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Teacher-Student Relationships and Their Impact on Student Achievement in School

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THE IMPACT OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS ON STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL

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Abstract

This literature review addresses teacher-student relationships (TSRs) and their impact on student achievement in school. Research was collected from peer-reviewed articles and journals on the importance of TSRs, barriers that can make it difficult to develop these relationships, and strategies that teachers can use to build strong relationships with students. Research shows that TSRs between teachers and students have a large impact on students' achievement in school. Positive TSRs increase student motivation and academic success, while negative relationships hinder students' cognitive development and desire to participate in academic tasks and routines. Students' backgrounds, their prior experience in school, and teachers' experience are some of the potential barriers to building positive TSRs that are discussed in this literature. Teachers can use strategies such as getting to know students personally and supporting their students emotionally and academically to achieve positive TSRs with each of their students.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Teacher-student relationships, TSRs, have the power to impact a students' emotions, behaviors, and academic achievement in school. Each day, teachers are presented with opportunities to impact the emotional, behavioral, and academic growth through interactions with each of their students. These interactions determine whether the relationships between teachers and students will be positive or negative, so it is crucial for teachers to be aware of how they interact with each student so as not to hinder development of a positive relationship with each of them.

With every teacher-student relationship comes barriers that complicate the connection between teachers and their students. Some barriers discussed in this Literature Review include student background, teacher experience in the field, student relationships with peers, and overall student motivation to learn and participate in class. These barriers make it difficult for teachers to build positive relationships with students. They can even negatively impact teachers' interactions with students, leading to negative relationships being built, therefore interfering with the academic achievement of the student involved in the relationship. A study by Spilt, Hughes, Wu, and Kwok (2012) emphasized the effects of negative teacher-student relationships. Students' academic achievement was hindered or nonexistent, due to conflict in their relationships with teachers.

Teachers can overcome these barriers by using incorporating a variety of strategies into interactions with students and efforts to build healthy relationships with them. By recognizing barriers and strategies that can hinder or help them in relationship building, teachers can prepare

themselves for different situations with students and feel hopeful that they will form strong bonds with their students, leading to healthy interactions and student success in the classroom. The motivational model, by Connell and Wellborn (1991); Deci & Ryan, (1985 & 2000); and Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn (2009), helps explain strategies for teachers to build positive relationships with students. It provides suggestions of ways that teachers can connect with students and interact positively, understanding each student on a personal level, so as not to be offended by negative behaviors or other forms of disrespect. Furrer et al. (2014) also offers suggestion that teachers can create a welcoming classroom to help students feel accepted and, in turn, open to participating in class activities and discussions. An uplifting and enjoyable classroom environment is emphasized as a necessary factor in the teachers' building of relationships with students.

Relationships between teachers and students can also be affected by people and experiences outside of the classroom. Studies completed by Farmer (2018) as well as Gutman and Midgely (2000) examined the impact of effective teachers' characteristics on motivation of students in the classroom, as well as the effects of student autonomy, parental involvement, and students' sense of belonging on student achievement in school. Furthermore, an investigation completed by Cook et al., (2018) revealed that strong teacher-student relationships are part of the foundation of students' positive experiences in school.

Negative relationships at home, and lack of involvement by parents, guardians, or outside caregivers, all affect students' success in school. It is the teachers' responsibility to understand students and learn about them on a personal level so they can help every student be successful in

school. Students are more successful in school when they feel that they are heard and supported by their teachers, according to Hamre and Pianta (2005).

Rationale

As an ESL teacher with three years of experience in a low-income school, I have worked with a variety of students who come from broken homes, no prior formal education experience, or have parents who have not acquired post secondary education. I have witnessed teachers forming positive relationships with their students. These teachers identified student's individual needs in the classroom, creating space and time for each student. It was evident that this method of teaching kept students engaged and excited about what would come next in their learning each day. It was also very evident to me when teachers lacked positive relationships with their students. This could be seen through the students' negative interactions with the teacher and refusal to follow the teachers' instructions. The classrooms of these teachers showed disarray as the teacher spent a majority of classroom time trying to get students to comply and complete the tasks set before them.

Many teachers are strong instructors in the classroom. They take pride in their ability to help students understand the material they are teaching them. However, when it comes to resolving conflicts with students or getting them back on track in the lesson, they may have difficulty knowing what to do. Teachers may resort to communicating their frustrating to these students, remove them students from the classroom, or bringing attention to these students' behaviors, creating discord among students in the classroom. As readers of this literature review will learn, there are more effective ways to deal with situations in the classroom.

This literature review provides teachers with valuable information to understand teacher-student relationships (TSRs), potential barriers that make building these relationships difficult for teachers, and strategies teachers can use to build positive TSR. When teachers understand TSR, they will be able to build positive relationships with students and maintain these relationships throughout the school year (Furrer et al., 2014). By recognizing barriers that can hinder their TSR building, teachers can anticipate difficulties in building relationships with students . Being aware of strategies to use when building TSR will supply teachers with a collection of resources to use when building and maintaining relationships with students (Yeager & Walton, 2011). The research provided in this literature review will help teachers gain confidence to overcome barriers in the classroom and get to know the needs of each student, as well as valuable insight into ways to strengthen relationships with students and support the needs of each student.

Definitions of Terms

At-Risk Populations: Gutman and Midgley (2000) define at-risk populations as youth with a heightened risk of emotional, behavioral, or academic challenges.

Effective Teachers: Effective teachers are able to teach their students and keep them engaged and excited to learn more.

Emotional and behavioral problems: Emotional and behavioral problems are the inability to express oneself without negative emotions or behaviors.

Manipulative Power: Manipulative power is the power of getting one to comply with instructions, by using a variety of strategies to entice them to do so.

Peer Preference: Peer preference is a preference for some peers over others (Wang et al., 2016).

Peer Victimization: Peer victimization is a child's experience of being bullied, verbally or physically by other students at school.

Self-Efficacy: Self-efficacy is one's ability to effectively complete tasks in various situations (Bandura, 1986).

Student Interactions: Student interactions are the interactions between students and their peers.

Student Motivation: Student motivation is a student's desire to attend class, participate in discussions, and complete class work.

Teacher Preference: Teacher preference is preference shown for some students rather than others.

Teacher-Student Relationships (TSR): Teacher-student relationships are the relationships between

a teacher and his or her student(s) that provide emotional and academic support

Victimization: Victimization is being singled out by others, being verbally attacked or physically attacked due to others' thoughts or feelings about a person.

Guiding Questions

Teachers can influence students in a positive or negative way. They have choices to make that may support or impede their relationships with students. This literature review focuses on answering a series of questions: **Why should teachers be concerned about their relationships with their students?** Teachers need to understand the power of positive teacher-student relationships and the positive impact they can have on student success as a direct result of their strong relationships with their students. Understanding the influence that TSR can have on students can help teachers determine the best ways to build TSR with students. **What barriers might make it difficult for teachers to build and maintain positive relationships with their**

students? It will be difficult for teachers to build positive relationships with their students. For this reason, it is important for teachers to be informed of the potential causes of these difficulties so they can gain an understanding of their students and overcome obstacles to build positive relationships with their students. **What strategies can teachers use to build strong relationships with their students?** When presented with the task of building positive relationships with their students, it is helpful for teachers to be aware of what they can do to be successful.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Why Should Teachers be Concerned?

It is important that teachers are strategic in their interactions and building of relationships with their students so that these relationships can facilitate a heightened sense of trust and confidence on behalf of the students (Yeager & Walton, 2011). Making these relationships between teacher and student personal can increase the level of student motivation in school (Farmer, 2018). Gutman and Midgley (2000) label students' belief in themselves, involvement of parents, teacher support and sense of belonging as protective factors of students' well-being in school. They conducted an investigation to explore the effects of these factors of students' success in school that was used as a follow up to a larger study that took place in southeastern Michigan. In the larger study, 22 elementary schools and 10 middle schools were included in the participant pool. Each participant was surveyed once during their final year in elementary school and once again during their first year in middle school (Gutman & Midgely, 2000).

Throughout the investigation, Gutman and Midgely (2000) were able to gather additional information from African American families of low economic status in a single district. Within the district, students attended one out of seven elementary schools and one out of four middle schools. 81% of students and families participated in the survey; 257 elementary school students and 218 middle school students (Gutman & Midgely, 2000). The results showed no direct impact of teacher support or parent involvement on student self-efficacy and academic achievement, however, students who received high levels of teacher support and parent involvement together

achieved higher grades than students who did not receive those supports (Gutman & Midgely, 2000).

A later study was conducted by Cook et al. (2018) to understand the impact of a method to strengthen teacher-student relationships. This method, known as the establish-maintain-restore method, was used amongst fourth- and fifth-grade teachers and their students (Cook et.al., 2018).Through this study and the information gathered, it was concluded that strong teacher-student relationships provide the groundwork for students experiences and learning in school (Cook et. al., 2018). It provided stronger teacher-student relationships and showed that positive teacher-student relationships can have an effect on student behaviors in school (Cook et. al., 2018). It also provides teachers with strategies for building positive relationships with their students, sustaining these relationships through the interactions they have with their students, and repairing relationships with their students that may have faltered (Cook et. al., 2018).

These relationships are jump started by teachers' interactions with their students (Cook et. al., 2018). They can encourage student growth and development of deeper engagement in academics, due to a lesser fear of risk of failure in the classroom (Meehan, Hughes, & Cavell, 2003; Verschueren & Koomen, 2012). Through the analysis of conceptualizations of teacher-student relationships and their advancement over the years, Cook et al. (2018) discovered that relationships are tied directly to the well-being of people. These relationships are the foundation of students' development, responsible for student development. (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003). If these relationships are positive and healthy for both the teachers and the students, one will be able to see a demonstration and encouragement of student development of emotional and behavioral well-being (Pianta et al., 2003).

Relationships in the revers can increase anxiety in students and lead to limited motivation in the classroom (Pianta, 1992) and thwart children's basic need for relatedness and diminish children's feelings of belonging at school and perceived academic competence, thereby obstructing motivational processes that drive academic achievement (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). The quality of teachers' relationships with their students can be measured by the level of trust in the relationship, the amount of negative interactions that take place in the relationship, and the dependency of students in the relationship (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, and Oort (2011) suggest that closeness is evident in positive teacher-student relationships, however conflict is one feature that distinguishes negative teacher-student relationships (Roorda et al., 2011).

Froiland, Worrell, and Oh (2019) discovered factors that affect teacher-student relationships and the positive effects of these relationships on teachers and their students in school. Samples of students were gathered from various ethnicities and races and studies. These studies informed researchers that the quality of teacher-student relationships were dependent on whether needs for inclusion, relationships, and feelings of accomplishment and success are met. These feelings will lead to enjoyment of students and their teachers in the classroom (Froiland et al., 2019).

Teachers' relationships with their students inform actions and reactions on behalf of teachers and students in the classroom. Teachers may become burned out as a direct result of the type of relationships they hold with their students (Roorda et al., 2011). Positive teacher-student relationships can reverse this by supporting students' learning and teaching them to manage themselves and their time wisely in school (Roorda et al. 2011) .

A sense of belonging contributes greatly to the well being and survival of at-risk students in school. This is important in supporting poor minority youth's achievement in school (Ford, 1993). Hughes, Cavell, and Wilson (2001) say the different behaviors and attitudes of teachers in the classroom may affect the culture of their classroom, as well as the ways that students will evaluate themselves and others. In addition to everything else happening in a student's life, those students who are experiencing low-economic status may find it more difficult to access school resources or get the chance to participate in educational activities, and formal education (Kozol, 1991). This continues to create an achievement gap for these students in school, making it difficult for them to be at the level they should be at with their peers (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

Teachers are the driving force of classroom culture and the establishment of norms for the students in the classroom. This informs how students and teachers behave in the classroom (Farmer et al., 2011). A teacher's body language around students, the voice they use with students, and non vocal communication with students can impact students' peer preference, affecting student to student relationships in the classroom (Babad & Taylor, 1992; White & Jones, 2000). In a study completed by Wang, Leary, Taylor, and Derosier (2016)**,** data was collected to inform about the impact of peer preference and teacher preference of students on teacher-student relationships and the effect of student ethnicity on peer victimization cases in elementary school. As part of the study, teachers rated students' behaviors, and students shared their feelings of acceptance and of being liked or disliked in school (Wang et al., 2016). The students' responses helped researchers recognize the connection between the level to which students perceived they were liked and disliked and how those same students might be victimized by their peers. Teachers' input informed the researchers of probable causes of

students' behaviors in school. Because the students were not provided with a definition of peer victimization, their responses could have been skewed by their own perception of what it means to be victimized by peers (Wang et al., 2016).

It was difficult for Wang, Leary, Taylor, and Derosier (2016) to reach necessary conclusions in this study because of the lack of access to information that would inform them, such as socioeconomic status of the students and their families and cultural perspectives of victimization. This could inform the way the data is obtained from the participants and questions that the participants would answer during the study. Gender of the students did not have an effect on the responses. Fifth grade students reported feeling less victimized than third grade and fourth grade students (Wang et al., 2016).

Students who were less liked by peers and teachers showed more victimization than students who were more liked (Wang et al., 2016). The relationships of students with their teachers were impacted by their peers' preference for students, but teacher preference for them did not have an effect (Wang et al., 2016). Students' victimization by peers also had no effect on teacher-student relationships. Of students who reported being victimized in school, it was seen that 8% of these reports occurred based on victimization in classrooms, and 92% were affected reported by students within the same classroom, according to Wang, Leary, Taylor, and Derosier (2016). White students reported more positive relationships with teachers and were less often victimized by their peers. How students reported their relationships with their teachers did not contribute to victimization (Wang et al., 2016). Peer victimization occurred more commonly among students who were less liked than students who were well liked, including Black and Hispanic students who participated in the study (Wang et al., 2016).

By the time a student reaches late elementary school, peer preference influences their feelings of victimization. This victimization can be controlled with the implementation of prevention and intervention programs to promote students' development of social skills (Wang et al., 2016). Research by Hughes and Kwok (2006) and Saft and Pianta (2001) concluded that at-risk students and economically, racially diverse students, struggle more than white students in their building of relationships with their teachers.

Through the analysis of the data collected from the students' responses, researchers were able to draw conclusions about student motivation and what triggers high motivation and low motivation (Wang et al., 2016). Wang, Leary, Taylor, and Derosier (2016) found that the level of motivation of students was affected by the teachers' content knowledge and teaching style. The study showed an impact of student diversity on motivation in school.

Minority students of low economic status and with challenges have greater potential, positive or negative, to succeed or fall behind in school (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Their relationships with their teachers are weaker than those of white students (Hughes & Kwok, 2006), making it difficult for them to engage and perform well in school (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002). By putting in effort to develop and maintain positive relationships with these students in their classroom, teachers are able to instill in them a sense of importance and belonging (Comer, 1980; Rutter, 1979). Positive and healthy teacher-student relationships emphasize comfort and approachability and work to minimize negative interaction and communication by the teachers and the students (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 1999). Positive relationships between teachers and their students can also reverse adverse effects of poor relationships between students and their parents on the way they handle themselves in

social contexts (Buyse et al., 2011; Hughes et al., 1999). This can lead to students learning to deal with difficult situations in school and develop skills for controlling their behaviors and emotions (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Pianta, 1999).

The quality of the connections a student has to school is greatly affected by the relationships that he or she has with teachers and others within their school (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). Recognizing the impact of positive teacher-student relationships sets a foundation for teachers' planning of strategies they will use in the classroom (Pigford, 2001). Teacher-student relationships that provide support of students' needs emanate mutual trust between teachers and students, teacher interest in students, and involvement of teachers in students' work and needs (Wang et al., 2016). These relationships provide a support system for students to navigate through various situations and be able to develop social skills in a school setting (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999).

On the other hand, student-teacher relationships that lack teacher involvement and visible interest in students can hinder students' ability to monitor the ways the behave in school and progress academically. This may lead to students dropping out, falling victim to drugs and alcohol, becoming violent or stealing (Rudasill et al. 2010). These students are the ones who would most benefit from positive student-teacher relationships and the feedback they could acquire from a teacher to help them in their search for themselves and the tools to navigate school well (Wang et al., 2016). As students progress through school, they rely less on relationships with their teachers (Wu & Hughes, 2015). However, it is still important for all teachers to ensure their students feel like an important part of the classroom culture as they move toward middle school and high school (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Goodenow, 1993).

Teachers' impact on student achievement can be measured by their interactions with their students and the students' outcomes, both behavioral and cognitive, based on those interactions (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). It is important for teachers to cultivate positive relationships with their students and make a conscious effort to incorporate that relationship into their teaching (Pigford, 2001). In a study completed by Lui and Meng (2009), it was concluded that students appreciate when their teachers are able to teach effectively, understand what they are teaching and the best ways to teach it, and the positive relationships that their teachers have with students that help them feel accepted and important in the classroom.

In order to develop effective teacher-student relationships, teachers need to first understand the importance of their relationships with their students before they can strategize ways to make those relationships a reality for themselves and their students (Pigford, 2001). Negative interactions between adults and students can be detrimental to students' feelings of acceptance both in school and out of school (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2014). Conversations between adults, especially teachers, and their students can aid in students' recovery from these poor relationships and interactions and help them feel accepted as an important part of the classroom and their learning so they have a desire to do well in school (Gregory et al., 2014).

Teachers' communication with students on an instructional level can positively or negatively influence the relationship that teacher will have with that student (Cornelius-White, 2007). Verbal and nonverbal communication by teachers is associated with students' affective learning (Cornelius-White, 2007). According to Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991) and Ryan and Powelson (1991), children's motivation is dependent on their feeling of connection,

success, and independence in school. This can be supported by teachers' involvement in their students' lives, through the implementation of clear structure and expectations in the classroom, as well as encouraging their students' independence and responsibility for their actions and achievement in school (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Ryan & Powelson, 1991). It creates an increase in the engagement and involvement of students in their learning, according to Skinner and Belmont (1993).

Regardless of the way teachers interact with their students, whether through instructional strategies and personal relationship with the students, the students' learning outcomes and level of understanding and motivation can be affected (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Ideally, this happens for the benefit of the students, but it can also hinder student outcomes and cause students to be stagnant in their learning or regress toward a lower level of understanding (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). Research by Bergin and Bergin (2009) shows a direct connection between parent-student and teacher-student relationships and their impact on students' ability to understand and regulate their emotions, relationships with others, and how well they perform academically. Positive relationships can repair and defend areas of the brain affected by detrimental relationships that stunted healthy brain development (Siegel, 2015).

Student engagement refers to a student's participation in school, including interactions with peers and teachers, and academic tasks, in addition their interactions with activities within the classroom (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). Behaviors, emotions and cognitive development of students play an important role in student engagement in the classroom (Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). The self-determination theory, by Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991), differentiates conscious choices for behaviors and actions and those

choices of behavior influenced by outside sources (Deci et al., 1991). Self-determined actions are those which a person thinks intentionally about before completing them. These actions are completed because of the person's choice to do so. On the other hand, controlled actions are those in which the person is motivated to complete an action by an interpersonal source (Deci et al., 1991). Teachers need to be aware of the choices that their students make in the classroom, in order to influence their relationships with their students and support them. This would be considered the concept of needs, as mentioned by Deci (1991). It brings attention to people's motivation and provides clarity of what may affect motivation, performance, and development of people (Deci, 1991).

Teachers can support their students and help to keep them motivated and engaged in the classroom if they are aware of what motivates their students. (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan, 1991). One way to build teacher-student relationships is to motivate students to learn… to want to learn (Deci et. al., 1991). Two types of motivation discussed are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci et. al., 1991). Intrinsically motivated children will participate in a task simply because they are interested in. Extrinsically motivated children require an outside incentive to complete a task (Deci et. al., 1991). In addition to being intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, students need to be aware of their ability to learn well, have healthy relationships with their teachers and other adults in their lives, and feel a sense of self-efficacy (Deci et al., 1991). All of these things affect whether or not a student makes the choice to be his or her best rather than being controlled to do so (Deci et al., 1991).

Deci and Ryan (1985) mention four types of extrinsic motivation; external, introjected, identified, and integrated. External Regulation is identified as a person's motivation that relies

heavily on outside sources to make them want to accomplish something or complete a task (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This can be seen through their motivation from receiving praise, avoidance of negative consequences, and increased motivation or work ethic due to their receipt of a reward or potential discipline (Deci et al., 1991). Introjected regulation is motivated by a person's desire to do something in order to avoid self-guilt or feeling bad about not doing it (Deci et al., 1991). Identified regulation is a person's habit of accomplishing something or completing tasks due to their personal choice to do so, motivated by positive outcomes of the same behavior in past instances (Deci et al., 1991). Lastly, integrated regulation is a personal choice to do something based on the value seen by a persons' completion of a specific task (Deci et al., 1991).

Bullying victimization is tied to lower student engagement (Mehta, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory, 2013), student achievement in school, (Nansel et al., 2001; Strøm, Thoresen), depression (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001; Fekkes, Pijpers, Fredriks, Vogels, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006), thoughts of suicide (Copeland et al., 2013; Brunstein Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007), and a decrease in quality of physical and mental health (Benedict, Vivier, & Gjelsvik, 2014; Rigby, 2000, 2001; Slee, 1995). The positive relationships with their teachers support those students who are victims of bullying and victimization in school (Huang, et al., 2018) and help deter other students from becoming bullies, increasing engagement of all students in their classroom (Doumen et al., 2011).

Teachers who have not established positive relationships with their students, or have developed negative relationships with their students, can cause negativity in their classroom environment, leading to increased aggression and bullying (Doumen et al., 2011; Reavis, Keane, & Calkins, 2010; Troop-Gordon & Kopp, 2011) or make other students victims of bullying (Shin

& Kim, 2008). Teachers play a key role against bullying and victimization of students (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). They build relationships with their students, engage them in the classroom, set expectations for classroom behavior, and model positive behaviors (Di Stasio et al., 2016; LaRusso, Romer, & Selman, 2007). Teachers are also a big part of the growth and development of their students' sense of belonging (Roeser et al., 1996)

Teachers need to be concerned about the relationships they have with their students, because they are in close proximity to situations involving bullying at school, and they are aware of problems with bullying (Newgent et al., 2009; Waasdorp et al. 2011).In a study completed by Troop-Gordon and Quenette (2010), it was found that students are aware of bullying and the victims of it (Troop-Gordon & Quenette, 2010) and they were able to recognize the difference between teachers who are concerned for victims of bullying and those who do not show any concern (Troop-Gordon & Quenette, 2010). It is clear to students when teachers are making active efforts to support these victims and deflect the bullying and when they are passively reacting to it without actual effort being put forth to change it (Troop-Gordon & Quenette, 2010). Students who viewed teachers as passively involved in bullying victimization began to avoid school and decrease their communication with their teachers about their bullying problems (Troop-Gordon & Quenette, 2010).

Being part of teacher-student relationships can help students interact positively with teachers and other students, understand how to handle difficult situations, and help students feel important to their teachers and others in school (Bagwell, Newcomb, & Bukowski, 1998).

Additionally, these relationships bring about a sense of belonging in students, increasing the work they put into tasks, attention to what needs to be done, and taking charge of their

learning (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010; Li & Lerner, 2013) and showing a deeper understanding of the material they are learning (Dupont, Galand, Nils, & Hospel, 2014). Without these engaging teacher-student relationships and the aforementioned benefits that accompany them, students' declines in performance become noticeable in both academics and behaviors (Gest, Graham-Bermann, & Hartup, 2001; Harel-Fisch et al., 2011; Ladd, 1999).

When teachers build positive relationships with their students, especially those who are the most challenging to deal with in the classroom, those students have shown less aggression and increased participation in school (Doumen, Buyse, Colpin, & Verschueren, 2011). When students don't have these relationships, they may become bullies or victims of bullying (Haynie et al., 2001). As bullies, students exhibit high behaviors that are not easily controlled. They show signs of unhappiness and are unable to control themselves when they become frustrated. They also demonstrate a lower ability to stay on task in school and achieve goals than their peers (Haynie et al., 2001).

Positive relationships between students and their teachers can guide students through the challenges of school and help them to develop positive behaviors in the classroom that will help them be successful in their learning (Roorda, Koomen, & Spilt, 2011). They can help students achieve success in academics (Wubbels et al., 2016). Correlations between positive teacher-student relationships, academic competence and achievement are commonly found (Gest, Domitrovich, & Welsh, 2005; Valiente et al., 2008; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998). Positive teacher-relationships may also shield students from feelings of doubt and unhappiness, low levels of confidence in themselves, negative behaviors and uneasiness when they experience difficulties in the classroom (Haynie et al., 2001; Juvonen et al., 2003; Yen et al., 2010).

Graham, Bellmore, & Mize, 2006, say that these things may discourage student engagement in school and achievement in their academics (Graham et al., 2006).

Psychosocial outcomes determine students' academic progress, moving to the next grade level, and keep students on a track to avoid academic failure in the future (Cornelius-White, 2007; Duncan et al., 2007; Li-Grining, Votruba-Drzal, Maldonado-Carreño, & Haas, 2010; Stipek & Miles, 2008). In addition to the effects of positive teacher-student relationships on the students, there is also a large impact on teachers in those relationships (Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). Interviews taken by 60 teachers showed that their relationships made their class the most motivated and interested (Hargreaves, 2000; Spilt et al., 2011).

Joe, Hiver, and Al-Hoorie (2017) make a connection between teachers' support of students' emotional and learning needs, and classrooms that exhibit respect among teachers and students, aiding in student motivation in class. High quality relationships between teachers and their students are crucial because of the ways they can affect student motivation and enjoyment in school (Furrer et al., 2014). They provide teachers and their students with an exciting approach to school, allowing them to naturally progress through their relationship toward student academic success, without the added burden of trying to make a relationship work (Furrer et al., 2014). Students and their teachers are also able to quickly recognize when relationships between themselves are hindering student learning and teacher instruction, causing separation among teachers and students in the classroom (Furrer et al., 2014).

Academic engagement is a powerful tool (Wigfield, Eccles, Shiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). There is an urgency to keep students in class, engaged, and learning, because research shows that, overtime, students' desire to do well in school, participation in class and

excitement about school have lowered throughout elementary school and into middle and high school. (Wigfield, Eccles, Shiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2006). Research points to the value of positive teacher-student relationships and strong peer relationships. The fruit of which is shown through more intentional engagement in academic activities and overall control of emotions (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Hymel, Comfort, Schonert-Reichl, & McDougall, 1996; Juvonen, Espinoza, & Knifsend, 2012; Klem & Connell, 2004; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995; Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012).

Studies show that class is more enjoyable for students when they can be engaged in the material (Furrer, Skinner, & Pitzer, 2014). When students are engaged in class, and motivated to learn (Furrer et al., 2014), they provide themselves with a multitude of ways to deal with the demands of academics (Martin & Marsh, 2009). Student engagement in class also serves as a buffer between students and destructive behaviors, including participation in gang-related activities, involvement in sexual activity, absenteeism, and criminal activity (Connell, Spencer, &Aber, 1994; Janosz, Archambault, Morizot, & Pagani, 2008; Li & Lerner, 2011; Voelkl, 1997). When students are engaged in class, they are more likely to learn what they need to learn, achieve the goals the need to achieve, and move through high school and, eventually, college (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Barriers Teachers Might Face

Through a study completed by Murray and Zvoch (2011), it was discovered there is a great difference between the relationships built between teachers and students with diagnosed behavioral problems and teachers' relationships with students that did not have diagnosed behavioral problems. Murray and Zvoch (2011) concluded that students who had visually

noticeable symptoms of clinical behavior problems had a lower feeling of trust in their teachers than students who were not diagnosed with behavior issues. According to the recorded responses of student participants in Murray and Zvoch's study (2011), the trust factor in teacher-student relationships caused a divide in the gathered data.

Students reported the level of trust in their relationship as lower than the level of communication between themselves and their teacher, though communication was not a strong factor in the quality of teacher-student relationships compared to trust (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). Students with clinically diagnosed behavior problems provided lower averages in their evaluation of trust in their relationships with their teacher (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). In addition to the data retrieved from students with or without clinically diagnosed behavioral disorders, results showed that the students' gender also contributed to the quality of teacher-student relationships (Murray & Zvoch, 2011). For both clinically diagnosed and not clinically diagnosed male and female students, female students provided higher ratings in closeness than male students, and male students rated conflict higher (Murray & Zvoch, 2011).

Negative relationships disrupt with students' ability to accomplish tasks at school (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). Negative teacher-student interactions lead to poor teacher-student relationships (Cook et al., 2018) and hinder students' sense of security, making it difficult for the student to deal with the demands of school (Roorda et al., 2011). Negative teacher-student relationships have also been found to have a greater impact on students' schooling than positive teacher-student relationships (Baker, 2006). According to Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, and Vohs (2001), a student's negative experiences have a larger impact on the student than positive relationships (Baumeister et al., 2001).

Age, gender, teacher characteristics, characteristics of study methods, and whether or not a student is considered at-risk all play a role in the effects that bad experiences or negative relationships can have on students (Roorda et al., 2011). Younger students are more affected by their relationships with adults than older students, and as they become older, peer relationships become more prominent than their relationships with their teachers (Buhrmeister & Furman, 1987; Hargreaves, 2000; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997).

In a study completed by Spilt, Hughes, Wu, and Kwok (2012), teacher-student relationships were analyzed throughout elementary school to explore achievement of at-risk youth. To learn more about the trajectories of these relationships, researchers collected feedback from first through fifth grade teachers about the levels of warmth and conflict between them and their students. Student achievement was measured in first grade and sixth grade. From the data, Spilt , Hughes, Wu, and Kwok (2012) discovered that conflict was most represented in data encompassing low achievement of the students and was shown to be directly related to low student achievement. Students who were a part of relationships with high and/or consistent levels of conflict showed higher probability of failure to achieve in school (Spilt et al., 2012).

Evidence-based teaching has made it difficult for teachers to understand their students' needs and spend time getting to know each of their students, building high-quality relationships with them (Valli & Buese, 2007). Decisions made based on data cause teachers to spend more time on making decisions for the class as a whole that will help every student succeed than on building relationships with students and getting to know the individual needs of each student, understanding them on a personal level (Valli et al., 2007). In addition, it is challenging for teachers to bring their authentic selves and individual approaches to teaching into the classroom

because of lack of funding, disagreements on how classes should be taught, loss of important student supports, such as counselors and nurses, and shifting student demographics in classrooms (Furrer et al., 2014).

High-stakes testing also makes it difficult for teachers to focus on nurturing relationships with their students, as it increases pressure put on teachers to plan lessons to help the class succeed as a whole (Wellman, 2007). They are also given specific ways to teach, even if they go against the ways they know they can teach their students effectively (Furrer et al., 2014). This makes it even more crucial that teachers recognize and use strategies to nurture their relationships, which can increase student academic success, participation and desire to learn (Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2008).

Teachers can recognize when their relationships with their students is weakening when students show little desire to be on time to class, are disrespectful, don't participate, and seem disconnected from their learning (Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, 2009). It is time to take another look at the relationship when more time is spent on discipline than upholding positive teacher-student relationships, and the students in the classroom are lacking in their enthusiasm for learning and participating in class.(Furrer et al., 2014). The motivational model (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) is a good predictor of when teacher-student relationships have begun to weaken. The failure of teachers to meet the fundamental needs of students can result in negative interactions between students and their teachers (Furrer et al., 2014).

It is important for teachers to not take student behaviors or lack of interest personally, as this can cause teachers to focus on their own needs for relatedness, which are then not being met

by the students (Klassen, Perry, & Frenzel 2010; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011). This feeling can morph itself into teachers feeling as though they are not competent in their jobs (Woolfolk, Hoy, & David, 2009). Teachers can also fall victim to feelings of being in coercive relationships with their students (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007). This can jumpstart confrontations with students and prevent teachers from teaching effectively and achieving their goals for their teaching and the lesson plans they create (Roth et al., 2007).

As time goes on, negative relationships with a student's teachers and classmates can be detrimental for the student (Furrer et al., 2014). They can make school more stressful for students and teachers and decrease student participation, eventually leading to those students falling behind in their academics (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 1998; Skinner, 1995). Student personalities and behaviors can make it difficult for teachers to develop strong and positive relationships with them (Birch & Ladd, 1998). Wellman (2007) determined that testing environments in which students feel a heightened sense to get a good score negatively impact teachers' relationships with students.

Students of low socio-economic status, single-parent families, or chaotic home lives are likely to focus more on these factors than their engagement and participation in the classroom (Morganett, 1995). This can cause motivational problems for students (Morganett, 1995). Students coming from public schools can also struggle to become motivated in the classroom, do to efforts being made to keep the most students in the classroom as possible (Bracey, 1991). These efforts keep within the classroom students who are difficult to motivate or do not value the learning they are experiencing in the classroom. This can add stress to the teacher's day (Morganett, 1995).

According to Nias (1989), it is difficult for teachers to separate how they view themselves as a person and as a teacher. This can impact a teachers' instruction because they teach through their personal life experiences and based on past experiences they have had, both good and bad (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2005; Sikes, 1999). A teacher is a reflection of his or her past and desired future (Kelchtermans, 2009).

According to Lunkenheimer, Kemp, & Albrecht (2013) and Rothbart & Bates (2006), Relationships between students and their parents have a large impact on the students' abilities to regulate their behaviors in school. The attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982) supports this research by stating that children use their prior experiences with parents or other caregivers to inform how they will behave and respond to other people (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000). At-risk students may not have had experiences working or playing alongside other children, making it difficult for these students to understand social cues and regulate their behavior around others (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2010). In addition, students in poverty may have more difficulty controlling their behaviors than students who are not in poverty (Evans & Rosenbaum, 2008; Miech, Essex, & Hill Goldsmith, 2001). This inability to control their behaviors can invade students' peer relationships and their establishing and maintaining friendships in and out of school (Ramani et al., 2010).

Parental involvement in their child's education is an important factor in students' presence and academic success in school (Kearney, 2008). Without this involvement on behalf of the parents, students' attendance will decrease, and their productivity and success in school will be negatively affected (Kearney, 2008). According to Goldstein, Little, & Akin-Little (2003), Kearney (2008), and Spaulding et al. (2010), this decreased attendance and lower level of

academic achievement make it difficult for students to learn what they need to at school. In a study conducted by Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison (2006), it was discovered that over half of students who consistently missed class were children of parents with little involvement in their education.

What Strategies Can Teachers Use?

It is crucial for teachers to have strategies they can use to improve student engagement and motivation in school and impact students in a positive way (Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2008). Strong teachers must exhibit an ability to manage their students, establish a classroom conducive to student learning, and help their students achieve academic goals (Klassen et al., 2013). Farmer (2018) completed a study on the impact of effective teachers' characteristics on motivation of students in the classroom.

The information in this study was used to better understand the needs of Education Preparation Programs (EPPs) in order to develop future educators and prepare them with strategies to teach well and help their students succeed academically (Farmer, 2018). These programs are sessions that provide teachers with skills in teaching, as well as tools for teachers to use that will enhance their instruction (Farmer, 2018). Additionally, teachers that participate in Education Preparation Programs will be more equipped to overcome challenges in the classroom that may affect the level of instruction (Farmer, 2018).

In addition, this study focused on uncovering differences in teacher-student relationships, based on the effectiveness of teachers, belief in themselves, knowledge of the material they are teaching, and the level of student motivation in the classroom. Students who were motivated were aware of their teachers' positive relationships with the students in the classroom. In

addition, motivated students recognized the teachers' understanding of the material they were teaching and their ability to teach it effectively (Farmer, 2018).

The outcomes of this study encouraged professional development for teachers and implemented techniques teachers can use to strengthen their relationships with their students and improve student learning in school (Farmer, 2018). Incorporating teacher-student lunches, student greetings at the classroom door, helping new students feel welcome, and making students aware that you are there to help them are a few ways that teachers can be more intentional and personal in their relationships with their students (Pigford, 2001).

High-quality teacher-student relationships are those that emanate respectful interactions between teachers and their students, maintain a focus on learning and building students' academic skills (Furrer et al., 2014). Teachers are responsible for maintaining positive relationships with their students so they can continue cultivating trusting relationships that encourage their students' success in school (Cook et al., 2018). Once students feel a sense of belonging, teachers can be made aware of ways they can nurture those relationships and enhance them even further (Canary & Yum, 2015).

To foster healthy relationships with their students, teachers need to ensure that their communication with their students is respectful, open to feedback by the students, and ultimately focused on the needs of the students. The classroom environment should be warm and welcoming to all students who step inside (Furrer et al., 2014). When teachers recognize the quality of relationships within their classroom they will be better equipped to drive their students toward heightened motivation and participation in school (Furrer et al., 2014).

The motivational model (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, 2009) suggests a variety of strategies teachers can use to build high-quality relationships with students, and help themselves not take student motivational issues personally or as shortcomings of their instruction or questions of students' character, but as information to guide their understanding of their classroom culture (Furrer et al., 2014).

The motivational model is a great resource for teachers looking to build healthy relationships with students and improve more negative relationships they may have with their students (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, 2009). From this model, teachers can gain insight into fostering motivational resilience. Motivational resilience, as defined by Skinner, Kinderman, and Furrer (2009) and Skinner and Pitzer (2012), puts a focus of student engagement in and dealing with relationship and academic challenges in school. The model of motivational development can guide teachers' building new relationships with their students and repairing damaged ones (Furrer et al., 2014).

The aforementioned model places an emphasis on human needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Relatedness can be understood as a need to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). A feeling of relatedness can be achieved when teachers and students feel warmth in their relationship, but it can disappear if one party begins to feel rejected by the other (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). In school, students' relatedness can help them build relationships (Walton et al., 2012) When students feel connected with others, they have an increased ability to be successful, even when met with academic or social challenges in school (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Competence is the need to feel effective in

interactions with social and physical environments' (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008).

Competence can be felt in relationships where there is structure, but this feeling can be reversed where chaos is felt in the relationship (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). Autonomy is the need to express one's authentic self and be the source of action (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). Autonomy is present when support is felt by both the students and the teachers (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). When one party feels taken advantage of and not appreciated, this feeling can diminish (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008).

The Establish-Maintain-Restore method is another helpful resource for teachers that aims to give students a sense of inclusion in the classroom and helps teachers understand their students through the relationships they have with them (Cook et al., 2018). Teachers can use verbal and nonverbal communication can help teachers communicate their care for their students. communicate care for them (Howard, 2002). Language used by teachers with their students is more beneficial to the teacher-student relationship when it is redirective and does not seem to attack the student. This will make students more receptive to making a necessary change in their behavior (Alderman & Green, 2011). For example, instead of telling a student, "Who do you think you are, coming in my class like that?", a teacher could express an interest in the student's well being and say, "I can see something is bothering you, have a seat now and we'll talk about it in 5 minutes." (Alderman & Green, 2011). This conveys authority and support on behalf of the teacher at the same time (Alderman & Green, 2011). They can be sure to listen to their students

and make an effort to understand their needs, and make their classroom warm and inviting to their students (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Howard, 2002). These actions by teachers show students they want them around, they respect them, and they have faith in them (Jeffrey et al., 2013).

"Teachers can make the mistake of only responding to or paying attention to students who are off task of behaving negatively (Alderman & Green, 2011). Students who observe this will begin to desire the teacher's attention and behave negatively to get it, because that is the type of behavior being noticed by the teacher (Alderman & Green, 2011). It is important for teachers to recognize students' need of positive attention and help them achieve that in a healthy way (Alderman & Green, 2011).

When utilized together, the following strategies can help teachers build positive relationships with their students and even maintain already positive relationships with their students (Alderman & Green, 2011). If not used together, or if a few are used much more frequently than others, these strategies can cause teachers to establish relationships with students that do not communicate support of them or cause students to not understand the students' part of the expectations in the classroom (Alderman & Green, 2011).

Manipulative power can support teachers' efforts to build and maintain positive relationships with their students (Alderman & Green, 2011). This can also be effective for teachers working with students who are more difficult to motivate and may have high behaviors (Alderman & Green, 2011). Teachers can give students the freedom and power to choose rules, consequences, and work completion (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). They can also allow students to gage their own behavior and make improvements on their own and become

more interested and engaged in their work. This can help all students succeed behaviorally and academically (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000).

The aforementioned strategies to keep students engaged, completing their work, and enjoying their time learning in class allow teachers to see when their students are exhibiting positive behaviors and completing their work well (Alderman & Green, 2011). They also give teachers the tools to build or maintain positive relationships with their students and acknowledge when students are doing well in class, using comments that are not praising the students and nonverbals to help the students know they are being seen (Alderman & Green, 2011).

It is crucial that teachers teach and provide their students with their own set of tools to use when they feel unengaged with the material being taught or disinterested in remaining in the classroom, potentially feeling the need to leave the classroom and refuse to come back in (Alderman & Green, 2011). When students have social or behavioral difficulties they struggle to monitor their behavior when they get frustrated (Alderman & Green, 2011). Teachers can help them develop skills to cope with frustration, such as teaching them words and phrases to use that communicate. When they have reached a point where they don't wish to be a part of the class anymore, let alone participate in class or do their work, they can vocalize how they are feeling and help the teacher and other students understand. Students can be taught to say 'I need some time,' 'I can't talk now,' or 'I am just sick of this work' when they are feeling frustrated (Alderman & Green, 2011). With these phrases in their vocabulary, students take charge of their own feelings and self-monitor to keep themselves out of trouble in class, as they can avoid reaching a point of outward frustration or tuning the teacher and others out (Alderman & Green, 2011).

When students see teachers' efforts to listen to them and support them when they need help, they are more likely to be engaged and participate in class. (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). In order to fully develop student trust in them, teachers need to listen to their students and validate what they are saying (Alderman & Green, 2011). Teachers can make themselves approachable and trustworthy to their students by setting aside time specific for meeting with their students to understand how things are going for them. They can also discuss with the students any concerns they have at school or outside of it that may be affecting their experiences or performance at school (Alderman & Green, 2011). Teachers can also show support for their struggling students by connecting them with additional tutoring support, or an adult mentor to talk with the student on a regular basis (Alderman & Green, 2011). Casual conversations with students once a week can provide students with a feeling that their teacher genuinely cares about them and takes an interest in their wellbeing (Alderman & Green, 2011).

When students feel they are important to their teachers, and their teachers put in an effort to make class enjoyable they are more likely to follow classroom expectations, remain engaged, and participate in class (Alderman & Green, 2011). Though it may seem automatic, teachers need to recognize that they have control over their likability in their classroom (Alderman & Green, 2011). They have the power to create a fun and energizing classroom environment and spark students' interest and excitement about being a part of their classroom (Alderman & Green, 2011). Engaging in fun activities with students in the classroom, wishing their students a happy birthday, attending students' sporting or music events, making their students laugh, showing interest in what their students are interested in, and keeping their teaching relevant to

their students are all ways that teachers can make themselves and their class more intriguing to their students (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1993).

Some strategies teachers can use to develop strong, positive relationships with their students include learning their students names and getting to know them (Morganett, 1995). Teachers can have students introduce themselves to the class to help them feel like a valuable part of the classroom environment (Morganett, 1995). Getting to know each student in the classroom is important, as it allows the teachers to hear about their student. Teachers can also help their students feel like what they are saying is important and who they are is important to the teacher and their classroom environment (Morganett, 1995).

Teachers can teach in a fun and positive way and share positive comments with their students (Morganett, 1995). These actions by the teacher will show their students that they are passionate about teaching, learning can be fun, and they recognize the good things their students do in class (Morganett, 1995). Some teachers show interest in their students by greeting them as they enter the classroom (Morganett, 1995).

It is also important that teachers converse with their students when they do something wrong so that the student doesn't feel like a bad child, but that the teacher is trying to help them improve their behavior (Morganett, 1995). Teachers can make an effort to create a learning environment that welcomes mistakes, encourages students to try their best when they are unsure, and supports all students' needs and learning styles (Morganett, 1995). This can be seen in student-student and teacher-student interactions during class (Morganett, 1995). Students will also exhibit more participation and engagement and take risks in asking and answering questions in class to enhance their own learning (Morganett, 1995).

Teachers can create a positive classroom culture and climate in which students can learn well (Pianta, LaParo & Hamre, 2008). Classrooms in which teachers provide healthy emotional support, organization to combat chaos, and instructional assistance for their students are part of a positive classroom climate (Moen, Sheridan, Schumacher, & Cheng, 2019). Emotional support is teachers' ability to create a welcoming classroom environment that is supportive of students' development, both socially and emotionally (Pianta et al., 2008).

Teachers can incorporate emotional support into their classrooms to help themselves understand their students' needs, academically, socially, and behaviorally. They can also help teachers recognize these needs of their students and respond in ways that will support those students (Doll et al., 2012; Pianta et al., 2008). They can assist in their students' feelings of being supported at school and development of skills they need to be independent in their learning as well. Emotional support can create a classroom environment in which teachers and students show mutual respect toward each other and enjoy being in the classroom (Doll et al., 2012; Pianta, 2008).

An organized classroom space can influence the kind of teaching that is taking place, supporting students' engagement and participation in class (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2009). It envelops routines in the classroom to maintain and control student behaviors, how time is spent throughout the day, student engagement, and focus on what is happening in class (Pianta et al., 2008).Whether a classroom is organized or not has a big impact on student engagement and success in school (Cameron et al., 2008, and Hatfield et al. (2016). This includes whether or not the rituals and routines carried out effectively and consistently in the classroom (Cameron et al., 2008; Pianta et al., 2008).

Instructional support is cognitive and language learning support by teachers for their students by teaching in a variety of ways in the curriculum (Pianta et al., 2008). This includes teachers' effectiveness in being there for their students, and helping them learn problem-solving strategies to expand their learning and academic development (Dolezal et al., 2013) and the point to which the teacher models correct language and supports students' development of their own language skills (Pianta et al., 2008). High quality instruction by the teacher encourages more on-task behaviors by the students (Pianta et al., 2008), increased skills improved student understanding and application of material being taught (Burchinal et al., 2008; Curby et al., 2009; Mashburn et al., 2008).

Classrooms with high levels of instructional support can provide students with a new way to increase their academic competence and skills and strategies that will follow them throughout their academic career (Burchinal, et al., 2008). Support for at-risk students can also be found in classrooms with increased instructional support (Burchinal et al., 2008). According to Hamre and Pianta (2005), When at-risk children receive a lot of instructional and emotional support in the classroom, their improvement in academics and teacher-student relationships is comparable to that of their peers who are not considered at-risk (Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

Conclusion

Teachers need to be strategic in their interactions with students to ensure they are enhancing their learning and experiences at school and not diminishing them. Teachers can enhance student learning best when they recognize the importance of positive teacher-student relationships and the impact that both positive and negative relationships have on students. When teachers are aware of the impact their interactions with students, they are better able to tailor

their relationships to the individual needs of students. Yeager and Walton (2011) state that teacher-student relationships build trusting relationships that boost students' confidence. This can increase students' motivation and academic achievement in school (Farmer, 2018).

Negative teacher-student interactions (Cook et al., 2018), high-stakes testing criteria (Wellman, 2007), specific criteria for the ways teachers teach (Furrer et al., 2014), and student-student interactions (Furrer et al., 2014) all play a part in the quality of teacher-student relationships in school. When teachers are aware of these things, they can be proactive and recognize the best ways to approach building relationships with individual students. Teachers can use their knowledge of these potential barriers as tools to assess their relationships and enhance communication with students.

There are a variety of ways that teachers can overcome the aforementioned barriers and foster strong and positive relationships with their students. Meeting with students to check in outside of class time (Pigford, 2001), communicating care communicating care for students through words and actions (Howard, 2002) and understanding students on a personal level (Daniels & Arapostathis, 2005; Howard, 2002) are some steps teachers can take toward building positive relationships with students, regardless of the barriers that may stand in the way. In conclusion. When teachers When teachers are familiar with the best ways to build relationships with students, they can make themselves an asset to students' success and academic achievement in school.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Literature

This literature review addressed the importance of teacher-student relationships. Reasons for building positive teacher-student relationships, barriers that could hinder building these relationships, and strategies that teachers can use when building these relationships were researched to provide readers with an understanding of the impacts of positive relationships between teachers and their students.

Research has shown that teachers can bridge the gap between students and their academic success or lack of achievement in school. When teachers seek out positive relationships with each of their students, these students develop a sense of belonging, interest and determination in school (Comer, 1980; Rutter, 1979; Steele, 1992). All of these elements affect students' performance in school. Without these elements, students may fall behind or become unwilling to come to school.

The research in this literature provided a variety of factors that can stand in the way of teachers building positive relationships with their students. Student personalities and behaviors can make it difficult for teachers to develop strong and positive relationships with them (Birch & Ladd, 1998). Each student has a story, and the parts of that story can inform how a student approaches their time in school, the behaviors the exhibit at school and the interactions they have with their teachers and classmates.

Understanding their options for effective communication with their students can help teachers navigate their way toward open, approachable and positive relationships with their students that will benefit student learning and achievement in the classroom (Cook et al., 2018).

The strategies researched in this literature review can help teachers achieve open communication, enjoyment and interest on behalf of their students. Though not all of these strategies work for every student, they are good starting points for teachers to get to know each of their students, understand how to communicate best with each student.

When working to build strong relationships with their students, teachers need to make sure they are respecting the students in their classroom (Joe, Hiver, & Al-Hoorie, 2017). This respect can be seen in the forms of respecting students' personal space or need for time alone to regroup or de-escalate themselves. Teachers need to make sure that they are supporting their students' journey through learning in the classroom (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). They can support their struggling students with one-on-one tutoring during work time or provide their students with strategies that could make it easier for them to learn what they need to.

Students need to feel connected to their class and their teacher (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000; Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, & Wellborn, 2009). Teachers can make students feel like a part of the classroom community by asking them questions about themselves and expressing an interest in their lives, interests, and thoughts or feelings about school. All of these things can help teachers understand their students on a more personal level and provide their students with tools to be successful in school. When students feel that their teachers care about them as more than just students and actually want to understand them, they will be motivated to do their best in class and make their teachers proud (Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

Student choice is a powerful strategy that teachers can use to keep their students interested in doing well in class. When teachers offer students options for how to complete their work, when to complete their work, or the order in which they will complete their work, those

students will feel empowered and like they can make their own decisions (Sutherland, Wehby, & Copeland, 2000). This can make the teacher's job easier by not having to micromanage students and their work completion so they can put more focus on other students who might need extra support or other tasks they need to get through during their lesson.

Professional Application

Through this research, I have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of teacher-student relationships and the impact they can have on students in the classroom. Because of this, I have the resources to share with my colleagues and others in education to help them understand some of the most effective ways to communicate with their students and build trusting and warm relationships with them. Students in my workplace come from so many different home lives, past experiences and qualities of relationships with their family and friends. It is evident that many of them are craving this connection, but are either making choices that hinder that connection or are not surrounded by teachers who are aware of the best ways to break through with those students.

From having conversations with classroom teachers, to offering suggestions in my team meetings, I can shed light on the research I have completed and provide my colleagues with insight into teacher-student relationships. Teachers in my workplace will benefit from someone like me who has completed research on the topic to guide them toward better relationships with their students. This would provide them with concrete ways they can handle situations with more challenging students and create an atmosphere in their classrooms and throughout the school. Ways to affirm their students' needs for relationship is a great way for me to start with teachers. Additionally, I can help these teachers be supportive of their students and build

relationships with them that will help to reverse their negative behaviors and make them proud and excited to be at school.

What tools can I provide classroom teachers?

Based on the research I have completed, I can provide teachers with tools to use to enhance relationships they already have with their students and establish relationships with students whom they have overlooked or neglected to build a relationship with. It would be helpful for teachers to be exposed to different ways they can motivate their students to be in class and take responsibility for their own learning.

Helping teachers understand that students need to feel like an important part of the classroom would be a great way to start. I could introduce my colleagues to the motivational model (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Deci and Ryan, 1985, 2000; and Skinner, Kindermann, Connell, and Wellborn; 2009). When this model is introduced, I can help guide my colleagues toward accomplishing what this model intends, which is helping students feel like a valuable asset to the well-being of the classroom community, and motivating students to do their best in class.

I can introduce fellow teachers to the Establish-Maintain-Restore method (Cook et al., 2018). This will provide them with resources they can use to build relationships with their students, keep these relationships going strong, and repairing any relationships that may have become detrimental to the teachers' and students' success in the classroom. By helping my fellow teachers become familiar with this method, I can assist them in recognizing some of the best ways to start relationships with their students. They can understand how to keep these

relationships consistent and positive by learning to take time to listen to their students and continue to seek understanding of their students' needs (Alderman & Green, 2011). They can even recognize when they need to return to the start with students they have negative relationships with.

How can I foster strong relationships between classroom teachers and ELL students?

I have a great opportunity as an ESL teacher to get to know my students on an individual level. This can be beneficial for me to inform classroom teachers of the strengths, likes, dislikes, work ethics of each of my students. It can be difficult for classroom teachers to learn details about their students through observing their work in class, or having "get to know you" conversations with them, because larger class sizes, high behavior students in the classroom, and even the teachers' lack of understanding about the importance of building individual relationships with their students.

One way that I can foster relationships between ELL teachers and their students is to stay in communication with the teacher whose students I work with on a regular basis. I can keep them informed about concerns about students, progress of their students. I can also advocate for my students, communicating positive things I have seen in their work with me that their teachers may be concerned about. For example, there was a situation this year when a teacher asked me if I thought she should refer one of my ELLs to Special Education. When I asked for clarification, she let me know of ways that the student was unengaged in her classroom and had difficulty following single step directions to get his materials or do the required activity for the lesson. I was able to tell her the ways that he was successful in my group and the things I have noticed that hinder his work ethic on school work. I was also able

to suggest to her ways that she could tell the student what to do that would communicate in a way that is easier for him to understand and accomplish. The teacher was grateful for my input and eager to implement my suggestions into her instruction and communication with the student.

What do I feel equipped to do now?

After completing my research, I feel equipped to build strong relationships with my students. The research I gathered helped inform me of new ideas for getting to know each of my students and how to build strong, healthy relationships with each of them. For the relationships I already have with my students, I gained insight into strengthening those relationships and maintaining the positivity in each of them, through my verbal encouragement of each student, recognition of what they are doing well, and interest in each of them personally. I am ready to expand my own experiences that were affirmed through the research I found to help build and maintain positive and healthy relationships with each of the students I work with.

This project reminded me of the importance of not taking anything personally in my career. Students come to school with baggage from home. Some students come from single-parent families, unstable housing, single-income families, poor relationships within their families, and unhealthy relationships with their parents or caregivers and siblings. As Lunkenheimer et al. (2013) and Rothbart and Bates (2006) stated, the quality of parent-child relationships in early childhood is one of the primary predictors of children's behavior regulation capacities. It is not always easy to look past the disrespect that is often shown by students in my workplace, but based on the research I have found throughout this project, it is

easier to remind myself of the factors that can cause these behaviors and attitudes to be exhibited by my students.

What were the limitations of the research?

While researching my topic, it was difficult to find studies and other research about teacher-student relationship building that occurred after 2014. It would have been interesting to see what, if anything, has changed in regard to the barriers that teachers face when trying to build relationships with their students and and strategies they can use to build these relationships. It also would have been beneficial to have current research between 2015 and 2018 to ensure that the best strategies were up to date. Other limitations included limited studies and research completed on the effects of teacher experience on building positive teacher-student relationships and research completed on teacher-student relationship building with low-income students. This research would have been helpful for me to learn more ways I can strengthen my relationships with the low-income community I serve.

What are some implications for future research?

To further understand teacher-student relationships when it comes to at-risk youth, more research should be done to inform readers of the best ways for teachers of at-risk youth to build strong relationships with them. Through my research, I learned that relationships with at-risk students can affect these students in different (Roorda et al., 2011), but it was difficult for me to find ample research on this topic. This would open up more discussion on the topic and expand the roles of teacher-student relationships to a group of students that seems to need relationships the most, leading to more understanding by educators and others who want to know more.

Research shows that parent involvement in students' lives directly impacts both students' experiences in school and the relationships they build with their teachers and classmates (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). In order to further understand the connection between parent involvement and these experiences and relationships, more research needs to be done on the direct impact of parent involvement or lack thereof on students. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to follow up the research in this literature review with an action research project to follow teacher-student relationships built on the strategies researched in this literature review. Studies on the teacher-student relationships were implemented into this literature review, however, there was not a lot of follow up done after those studies. Real-life comparisons of positive and negative relationships' influence on student achievement would inform readers of the concrete necessity of positive teacher-student relationships.

Conclusion

So, what impact do teacher-student relationships have on student academic achievement in school? Teacher-student relationships are part of the foundation of students' achievement in school (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003). Positive relationships with their teachers can aid in student motivation in class and their desire to participate and engage in their learning (Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2008). Because of this, teachers need to be aware of strategies they can use to get to know their students, provide a welcoming classroom atmosphere for their students, and encourage their students' academic achievement in school.

The amount of time teachers put into getting to know their students can make a positive or negative impact on the performance or lack thereof by their students (Furrer et al., 2014). The studies and research that were completed on this topic showed the benefits of positive

teacher-student relationships and the disadvantages of negative teacher-student relationships on students' achievement in school. This literature review concludes that students are more successful and put more effort and passion into their learning when they have relationships with their teachers that emanate mutual trust, mutual respect, high classroom participation, and teacher interest in the student (Wang et al., 2016).

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