would not adopt the Schoolhome Instructional Design because, he said, “I think I adopt many of the philosophies but my own style of creating community and having students help facilitate the classroom works for me and for them.” His comments seem to indicate a negative response to the model but not to the philosophy upon which he believes it is based and which he suggests he is using in a different way. However, he did not discuss in any detail his own style nor provide any examples of ‘facilitation’. Mr. Hart’s comment seemed to indicate complacency, a resistance to change that has a negative impact. When a teacher believes that there is nothing more to learn, it may be due to a failure to understand the rationale of the proposed change (Saraswathi, 1991, as cited in Bailey, 2006). Educators have a central role as agents of social change for the students. It is the educators’ duty to hone and use their skills and knowledge to lead and inspire these future citizens.

Foremost among all the teachers’ concerns was covering the curriculum, one result of being required to meet state standards and prepare students for state assessments. Their comments focused on their existing situations and whether they could fit in one or another feature of the Schoolhome Instructional Design. Freire (2002) suggested that teachers should
question the practices that are limiting and ultimately restricting students’ growth. Neither teachers nor administrators moved beyond naming the limiting situation to convey a realization that it was affecting their practice, nor did they seem to question whether and how the situation could be changed.

Figure 3 displays summary information about teachers’ openness to change. Thirty percent of the middle school teachers were able to change their classroom set up and saw a Schoolhome as possible. Twenty percent saw neither the ability to nor the possibly of such a change. Only ten percent of the middle school teachers desired such a change, while 40% did not. With respect to the high school teachers, 20% had the ability to change, while 40% saw no possibility for a Schoolhome Instructional Design in their teaching assignments. Only 20% of the high school teachers would desire such a change; 30% would not. The contrast between teachers seeing the possibility of a Schoolhome Instructional Design in their practice and the desire to change to a Schoolhome Instructional Design is revealing. All the teachers see a possibility but only 30% have the desire to make a change. With regard to participation in teacher action-research, 60% of all the teacher-participants expressed interest, while 40% were not interested, indicating a lack of strong interest in experimentation, but experimentation is crucial to the change process.
Administrators were asked similar questions to determine what problems they anticipated for teachers and for themselves and how they might support the Schoolhome Instructional Design implementation. Administrators shared the teachers’ concerns regarding learning standards and assessments. When asked what problems they foresaw with implementation, Mr. French said:

There are certain things that I don't think you can shy from; for example, if you've got graduation requirements, and there are certain standards that have to be done. I'm going to take the extreme example: you've got a math class; you have to learn the quadratic equation. Can that happen in a Schoolhome community where everyone is on a Web Quest? I don't know.

Mr. French was concerned about standards but even more about the Schoolhome Instructional Design working for higher level classes. He seemed to think that complex concepts such as
advanced mathematics could not be done through a webquest. However, Montessori (1965) contended that for complex tasks, checklists and rubrics can help students and teachers determine whether the objectives of the lesson were met and also encourage independent thinking.

Both Mr. Pierce and Ms. Macbride spoke about assessments. Mr. Pierce mentioned difficulties of the Schoolhome with respect to assessments, which he said “are going to need to be largely very individualized, or are opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. They're going to need to allow for individual expression of that.” His comment questions whether and how both state assessments and individualized assessments can be met within the Schoolhome Instructional Design. Macbride also expressed concern about assessments:

There's these things that we have in place; the result, obviously, is formal assessment from the state. But we also have these policies in place in our district that want communication with parents once a week about how our students are doing.

Ms. Macbride saw two problems: meeting the formal assessment and the time intensive district policies requiring weekly communication with parents. She saw these hindering the application of a Schoolhome. Ms. Macbride was concerned that there were not enough hours in a day to run a Schoolhome while attending to all the other duties.

Both teachers and administrators seemed to appreciate the Schoolhome Instructional Design and its potential for enhancing the 21st Century Skills, especially civic literacy and citizenship, social responsibility and ethics, technology literacy, initiative and critical thinking. The main issues they raised were the extra time required to meet the standards, and space enough to add the Schoolhome comforts. Freire (2002) believed that education should be liberating, with students participating in the learning process. When instructional time is consumed by the multiple standards and required assessments of the ‘central authority’, both students’ and
teachers’ freedom to explore is constrained. According to Dewey (1938), it is in the participation, a reciprocal give-and-take, that the child’s development occurs.

**Mechanics**

Both teachers and administrators questioned what the implementation of a *Schoolhome* Instructional Design would look like for different classroom settings. For teachers, space restrictions were a major issue. For example, Mr. Hart saw “Student/teacher ratio and space” as hindering a layout change explaining, “My classroom is rather small to begin with and I can barely fit the 24 desks that I need in that room…There really isn’t space for a separate flexible-seating area…” Ms. Young highlighted a similar problem: “It may be possible but with almost 30 kids in a classroom it is very difficult. I don’t think I have the space for desks and a rug area…” Ms. Ricardo’s space problem was the lack of her own classroom: “In some of my co-teaching classrooms … I have to share space with other teachers and can’t move too many things around.” To summarize, to these teachers’ issues, space issues include room size, large classes and room sharing. Here, the teachers focused on the existing space limitations and did not question whether and how the classroom could be differently organized.

Another facet of mechanics involved implementing the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design for various grade levels and subject areas. For example, Ms. Henderson liked “the idea of a Schoolhome but am unsure that this is realistic in a high school science class…I don’t see this being feasible in a high school setting…” Ms. Henderson was resisting a change to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design because of the size of the classrooms and the amount of curriculum she needed to cover in order to prepare students for end-of-the-year for Regents examinations.

In such areas as science, technology and music performance, the room itself presented
configuration issues, which hindered the ability to change classroom set ups. As an example, Ms. Tillman said “My class is performance-based rehearsal class … A rehearsal is very different than a traditional academic class.” Myers (1995) named structure as one of the inhibitors of change. For Ms. Tillman and Ms. Henderson the challenge will be to see the possibility of incorporating a home-like atmosphere of the Schoolhome Instructional Design, like adding a rug or having a microwave, even in a space like a laboratory.

Administrators shared similar concerns regarding the mechanics of implementing the Schoolhome Instructional Design in classrooms. Mr. French acknowledged that implementation would look different depending upon the grade, explaining that:

… the level and complexity of where the kids are at … might create some additional challenges to letting the kids run the show with their peers … when you're getting introduced to something; you can give them license to roam, and interact. It makes it easier to monitor because the monitoring does not require a level of depth as you would need for someone doing very, very complicated [work].

Similarly, Ms. Macbride said implementation might be easier at certain grade levels than others:

I think that the full model could be implemented more at the middle school level … that's why we have teams in the middle school. We're aware that students learn differently in the middle school: their behavior, their need for that home feeling. I think you can take components of that and infuse it into a high school room. I don't know if you can do a full out; I wouldn't say I'm against it, but I'm saying I don't know how you can.

Mr. Long also saw the Schoolhome as best suited to a middle school saying, it: “does lend itself more akin to that middle philosophy…the upper secondary grades [are] fairly departmentalized, a predominant lecture-driven, teacher-driven delivery…more difficult to move up”. These
comments show how teachers’ training and assumptions preclude seeing the potential of the *Schoolhome* for different levels and, thereby create a limit situation.

Sarasin (1999) said there are “specified patterns of behaviour and/or performance according to which the individual approaches a learning experience; a way in which the individual takes in new information and develops new skills” (p. 1). According to Gardner (2004), educators need to adapt the curriculum to the students’ multiple intelligences that he believed described the human capability and is true for the teacher as well as the student. A *Schoolhome* Instructional Design uses a learner-directed approach where the entire student is considered, finding their own motivation, increasing autonomy and cooperation in an unthreatening and non-competitive way. Additionally, Hawkins (2002) asserts in his *I, Thou, It* framework, that the educator has to enable students’ capacities to reach their full potential – at all levels. As Gardner (2004) explains, the educator’s role is to facilitate and guide students’ participation in their own learning.

Another issue of mechanics is that of resources. Ms. Hurt wondered about how department resources could play a role in determining the ease of program implementation. She stated “…I don't know if there will be money to afford to do those kinds of things like furniture, rugs, and food.” Teachers here show a disconnection with the community; they could reach out to the community and to various organizations to gain funds and grants to recreate the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design environment.

In addition to classroom layout and available resources, there was also the mention of the initial time required to set up such a classroom. For example, Mr. Pierce explained:

… When you first do this there’s a tremendous amount of how-to learning on the part of the instructional designer that happens upfront. The more adept you get at it; I imagine
that it would become slightly easier but there's still a really challenging teacher role to play.

Mr. Pierce pointed out that a Schoolhome would bring many challenges. Again the focus is on barriers to the Schoolhome Instructional Design implementation.

Ms. Macbride also mentioned the role of time with respect to program implementation:

Your time went beyond the school day, which creates a dynamic change for the educator.

If you're in the classroom and you give a test, you can check it and you can use that. We all know that time is our valuable resource and there's never enough of it.

The administrators focused on the constraints of course level, time and assessments.

Martin’s (1995) Schoolhome allows considerable flexibility enabling modification for specific teaching contexts and learning needs. The challenge will be to discover what can be done instead of being overwhelmed (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Among the administrators, none used the issue of mechanics as a reason to discourage adaption of various Schoolhome aspects. Their comments seemed to indicate a belief in the value of the model but also an awareness of the need for careful thought prior to any implementation.

In summary, to the fourth research question, “To what extent would the teachers and administrators support an implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design?” the data revealed that the level of support varied among and between the groups. Among teachers, three of the ten supported full implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design, but partial implementation was supported by all ten. However, most the teachers agreed that the Schoolhome Instructional Design would not be appropriate for all levels and/or all subjects, and that space and time were obstacles to be overcome.
Finally, the main difference observed when comparing teacher and administrator responses regarded implementation. All ten teachers were willing to adopt features of the Schoolhome Instructional Design but in varying degrees. Administrators did see the value of the Schoolhome Instructional Design but were more hesitant about implementation, stressing their concerns about meeting required standards and assessments. The administrators’ broader responsibilities may be one reason for their greater hesitation when compared to the teachers.

**Summary**

This study sought to understand teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the care-based pedagogy of the Schoolhome Instructional Design and their openness to implementing the model. Four research questions were asked and the analysis of the data provided the following answers.

First, it was discovered that both teachers and administrators held only a basic prior understanding of caring theory. Second, upon exposure to the information packet and video, teachers and administrators described the Schoolhome in a positive way. Their comments highlighted how the home-like environment enabled students to assume ownership of their learning, and how freedom of choice and the use of chores increased opportunities for responsible behavior, enhancing citizenship skills. Third, while the overall response was positive, differences did exist regarding the specifics of the Schoolhome Instructional Design. The first difference was in the ranking of student engagement as they participated in the Schoolhome as seen in the video. The second difference was in the knowledge and depth of understanding of the caring pedagogy, as determined by participants relating the pedagogy to their own learning and experiences. The third difference was in the level of support for implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design. While only three teachers were open to adopting the full Schoolhome model, all ten were open to adapting some of its features.
Overall, the positive reactions were associated with the *Schoolhome* ideology and structure, but participants had concerns about meeting standards within the model and also about the mechanics of replication for different classrooms, subjects and levels. A sense of hesitation seemed evident throughout the majority of the responses, and it is attributed to limited exposure to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design and the theory upon which it is based.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the participants’ knowledge of caring theory and intent as well as to understand participants’ openness to a change in their teaching methodology. In this chapter, the findings are discussed. The emerging theory, implications, limitations and recommendations are included, followed by the final conclusion.

The analysis revealed the answers to the research questions as follows. Both teachers and administrators held only a basic prior knowledge of caring theory. Upon exposure to the Schoolhome information, they reacted in a positive way with regard to ideology and structure. However, all participants expressed concern about their ability to meet state and district standards, assessments and requirements within the Schoolhome Instructional Design. They also questioned whether and how the model could be replicated for different classrooms, subjects and levels.

The Schoolhome Instructional design at the heart of this study was developed to incorporate both intellectual and moral (culture of the home) education. The curriculum was delivered using a problem-based webquest requiring student-directed learning. The moral curriculum incorporated the values of an ideal home because “when school is ‘home’ classmates are seen as family …” (Martin, 1995, p. 177) and the classroom will be socially reconstructed into a community. Following is a discussion of the findings specific to each research question that guided the entire study.

Research Question One: “What are the teachers’ and administrators’ knowledge and understanding of the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome with regard to theory and intent?”
The first research question sought to determine the participants’ prior knowledge and understanding of the *Schoolhome* caring theory. Data revealed that the majority of the participants had little or no prior knowledge. However, interacting with the information packet of the *Schoolhome*, provided them with an experience of the *Schoolhome*. The majority of both teachers and administrators asserted they did have a basic understanding of *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. They were also able to compare activities within the *Schoolhome* to those that they had done or seen in their own experiences. Dewey (1963) theorized two criteria of experience. With respect to the first criteria of continuity, the stored past of teachers and administrators did influence their opinions about the *Schoolhome*. As for the second criteria of interaction, teachers and administrators carried the experience of the video of the *Schoolhome* forward to their immediate futures in their responses to surveys and in interviews.

The lack of prior knowledge regarding the caring pedagogy was disadvantageous. Participants knew the ‘what’ of the physical layout and interactive activities, but the lack of theoretical understanding prevented them from capturing the ‘why’, i.e., the reasoning underlying the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. Their discussions and responses remained at a surface level: short comparisons to their experiences and histories. They did not go deeper to connect what they were seeing in the video to Martin’s (1995) caring pedagogy. As Irez and Han (2011) suggested, a major impediment to change is the difficulty for educators to comprehend the theoretical framework of a reform, here the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design.

In Martin’s (1995) theoretical *Schoolhome*, combining the home (3Cs) with the academics (3Rs) fosters caring and citizenship skills. As an example, keeping the pet in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design necessitated cleaning the cage, washing the pet and feeding
him, which are caring activities not usually seen in a secondary classroom. Participants commented about students working together, helping each other as they cared for the pet, the room and even the teacher, as Martin (1995) theorized would occur. However, beyond describing the activities of the Schoolhome, none of the participants discussed why these caring behaviors were different from those seen in a traditional classroom. Moreover, few teachers labeled concern for everyone’s learning or communal participation as caring. It is also unclear whether participants understood the purpose of the chores other than to clean the room, although they did notice ownership, cooperation, sharing, pride in being seen doing a job well.

While the majority of teachers and administrators were not familiar with Montessori (1964) or Martin (1995), they did discern that freedom of movement and choice within a comfortable setting helped students cultivate a sense of ownership and self-control (behavior and work). The lack of knowledge and understanding of caring theories was compounded by confusion about pedagogical methodology, e.g., equating the Schoolhome Instructional Design webquest to cooperative learning. While each of these involves collaboration, the Schoolhome Instructional Design webquest required much more individual thinking and learning and little or no teacher direction. If participants could not see this difference with clarity, the possibility of replication or implementation is decreased (Irez & Han, 2011). Having little understanding of caring theory severely limits any effort to put the theory into action. However, the fact that 13 of the 15 participants were practicing some features of the Schoolhome Instructional Design may lead them to be more open about a ‘full’ implementation. Efforts to implement the Schoolhome should perhaps focus more on ‘doing’ than on persuading, i.e., experiential learning for the teacher rather than lecture and mandate.
To summarize, answers to the first research question provided evidence that participants held little or no basic understanding of caring theory, neither terminology nor rationale. However, they did express a positive attitude toward and familiarity with some aspects of the Schoolhome Instructional Design, leading me to believe that future implementation may be supported. Even though teachers and administrators did not know the caring pedagogy, they did notice students working together and displaying civilized behavior, as both Martin (1995) and Montessori (1964) theorized would happen.

**Research Question Two:** “How do teachers and administrators describe their reaction to the Schoolhome Instructional Design?”

The second question sought to determine the initial reactions to the Schoolhome Instructional Design as presented in the information packet. Two themes emerged when analyzing answers for this question. The first theme was Tradition because many participants first reacted by comparing what they saw in the Schoolhome to a traditional classroom. In the latter, one would expect to see a teacher lecturing and students listening and completing work as directed with the teacher firmly in control. However, in the Schoolhome video, both teachers and administrators noticed students moving freely in the room, working together or sometimes alone, directing each other, choosing chores and tasks to complete. They also commented on the teacher’s role as guide and facilitator, not lecturing, assisting as needed, and even working on the floor with students. These activities were indicative of shifting hierarchies, although not described as such by the participants. With the inclusion of the 3Cs came demonstrative ease, freedom and inclusion as Martin (1995) theorized would occur. The high rapport and collaboration among the students demonstrated the increased level of socialization that Brofenbrenner (1979) anticipated.
The second theme was Classroom Atmosphere because participants focused on the overall classroom environment they saw within the Schoolhome, especially noting how the classroom’s physical layout aided in collaboration and encouraged peer interaction and tutoring. Teacher’s and administrator’s participants identified features that created the home-like environment: a pet, the rug on the floor, pillows to sit on, comfortable chairs, decorations brought from home and food to eat. They also commented about students talking to each other, setting their own pace, asking classmates for help while working on the webquest. Students were seen as engaged and exercising agency in their own learning. All these features and activities contributed to an atmosphere of lowered pressure, in which the students seemed relaxed and comfortable. Bringing home-like qualities into the classroom did encourage moral behavior and create a positive atmosphere as Martin (1995) suggested.

While the participants did not characterize the classroom they saw as ‘democratic’, they did single out the non-traditional quality of the instruction and Schoolhome classroom as contributing to choice, both individual and group. They noticed students taking ownership of their learning and commented about the focus on character development and personal responsibility. The distribution of chores, the presence of a pet, taking turns bringing snacks, the variety of learning experiences enabled by the Schoolhome Instructional Design all gave students opportunities to practice democracy as Dewey (1963) and Martin (1995) recommended. Dewey (1936) said schools should be the place where citizens of the future are taught democratic skills and Martin (1995) characterized the Schoolhome as a miniature democracy. Had participants possessed the theoretical knowledge at the conscious level, they may have been able to make this connection.
As Martin (1995) explained in her educational philosophy, socially reconstructing the classroom by adding domesticity, would reduce antagonism, and it did. Students policed their work and behavior with minimal intervention from the teacher, supporting the theory that students are more engaged when given freedom of choice among authentic tasks.

To summarize, participants answered the second research question by comparing the Schoolhome Instructional Design to what they usually saw, and they focused their reactions on the classroom environment. A review of survey results and comments given in interviews revealed a pattern of participants noting the classroom structure and then making a connection between students’ responsibility and learning. In a traditional classroom students learn what is taught, but they do not usually discover nor reflect on that experience as Dewey (1963) and Hawkins (1973) recommended. Results provided evidence that participants considered the Schoolhome Instructional Design to be a tool for creating a space that encourages independence and engagement, but they did not or perhaps could not make a connection to the caring pedagogy.

**Research Question Three:** “What are the differences among teachers’ and administrators’ responses to the Schoolhome Instructional Design?”

The reason for asking this question was to gauge the level of support from two different perspectives, that of the teachers who would be ‘doing’ the Schoolhome Instructional Design and that of the administrators who would need to support the teachers in multiple ways. Even if the teachers want to adapt the Schoolhome Instructional Design, it would require strong administrative support and agreement, e.g., permissions would be needed for appliances and pets depending on existing school policies.
While the third research question sought to examine differences, the participants’ answers actually revealed more similarity. In particular, eight of the ten teachers saw the Schoolhome as authentically caring: students were caring about their environment and each other, and the teacher was caring for the students. Here we see several examples of caring, not only by the students but also by the teacher, which shows the caring to be multidimensional. Of the two who answered no, both commented about caring for the class pet and the teacher guiding ‘the family’, so while they did not consider the caring ‘authentic’ nonetheless they commented about caring behaviors. Their comments contradicted their ‘No’ answers. Finally, all the teachers also described the students as engaged and the classroom as inclusive and comfortable.

The difference seen among the administrators’ responses was one of degree. All focused analytically on the model, e.g., one administrator noted the challenge for the teachers to do assessments, and for administrators to prepare the staff to identify what is comfortable learning, how it fits, how to address the policy and assess learning. The administrators measured the Schoolhome Instructional Design against policies that would impede it. Only one administrator connected the model to personal experience. That the administrators seemed to distance themselves from experiencing the model may be due to their positions which are one degree removed from instruction, as well as to the lack of prior caring theoretical knowledge.

Hawkins (1973) explained that the art of teaching has unfortunately become too attached to an institutionalized framework. Beck (1992), who investigated school culture, also noted the ongoing transition to a performance-oriented environment. Administrators responses reflected the concerns about performance prominence.

To summarize, there was no substantive difference among the teachers’ answers. All their comments were positive, focused on the students and the classroom atmosphere. In contrast, the
administrators focused more analytically on the model itself and what problems its implementation would encounter.

**Research Question Four:** “To what extent would the teachers and participants support an implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design?”

This fourth and final research question sought to determine the extent of support that teachers and administrators would give to the implementation of a *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. All teacher- and administrator-participants supported some level of implementation, but not full scale. Specifically, seven of the ten teachers did not want to change their classroom entirely into a *Schoolhome* but would adapt certain *Schoolhome* features.

Four of the five administrators who were hesitant about supporting a full scale implementation cited the necessity of overcoming various constraints which I categorized as learning standards and mechanics. Teachers and administrators suggested that the full model might be more appropriate for middle school students because of their age and the existing cluster structure of the core subjects. They also said the amount of time required for preparing and fully implementing a *Schoolhome* Instructional Design would take time away from delivering the prescribed content and subsequently obstruct their ability to meet the required state standards and assessments. Another hindrance raised was mechanics, such as bringing food into the classroom, keeping a pet, having appliances, sharing classrooms with another educator, and even the size and configuration of the classroom itself. Those who were reluctant to implement a *Schoolhome* Instructional Design pointed out potential problems but did not demonstrate unwillingness, and as (Saraswathi, 1991, as cited in Bailey, 2006) pointed out, these comments were helpful in uncovering pitfalls.
The *Schoolhome* Instructional Design combined Hawkins’ (1973) vision of the *I, Thou, It* relationship with Martin’s (1995) 3Cs of care, concern and connection. The environment resulting from the integration of Martin 3Cs and Hawkins’ (2002) *I, Thou, It* was apparent to the teachers and administrators who noticed learners and teacher contemplating the subject matter together. In a K-12 reality which focuses on standardization, the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design did result in an altered and democratic version of education, visible to the participants. In the knowledge society educators have to become more versatile. Tyack and Cuban (1995) stated that educators can contribute to the educational reform by focusing on what can be done instead of being overwhelmed by the apparent impossibility of the task.

To summarize, results provided evidence that while teacher- and administrator-participants were supportive of small scale implementation, they were reserved about full scale implementation due to concerns about meeting state standards and dealing with issues of mechanics. As is true for students, teachers and administrators also must go through a discovery process when innovations are proposed.

**Development of the Theory**

All the teacher and administrator study participants saw value in the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design in one way or another, and their responses were thoughtful and serious. They freely shared their concerns which were related to their positions and their experience. Their responses gave evidence that a new idea, method or program may seem wonderful, but implementation will need to be personalized.

When a top-down policy concerning educational practices and strategies is set in place and adherence required, resistance and criticism will occur. How this is met will impact the acceptance and success of the new policy. Policies may be rooted in theory which is abstract and
represents an ideal, but theories require practical application. The Schoolhome Instructional Design was my application of the caring pedagogical theory. Given the diversity of teachers and administrators, one should expect diversity of application: no two Schoolhomes designed and/or implemented will be exactly like any other. The success of an educational practice is directly linked to the practitioners’ knowledge and understanding of the theory upon which it rests.

Looking back, this study was done to discover whether my Schoolhome Instructional Design could be implemented across levels, subjects and districts. The answer is yes, but not in its entirety nor for all practitioners. The caring pedagogical theory of the Schoolhome Instructional Design was deemed valuable and valid, but its implementation gave rise to mixed reactions. Practical problems would need to be explored and solved. Since each teacher, student, school, class, subject and district is different, each problem will require differing applications of the caring pedagogy of the Schoolhome and will result in individualized designs.

Consequently, my developed theory is that the formal introduction of caring into a curriculum design is both feasible and desirable; however, the implementation of such pedagogy will take many different forms. Figure 4 is an envisionment of my theory. It represents the interactive process of changing a traditional classroom into a Schoolhome Instructional Design in which democracy is practiced and gaining knowledge is gained through the shared activity of discovery as teachers and students learn from each other, where the It is simultaneously the context and the goal, where the 3Cs are integrated with the 3Rs (Martin, 1995) and where the classroom is recognized as a miniature society (Dewey, 1936).
Dewey (1916) also said that when educators have a theory of experience, they can progressively organize the subject matter to refer to students’ past experiences and provide them with new ones to which they can connect and thereby grow. This occurred in my Schoolhome.

Implications

My theory represents an important step in increasing the knowledge about teacher and administrator response to implementing a Schoolhome Instructional Design. Findings from this project suggest teachers and administrators understood the goal of the Schoolhome Instructional Design and were open to partial implementation of the structure. However, they had reservations concerning the mechanics of implementation.

Gaining this knowledge is valuable in many ways. Upon exposure to the Schoolhome Instructional Design, teachers said they liked what they saw. They did not analyze the Schoolhome, but they did cite many of its features as positive. Specifically, they saw students
achieving, being comfortable, helping each other, finding joy and also being in harmony with the teacher. All this was occurring in a classroom that participants realized was entirely untraditional. Seeing the vitality of the Schoolhome Instructional Design may provide an impetus for adoption. In fact, one of the study participants has already contacted me to learn more about transforming his classroom into a caring and democratic space. In this case, it seems to indicate that having been exposed to the Schoolhome, even briefly, provided participants with a new experience which they found enlightening and positive and worthy of some sort of replication.

The problem for the teachers is to learn how to do caring pedagogy and for the administrators, to support the teachers. If some teachers are reluctant or are unsure, administrators and other teachers need to encourage them. What is always required is learning, preparation, assistance, and then implementation followed by evaluation, an ongoing cyclical process. It would necessitate a deep analysis of the Schoolhome: the why, the how, the what.

When beginning the process of implementing a Schoolhome Instructional Design, there must be time and opportunity for teachers and administrators to connect the design to their personal learning experience in order to gain a deeper understanding. Only with understanding can a thoughtful implementation occur. The mechanics of implementation also must be fully addressed in order for there to be buy-in. This study revealed that learning standards and mechanics caused teachers and administrators to hesitate fully embracing the Schoolhome Instructional Design. In fact, Hawkins (1973) asserted that scripts and mandates lead to more formal and controlled classrooms. Additionally, Martin (1995) said that freedom of movement and choice enables discovery; such a classroom is diametrically different from a one where students are told what to learn, and how and when.
The foremost implication is that each Schoolhome implementation will be unique but its realization will not happen unless each teacher understands the need, and applies the theory class by class. Any Schoolhome implementation should be expected to change and evolve over time for each teacher. The form will vary, but each should encompass the principals of caring, democracy and openness to change. Teachers and administrators need to ask themselves some questions: Do I care enough for my students and teachers that I keep current on new theories? Do I care enough to create lesson plans that are alive, that engage students and give them new and authentic experiences? Do I care enough to treat my teachers as they will be treating their students? Do I care enough for my teachers to support them as they attempt to grow through education and innovation? Do I care enough for my administrators to understand their constraints and needs?

In a caring- and democracy-centered classroom, students and teachers are encouraged to express what they are thinking. Dewey (1916) asserted that:

“stimulation and response are exceedingly one-sided. In order to have a large number of values in common, all the members of the group must have an equable opportunity to receive and to take from others. There must be a large variety of shared undertakings and experiences. Otherwise the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves. And the experience of each party loses in meaning, when the free interchange of varying modes of life-experience is arrested” (p. 84).

This study showed that teacher’s and administrator’s participants’ lack of the theoretical knowledge associated with the Schoolhome theory hindered their ability to envision a Schoolhome Instructional Design in settings other than that seen in the pilot video. This implies that an in-service program must be developed. Focusing on theory will be the first step as it will
explain the ‘why’ associated with the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design. It will also expand participants’ understanding so they became aware of the *Schoolhome* rationale. Once participants have a firm understanding of the ‘why’, the in-service program can incorporate the ‘how’ of implementation. For example, participants of my study shared concerns about time for planning an implementation, about time needed to meet state standards and cover curricula, and whether they could handle the logistical side of implementation (Beck, 1992) and in-service program could help them navigate these obstacles.

As Applebee (1996) asserted, knowledge must be in context and therefore, the *Schoolhome* must fit the context of those who would use it. “Knowledge-in-action looks at different perspectives, problems and possibilities. It is the thinking and doing that gives the content life and vitality. Less study about and more participate in. We need to be open minded: the curriculum should respect independent thinking” (p. 127). He went on to say that “conversation has the possibility to be dialogic allowing each voice to speak in all uniqueness and at the same time to be a part of the whole” (p. 128). These characteristics would apply to staff development programs required by profound change, which implementing the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design would be.

Students of today are very different than ever before: diverse in race, ethnicity, creed, place of birth; technologically expert, globally connected, multitaskers and more independent. Therefore, a curriculum should not only introduce the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) but also incorporate 21st century literacy skills to connect students to the real world, and incorporate the three Cs (care, concern and connection) to allow more personalized teaching. Such a curriculum will foster citizenship and democratic behavior because students’ will be involved in their own learning, and their voices will be heard. Students become motivated and
interested when they are invited to make choices and take charge of their learning experiences and their environments, to wonder and question, and to seek and give help, and Freire (2002) would agree. He pointed out that learning is neither given nor imposed; it is a collaboration involving dialogue in a free environment. This supports Hawkins’ view (1973) of moral education as engaging, not controlling, the students’ inner processes with the goal of developing their independence.

Knowledge is easily exchanged, and it becomes a communal ‘good’ that is diverse and quickly shared, given the Schoolhome environment. A person’s contribution to society is ultimately expanded along with his growth. Dewey’s (1963) theory of experience as continuity and interaction is useful even in helping educators solve issues like freedom versus discipline. In the project-based instructional design of my Schoolhome, students used skills and developed new ones as they progressed, learning to become open-minded and risk-takers, to develop connections by working collaboratively and to realize there is always more to know and more ideas and solutions to be found. The classroom is a microcosm of the society. Students learn to participate and contribute to society as they practice in the classroom.

Therefore, the Schoolhome Instructional Design seems to be a viable response to the current issues students are facing since if focuses on teaching morality and ethics as part of the curriculum (Nussbaum, 2012). By introducing these elements into the Instructional Design, not only are students given freedom of movement and choice, but they are also introduced and taught good citizenship skills and thus become armored against engaging in antisocial behavior that can result from a lack of responsibility and integrity.

The aim of a caring curriculum is to help children to develop intellectually and morally and become good members in their societies. Moral education is seen as a necessity for the
current generation to gain a solid foundation of values and ethics especially in the light of globalization and the effect of media and technologies. Schools seem to be aware of these issues and lacks students are experiencing since they are introducing activities and events that promote values in schools such us *character week* and *peer buddy club* which are meant to raise students’ awareness of the effects of their behavior, especially bullying and enhance students’ responsibility and respect for themselves and for others (Lickona, Schaps & Lewis, 2003).

Caring education can be very useful in the sense that learning and assimilating different values and morals such as honesty, respect and self-discipline can be effective in enhancing students’ abilities to make good decisions as they relate what they learn at school to their own life situations. Since the child’s immediate environment of a solid family, church setting, school and local communities has been too often replaced by a disjointed society and the virtual world of internet, the new generations are experiencing questionable realities and role models in their lives. Brofenbrenner (1979) in fact, explained that the individual is a product of many overlapping contexts in which he exists, therefore development is a joint result of the interaction of person and environment.

The results of this study led me to envision an evolved staff development program designed to expand the knowledge of caring pedagogy so that it can be implemented. To assert that ‘one size does not fit all’, holds true for teachers and administrators as well as for students (DePaulo, 2000). A comprehensive form of in-service education for both teachers and administrators would be valuable and perhaps even stimulate other innovative educational ideas, like that of my *Schoolhome* (Bigby, 2009). Perhaps it could also include a preparation program the students who would be affected by the change.
If teachers become aware that aspects of their teaching styles and classroom environments are compatible with caring pedagogy, it may encourage them to learn about the theory, and facilitate their openness to implementing a Schoolhome. Embracing the Schoolhome and Martin’s (1995) philosophy of integrating domesticity and academics will require an about-face from the traditional model, but according to Tyack and Cuban (1996), when at least part of a proposed change is familiar, its implementation will seem more incremental and less overwhelming, and the focus will shift to what can be done. If teachers can work with something that is familiar, there should be less anxiety about the change. For example, cooperative learning, is similar to the Schoolhome Instructional Design webquest and therefore, changing to the Schoolhome Instructional Design should not be too overwhelming even though the democratic piece and the logistic classroom changes are completely different.

Change requires becoming familiar with and analyzing the current situation, and then working to make things better. The past is the fundamental reference point and actions are intended to alter that past; therefore, the desire to change should be motivated by a real desire to improve the past and an awareness of existing constraints, possibilities and boundaries. When the entire school faculty desires change, they will become the force to make the system better. Moreover, new systems are bound to emerge during the change process.

To conclude, the Schoolhome was a teacher action-research innovation. This study emanated from that innovation, with the objective of determining whether my Schoolhome Instructional Design could be expanded to other subjects and levels, beyond 8th grade Italian to, for example, 9th grade science, 10th grade English, 11th grade social studies. To expand to other subjects and levels would also be an innovation and would require the kind of research skills I learned as a doctoral student. Inasmuch as half of the study’s participants were not interested in
doing action research, they may benefit from such exposure, and so I would recommend that teacher education programs include a required course on teacher action-research. Innovations theoretically based, carefully designed and assessed can be valuable to stimulate education reform.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study is important because it provides insight about teachers’ and administrators’ reaction to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, the factors that influenced their responses, and their potential acceptance of an implementation. However, an examination of the findings of this study must take the following limitations into consideration.

The first limitation is scope. The study featured only one district, and the sample size incorporated only 15 participants, thus limiting the diversity of the sample. The context was also limited, confined to one school district in a suburban area and focused on the middle and high school level, teachers and administrators. Participants were also exposed to only one *Schoolhome* Instructional Design in one class.

Second, participants received minimal exposure to the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, simply an informational packet containing a synopsis and video of the *Schoolhome* in action. In fact, time constraints did not allow the whole process of transformation to a *Schoolhome* to be captured thus limiting the informational packet.

Third, research bias presented another limitation. For this study, I conducted all interviews with the administrators as well as designing and administering teachers’ surveys with the assistance of the GFD technology liaison. Additionally, I was the teacher-researcher, creating, developing and implementing the *Schoolhome* and interpreting the data collected. In addition, the study was conducted in the environment in which I taught. It is possible that
participants altered their responses because they knew me outside of the study context. For all these reasons, there is the possibility that researcher bias has influenced the proposed study and subsequent theory.

Another limitation of this study was that demographic data about the teachers’ experience did not include more educational background information. Knowing when the participants studied or received their degrees could shed more light on their reactions to the Schoolhome Instructional Design. Teacher education programs have changed over the years, and it is possible that a lack in knowledge of recent research could have influenced participants’ responses.

Limitation also pertains to the data collection tools. There were no teacher interviews done as follow-up to the surveys, preventing the gathering of additional information. Further, the study design did not incorporate discussions among teachers and/or administrators nor were focus groups conducted.

I should stress that my study has focused primarily on the participants’ understanding of and response to the Schoolhome Instructional Design. Student perspective was not included. Even though any future implementation would be the responsibility of administrators and teachers, students’ perspectives could be valuable because they are central in any educational initiative.

**Recommendations for Further Studies**

Findings from this study suggest several directions for future research. Recommendations are developed from the data, research design, limitations/delimitations of the study or simply problems that were not addressed by the data but were relevant to the research problem. The following could add to the literature about caring, democracy and change, and to the development of future policies and practices.
To begin, considering that this current study’s participants were drawn from a suburban school district, researchers might consider additional and similar studies in alternative, urban and rural settings to gather data from more diverse populations. For future Schoolhome Instructional Design models, research could be conducted to determine their effectiveness. There could also be comparison studies of the first model to succeeding ones.

Another research suggestion would involve perspective. Since the primary data sources for this research project included teachers and administrators, future research on Schoolhome implementation might be expanded to include formalized student participation. A qualitative study might be conducted to compare achievement, motivation and engagement of students in a traditional classroom to students in a Schoolhome Instructional Design, gathering responses from students, teachers, administrators and parents. A quantitative study comparing standardized test scores of students in a traditional classroom to the students’ scores in a Schoolhome Instructional Design could be conducted. Another study could assess students’ critical thinking by analyzing writing samples, submitted throughout the year, using identical assignments, from various classes, traditional and caring-based. A longitudinal study could track students’ growth and achievement across two school years of studying in the Schoolhome Instructional Design.

Another study could replicate this current investigation to determine the possibility of Schoolhome Instructional Design usage at higher levels and in different subjects and would include formal observation of the sample class(es) and also interviews of all participants. Additional research could be conducted to compare an implementation of the Schoolhome Instructional Design between a participant considered ‘veteran’, i.e., one who has been in the profession for more than 15 years, and one who more recently entered the profession. Finally, a study could expand this research by following up participants who planned to incorporate part of
the *Schoolhome* Instructional Design, verifying by interview and observation what changes were made and why, and whether they were deemed successful.

**Conclusion**

Freire (2002) argues that education favors the powerful, that students are taught/trained to listen, memorize and echo/regurgitate teachers’ disseminated knowledge without necessarily understanding or absorbing the meaning of that knowledge. This mechanical teaching method treats students as ‘receptacles’ in which teachers deposit knowledge. Additionally, this knowledge is deposited through others’ lenses, such as teachers and textbooks. Freire (2002) contended that with such a method, classroom effectiveness depends on how much knowledge a teacher can ‘deposit’ and how ‘receptive’ students are and how they ‘perform’ on high stakes testing. Freire’s educational analysis is reflected by teachers’ and administrators’ concerns about current mandated standards and assessments and the constraints that they engender.

Caring is considered an essential element of the teaching-learning process. According to Ferreira and Bosworth (2001), teachers have a great impact on how the philosophy of a school is interpreted and transferred to students and parents since teachers are the intermediaries between the institution and the students. The students’ opinions of a teacher as caring or non-caring influences their perception of the culture of the school. Good educational programs result from good teacher performance and go beyond obtaining high scores on standardized tests, and Martin (1995) theorized that these would be reflected in students’ overall growth. In fact, a caring approach by the teacher is a most important factor enhancing student performance (Umansky, 2005). Yet, current educational reforms ignore caring and instead center on cognitive standards. Moreover, no models of caring pedagogy exist, making it even more difficult for teachers to put caring into practice. This research expands previous work in the area of care-based pedagogy.
using a research-based framework to explain teacher and administrator responses to the
Schoolhome Instructional Design and its potential for expanded implementation.

While teacher- and administrator-participants’ reactions to the Schoolhome Instructional Design were positive, they did express concerns about the mechanics of replication in their classrooms, e.g., classroom configuration, sharing a classroom, number of occupants in a classroom, scheduling issues. They also viewed state-mandated standards and assessments as hindrances, raising concern that state goals could not be met using the Schoolhome Instructional Design. As Andreotti and de Souza (2008) asserted, standardization of education is not feasible in an ever-changing, disorganized and unstable society because what society needs is to develop citizens who able to create, not just recite what they have retained from rote teaching and memorizing. Darling-Hammond (2003) asserted that districts following top-down standardized, performance-oriented policies and curricula are morally deficient because they are controlling rather than freeing both students and teachers to engage in the process of learning.

A review of the study results caused me to reflect on what change means: is it grafting something new onto what already exists, or is it a complete change? According to Hock (1999), industrial age institutions like schools have become irrelevant, unable to achieve their purpose in a diverse and complex global society. We must question whether the concepts upon which organizations are currently based are suitable or even whether they are causing problems. The Schoolhome Instructional Design is a chaordic organization, simultaneously chaotic and organized (Hock, 1999). It does not replicate an industrial-age mechanized organization design but rather is decentralized, flowing, and flexible.

The results of this study revealed that the caring pedagogy is a proposed value rather than a structure and its facilitation as a model will occur differently in every situation. What might
work for one class or subject may not work in another, and is directly linked to the practitioners’
experience and the context of the class and its students. Consequently, the theory that emerged
from this research study is that the formal introduction of caring into a curriculum design is both
desirable and feasible; however, the implementation of such pedagogy will take many different
forms. One size does not fit all.
Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

Be part of an Education Research Study

The Schoolhome

Caring

Concern

Connection

Please consider participating in my research study about the Schoolhome. It will require only one hour of your time!

Your participation is vital to the success of the study and will be deeply appreciated by me (a teacher-researcher).

Please contact Piera Camposeo at camposeop@guilderlandschools.net for more information.

This research is being conducted as part of my studies in the Department of Educational Theory and Practice, University at Albany.
Appendix B

Pilot Study Synopsis

The pilot study was a teacher-action research project conducted through the Educational Theory and Practice Department (ETAP) in the School of Education at the University at Albany. The purpose was to investigate whether a Schoolhome can positively affect student learning, engagement and metacognitive awareness. The Schoolhome, based on caring pedagogy, does focus on intellectual development, but does so by delivering the curriculum in a home-like environment incorporating the 3Cs (care, concern, connection).

The entire pilot study lasted nine weeks. The participants were 29 students in the 8th grade Italian class at White Birch Middle School. Participation in the research study was entirely voluntary, and students who participated could leave the study at any time.

To create the environment, we changed the traditional classroom into a Schoolhome. The students and I, together, decided how the classroom should look and function. We changed the décor, added comfortable seating areas, a microwave and other appliances, and welcomed a class pet guinea pig. The new environment encouraged choice, interaction, involvement and required students to do Schoolhome chores which they scheduled and completed.

We began the study by teaching one unit of the curriculum traditionally. This unit lasted four weeks. Then, we used one week to transition. The second unit, using the Schoolhome model, also lasted four weeks and consisted of a student-led webquest. There was no deviation from District guidelines for the content of the curriculum in either unit. Also, there were three major academic assessments: one at the beginning of the study, one at the end of the first part (traditional curriculum) and one at the end of the second part (Schoolhome model).
At the end of the pilot study, students were interviewed in focus groups to express their in-depth analyses of ideas about and experiences with both models. Observations and students’ reflections throughout the study were also collected with the purpose of evaluating and comparing the students’ learning outcomes, challenges and successes.
Appendix C

Schoolhome Video Screenshots

The webquests continue.

End of class reflections.
Chore organizers for the week.

Creare il calendario del mese - IZZY
Sfregare il pavimento - SOPHIE
Pulire le insegne - BRIANNA
Pulire i fornici - MILOVAN - JESSE
Pulire il bagno - FAGIO
Tutor: Simona - ANNA
Organizzare la zona computer - BELLA
Controllare i cuscini se sono puliti - LISA
Pulire i popcom - OLIVIA
Portare il gelato alla Zac - ALEX
Pulire i colletti - DINO - VICTOR
Pulire il caminetto - KAITLY
Portare il gelato alla Vaniglia - LUCA
Portare i tavapiccoli - LUIGI
Portare il bicchiere dei cuscini di plastica - ALAIN
Portare il cotone alla Zac - ANTONIO
Portare le mosche - SIMONA
Portare le banane - GINO

Biscotti gets a bath.
Appendix D

Pre- Survey (Online)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study about the Schoolhome

1. Which subject / course do you currently teach? __________________________

2. What level? (circle all that apply) elementary, middle, high school

3. How would you describe your teaching style? (circle all that apply)
   Traditional, project-based, caring-based, flipped classroom, cooperative learning, other

4. What is your teaching philosophy?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

5. Are you aware of the caring curriculum theories? Yes No
   Have you heard of Jane Roland Martin and/or the Schoolhome? Yes No
   If you are aware of these, what is your opinion?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

6. What should teachers know about their students’ lives outside the classroom? (circle all that apply)
   Hobbies/interests extra-curricular activity family circumstance talents
   economic circumstance health goals and aspirations

7. Would you be willing to trying out innovative methods in your classroom? If not, why not?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

8. Do you engage informally with your students? If so, to what extent?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

9. What is your description of a classroom at work?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
10. Should students be allowed to:
- move freely around in the classroom  Yes  No
- work with other students on assignments  Yes  No
- eat/drink while the class is in session  Yes  No
- retake tests / redo HW to increase their grades  Yes  No

11. Do students pick up after themselves without being told?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

12. Do you have extra supplies for students to use?  Yes  No

13. Do you agree with peer tutoring?  Yes  No

14. I believe that: (please circle your choice)

- Classroom environment affects students’ achievement and engagement
  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

- Student-teacher relationships affect academic success
  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

- Students should be given choices of material to study
  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

- Students and teachers should communicate freely via email at any time
  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

- Students should be encouraged to suggest to teachers’ ideas for lessons, units, projects
  Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Strongly Agree

15. If you could, would you encourage informal seating areas in your classroom?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

16. Do you encourage your students to interact with each other? If so, in what way(s)?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

17. Do you have your own classroom?  Yes  No

18. If you could, would you allow appliances in your classroom? (microwave, refrigerator)
________________________________________________________________________

19. Please answer the following questions about you:
- Male: ________________       Female: _________________
- Years of teaching experience: _________________________

Thank you for participating in this survey!
Appendix E

Post- Survey (Online)

Directions: Please read the Pilot Study synopsis first, then view the video and finally complete the post- Survey

I. The Schoolhome radically changes both the environment and the manner in which the curriculum is delivered. First, let us focus on the environment.

➤ What did you notice about the Schoolhome classroom that is different from your classroom?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

➤ Are you able to change your classroom set up?
  □ Yes.
    What can you change or add?
    ________________________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________
  □ No.
    What prevents you from changing? _________________________________

➤ Would you want to change your classroom into a Schoolhome?
  □ Yes.
    I would enjoy using a Schoolhome because _________________________
    ________________________________________________________________

  □ No.
    A Schoolhome would not work for me because________________________

  □ I just do not like the Schoolhome
    because________________________________________________________

II. Now, let us focus on the Schoolhome method of the curriculum delivery.

➤ How would you describe the Schoolhome delivery style?

  □ Traditional  □ Student-driven
  □ Project-based □ Socratic
  □ Teacher-led  □ Hybrid

➤ Why do you think the Schoolhome is considered a “caring” model?
Was the Schoolhome in the Pilot Study authentically “caring”?

What kind of caring behavior did you notice in the video?

Who was exhibiting caring behavior?

What was the level of students’ engagement in their work?

- None
- Low
- Medium
- High

III. Finally, some general questions:

You are: Male ___________ Female ___________

Number of years of teaching experience? ________________

What teaching style do you prefer?

- Traditional
- Project based
- Caring
- Hybrid -- Describe ________________________________

What level do you teach?

- Elementary
- Middle
- High School

What subject do you teach? ________________________________

Is a Schoolhome possible in your particular teaching assignment?

- Yes
- No – Why not ________________________________

Do you see yourself as a facilitator or an authority figure in your classroom?

- Authority figure
- Facilitator

The Pilot Study was a teacher action-research project done to test the Schoolhome model and it proved to be successful. Is teacher action-research something you would ever be interested in doing?

- Yes
- No

Do you think you might incorporate parts of the schoolhome model in your practice?

- Yes -- What parts? ________________________________
- No
Please use this space to add anything else that hasn’t been asked or addressed in the previous questions.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Thank you so much for participating in my study.
Appendix F

Interview Protocol

First of all, I would like to thank you again for agreeing to be part of this research study. I would like to remind you that I will be taking notes and audiotaping.

Interviewee Name: ________________________________

Position: _________________________________________

Location: _________________________________________

Date: ___________________ Time start _______ Time end__________

Interviewer: Piera Camposeo, Teacher-Researcher

A. Interviewee Background

I would like to start by learning a little about you about your educational interests. What was your major as an undergraduate? What did you focus on during your Master’s Degree studies? What certifications do you hold? What are your hobbies? Do you have children? How many? Are they in this school district? What grades?

B. Interview Questions

1. What do you know about the Montessori method? What do you think about it?

2. What do you know about the Jane Roland Martin’s Schoolhome philosophy? What do you know of other caring theories? When you hear the word caring what is your immediate response as an administrator?

3. Having now read the synopsis of the Schoolhome Pilot Study and watched the video, what is your impression of the Schoolhome? Please explain in detail.

4. How would you compare what you saw in the Schoolhome with what you usually observe? What styles of teaching do you mostly observe? Please provide examples.
5. What adjectives would you use to describe the children in the Schoolhome? The teacher? To what extent do the students seem engaged? How does it compare with other classrooms you observed? Please provide examples.

6. What problems do you foresee for a teacher creating a Schoolhome? For the administrator? What does a Schoolhome-like classroom require in the way of change? Please provide examples.

7. What value might the Schoolhome have for the teacher? For the students? For the administrators? Please explain in detail.

8. What is your understanding of teacher-research? What is your understanding about it? What kind of support might be required of you as an administrator? Please provide examples.

9. If a teacher wanted to create a Schoolhome in his/her classroom how would you respond. Please explain in detail.
REFERENCES


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