Problem:
One of the primary goals of nursing programs is to produce nurses who meet the needs of health care industries. Students are the focus of our work as educators and our goal is to educate nurses who are both caring and competent.

Evidence:
Caring is not only an important attribute of nursing, it is a driving force for patient satisfaction. In today’s health care market, satisfaction with nursing care in an important factor in rating the quality of the services received and whether patients will return as future customers. Study of caring behavior is important because students are susceptible to the attitudes of their peers, instructors and the nursing staff within the clinical agencies.

Strategy:
This quantitative study examined the perceptions of nursing students on peer group caring using Hughes, (1998) Peer Group Caring Interaction Scale (PGCIS). The PGCIS was developed to measure the climate of caring experienced among student peers. Participants were nursing students accepted into a BS Nursing Program located in the northern plains. Students were surveyed at midterm during the fall semester of 2010.

Practice Change:
Recently, nursing literature has contained many articles about the work environments that our nursing students will begin practicing in. Caring is the heart of nursing; yet caring is rarely talked about in the workplace. We apply the concept to the care of our patients, but can neglect the application of caring to our colleagues.

Evaluation:
The knowledge obtained from this research will be analyzed and results will be distributed to the nursing curriculum committee. The research concepts and findings will be translated to identify possible curriculum development needs.

Results:
The final results are pending. This research is universally relevant to nursing practice in educational settings and practice areas.

Recommendations:
This research will build and contribute to the current body of knowledge. This research will contribute positively to the nursing department’s teaching and learning environment by involving nursing students in the process. Higher education plays a special role in helping students develop a sense of civic and social responsibility and to discover ways to contribute to the common good.

Lessons Learned:
Studying caring can enhance our program quality and the end product, the nurses we educate. The graduates from our university are ambassadors for the quality of our program. They are representatives of our mission and goals.