

Understanding the Effects of Classroom Relationships

By Nickolas Bogan

In the domain of education, there are countless things that impact the way a student learns and functions both in and outside of school. To be effective in any environment, whether it be in the workforce, education, or any community, one of the most crucial aspects of interaction is a social relationship. The outcomes of healthy relationships between teachers and their students reach far beyond classrooms and have lasting impacts for both groups.

For some students, a positive relationship with a teacher might be a relationship where a student can approach the teacher after school as a source of support. For another, a positive relationship may be reflected by flexibility and understanding when an assignment is incomplete due to complications. Students will react differently to their relationships, and the necessities regarding the relationship might be different, but there are some ways to measure how well a student might benefit. Students with interactive, healthy relationships with teachers may demonstrate more interest in their class. They will do this by becoming engaged and working to maintain a better grade, or continuing their current efforts. They may also feel more comfortable to gravitate to other teachers and students, thus improving their school experience. These relationships are powerful.

One of my experiences having a beneficial relationship involved a teacher who most students dislike. His classes are said to be difficult and he doesn't tolerate behaviors of disengaged students; sleeping in class, talking while he's teaching, making excuses not to do work, etc., but he also works with us to be successful students and walk out happy with an A in the class. Furthermore, he offered students and opportunity to open up to him in times of need.

To be productive and successful it is crucial that you are interested in what you're doing. It has been found that students who don't develop strong relationships with teachers (especially early on) will lose interest in school. Students without positive relationships regarding their

teachers have fewer resources and are less likely to begin or complete post secondary education. With healthy relationships, students feel encouraged and welcomed to pursue education and their goals. As a result, quality of life improves (Frostad et. al. 2015).

Classroom management programs have been created within elementary (or primary school) settings to monitor student behavior in response to proper management. These programs report that adequate classroom management increases academic achievement, decreased problematic behavior, aggressive behavior, and disruptive behavior (Hanke et. al. 2016).

A study of nearly 400 students in Italy, ages 13 to 20 found that these positive interactions had strong effects on the social well-being of students. It was found that more informal resources were available in times of need for these students (as they had support from these teachers). Similarly, these experiences allowed the students to relate more closely with each other. A sense of community is crucial in diversified classroom environments for high success, as it aides in the development of their psychological health (Capone et. al. 2018).

In every classroom, it is evident that some students don't feel like part of the classroom community. We can see this manifest in the withdrawal from classroom discussions, hesitant behavior choosing groups in activities, lack of communication with the teacher and even possible underperformance in the class. This is due to not feeling welcomed, wanted, or acknowledged. Developing and strengthening healthy classroom relationships builds community that breaks out of classrooms and benefits everyone.

