

School as a Second Home: Investigating Family Bonds in Educational Communities

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Abstract

This paper considers the question, "How can teacher-student connections affect a student and what makes that connection similar to a familial one?" The study focuses on student-teacher relationships and how students perceive their impact. This study was conducted on the outskirts of a large North Eastern city. Data was collected through a survey and interviews from 18 students who attend either a traditional high school or career and technical high school. The data was analyzed with comparisons to other research studies/papers and similarities were found in how students responded to teacher support and classroom environments. The findings of this paper demonstrate that these connections have a lasting impact on students, but not at the same magnitude as familial relationships. This study demonstrates that students' approach/ activity in these relationships must be studied more thoroughly. This would benefit teachers' connections with students and students' academic presence.

Keywords: *Teacher-student connections, teacher support, classroom environment, familial relationships, students' academic presence*

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Part 1: Introduction/Research Objectives

Topic Introduction

Think about all the teachers you have had, think about the connections made between yourself and those teachers. The connections with those teachers were important to your growth both as a person and a student. Teachers making connections with students is important to the growth of the children. Student-teacher relationships help students to be motivated, de-stress, and in some cases improve mental health. In small schools, large schools, poor schools, rich schools, public schools or private schools, student-teacher connections can change the life of students for the better. At the same time, family connections are important, socially, financially, and academically. Depending on the type of support a family provides, it can affect the child's grades and social life at school. At times family may not be able to step in and support the child at school. When does it become the teacher's job to support their students' academic life and help them grow as people? These connections will be different for each student and teacher, but even having the option for that relationship has shown to improve students' motivation, grades, and mental health.

Statement of the problem

Teachers supporting students at school may seem like a given, but many teachers just go through the motions of teaching, not actually making connections with their students. So when students need those connections, and they are not available (even from just one teacher), the teachers are missing the opportunity to help students grow to their full potential.

Researcher Positionality

This research is important to me because when my dad died, I had amazing teachers and school faculty support, which really did feel as if I had a family. Specifically, my school

principal showed up on our doorstep two weeks after the funeral to check in on us. In order to help you understand why this meant so much to me and how it relates to my research, I need to go back in time and share this story.

The house felt empty and cold after everyone left. Once filled with people celebrating the life of my dad, now it only held my closest family. My mother, so deep in grief, was struggling to eat and care for my brother and I. When I was in the messy kitchen searching for food, and the fridge was empty, I felt the hunger in my belly. The doorbell rang, interrupting my search; I called up to my mom “I got it,” just to open it up to see my principal, with her warm smile and arms filled with a giant basket. As I was new to the district, my mom was surprised to see her on our doorstep, and assumed she was there to tell us we needed to go back to school, but instead she just asked if she could come inside. As she walked in, you could see her taking in the disaster of a house; and yet she didn’t comment on it. She put the basket down on a table covered in mail, turned to us and said, “Are you OK?” By the time she left, my mother was crying, not just from the grief, but also because of the kindness of my principal. That principal meant a lot to my family, so when she left the next year I wrote her a heartfelt letter, thanking her for helping me through a really hard time in my life. She made school feel like a safe place for me and this had a lasting impact on me as a person.

I

Research Question

How can teacher-student connections affect a student and what makes that connection similar to a familial one?

Research Context

My research will focus on multiple parts. The first part will consist of research demonstrating the different needs and effects of familial support for students. This will demonstrate the need for some kind of family support and what support students benefit from

most. Next I will look at literature from the field that examines how students feel in schools, their stress levels and how these manifest. I will research papers and research studies to put into perspective how much support students need and the effects of effective support on students. In the final part of this research I will provide plans/examples of teachers implementing different types of support in their classrooms, as close to a family environment as possible. Using this research will provide readers a concept of what types of things can be done in a classroom to connect with students in order to demonstrate just how much work it takes to support the students.

Part 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this section I review literature from the field, which relates to the impact of student-teacher relationships as well as family relationships on students. These relationships can have a huge impact on students' academic performance, academic interest, mental and physical health. When students are lacking in family support and teacher support the stress and weight of school can become a lot to bear.

What is Family Support?

Family support comes in many forms, but the ones important to schooling are Family Economic Support (FES) and Family Social Support (FSS) (Cheng, Ickes, & Verhofstadt, 2012). But FSS can be broken down into even more parts: Home based support (safe space at home), School based support (volunteering for school events), and Academic Socialization (goals and priorities being given for school) (Wang & Sheikh-Khail, 2014). Studies like Cheng, Ickes & Verhofstadt (2012) looked into how the two categories of support impacted college students GPA and GPA slope. They found:

In general, the results of this investigation revealed that the level of perceived social support that students receive from their families was important not only as a "main effect" predictor of the magnitude and stability of their GPA scores across three

successive semesters, but also as an interaction-term component that helped female students to succeed regardless of their level of family economic support. Additionally, college students' family social support was found to account for about 5.86% of the variance in the magnitude and about 4.08% of the variance in the stability of GPA scores, despite the possibility of restriction of range in the measure of family social support. Family social support generally benefited college students' academic performance, and it helped to buffer the stability of the female students' academic performance from the effects of economic adversity. (Cheng, Ickes, Verhofstadt, 2012, p. 21)

This effectively demonstrates that family support is important to the student. On the other hand, this study has some limitations, such as low numbers of participants and limited participants' background family information. Not having this background information impacts the data because we do not know how much emotional support they are receiving or if there's a reason for lack of support. If this history data were taken and the amount of participants were increased, this study would be a little more generalizable and credible. That is not to say these findings should be discredited, but that is an area to expand on.

The inner workings of family support is proven in different studies, Wang & Sheikh-Khan (2014). In Wang & Sheikh-Khan's 2014 study, the authors examined the long term effects of parental involvement on a high school student's academic engagement, academic achievement, and depression. They found:

We found that parental involvement in 10th grade improved not only academic but also emotional functioning among adolescents in 11th grade. However, the effects of parental involvement on achievement and depression varied by the type of involvement in which parents engaged. For instance, among the types of parental involvement, academic socialization had the strongest positive relation with

achievement and strongest negative relation with depression.(Wang & Sheikh-Kan, 2014 p.10)

They proceed to break down the information even more by explaining how school-based involvement did not affect depression or academics, but home based involvement had an impact on academics and a positive effect on depression. The trait that affected the students the most academically was academic socialization, which significantly impacted their academic engagement and achievement, but it did have a negative correlation with depression. This study has some limitations that don't discredit the findings, but make it harder to trust the credibility, as all the data used in this study is self-reported. This means participants change their answers to make them seem better and more socially desirable. That has the ability to skew data and make it less credible, but as the study also looked at multiple aspects of the students, such as grades and students' behavior in school, that makes it so the data is more difficult to skew consistently in the same way..

Teacher Support

Teacher support is important in the growth and development of a student (Phippo & Stone, 2013). Some longitudinal studies demonstrate that resiliency can be correlated with good teacher support. Teacher support is especially important in high stress environments like schools, where expected academic success is high. Connor, Miles, and Pope (2014) explored the connection between the number of teachers supporting their students and students' mental health, physical health, and academic worry. They conducted surveys within the participating schools that asked questions about their health, their academic worry, and about their life (parental situation, ethnicity, and student characteristics). They found that:

The results of this study show that although most students in high-performing schools felt supported by most of their teachers and have at least one adult in the school to whom they feel they can turn with a personal problem, some did not.

These less supported students suffered significantly more psychological and

physical ill health effects than their more supported counterparts. They experienced considerably more academic anxiety, they reported more frequent internalizing symptoms, and they claimed higher rates of physical problems associated with stress (Connor, Miles, & Pope, 2014, p.16)

This demonstrates that if a student has just one teacher they feel they can turn to for personal and emotional things, that will improve their health and academic worry. The limitations of this study are that the generalizability is low because of the fact that all the schools that participated were well funded and had resources to help their students; in lower-funded schools, the students wouldn't get as much support. But Connor, Miles and Pope recognize this and talk about it in their findings, so that makes it so the data is still usable.

Phippo & Stone (2013) had a similar finding in the sense that teachers with high teachers' role breadth (how much social and emotional support teachers include in their definition of their role) had higher levels of students feeling supported, which causes their academic press (expectations) to be higher. The students with support met higher expectations. Phippo & Stones' (2013) data reinforces the idea that teachers who provide higher levels of support, get back more academic engagement and academic success. Phippo & Stone (2013) acknowledged that their data is from a small number of students in a small area, which makes it harder to generalize, but because they acknowledge that and say this is an idea to expand on they keep the study credible. The study also uses self-reported data, which can be skewed due to social desirability. This does make the data harder to trust, also because they are not the ones who collected this data. Phippo and Stones' (2013) study utilized data from a previous study by Bowen, Rose, and Bowen in 2007.

Classroom Implementation

Implementing teacher support in classroom environments is important, but making those student-teacher connections are more difficult in environments where the students are out underconstant stress. Incorporating teacher support into the classroom has an impact on the

students who may not need as much support as other students. Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, and Salovey (2011), looked into how Classroom Emotional Climate (how comfortable it is) can affect a student's behavior. They found::

Observations, student ratings, and card grades collected from fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms showed a positive relationship between CEC and student conduct that was mediated by teacher affiliation, even when controlling for teacher and classroom characteristics, including the other CLASS dimensions."

(Brackett, Reyes, River, Elbertson & Salovey, 2011, page 6)

Students behaved better on the 5-point scale when the CEC was stronger and higher. The limitations of this study is that they are interpreting observational data, and there is a possibility to interpret it incorrectly. Also the conduct reports weren't made by the teachers, which could have a bias towards specific students. They could run this same study in the future with a third party giving the conduct reports to minimize the bias.

Brackett, Reyes, Rivers, Elbertson, and Salovey (2011) did a great job proving the need for a good Classroom Emotional Climate, but they don't talk about how to incorporate it. Warren and Lessner (2014) talkabout a way to incorporate the feeling of family in the classroom while supporting the students. Warren and Lessner (2014) use the term "family business" to describe this type of approach. They describe it as:

Family Business (hereafter referred to as FB) is a daily classroom routine teachers may use for at least two primary purposes. First, FB offers education practitioners an approach to proactively building rapport with students in a large group setting. Second, FB provides a platform for teachers to access the most intimate, discreet aspects of students' real-life experiences – the facets of their personal lives that institutional and instructional norms tend to mute.(Warren and Lessner, 2014, p.1)

This routine makes it so students feel like a family in a classroom setting, and helps the teacher adapt to the students' social and academic needs more effectively. The students come into the classroom and have a family meeting where students can share anything they want. This makes it so the students can relax for a few minutes and then be able to focus on class (Warren and Lessner, 2014).

Of course, with every system there are a few rules. In FB, students can't gossip and names can't be used either—anything that would make it so the other people in the class know who is in the story that is being shared. This method has different effects on different classrooms, and is implemented differently depending on what your class needs, but it has proven effective. Unfortunately, no generalizability has been offered to this system yet by the author (Warren and Lessner, 2014).

Add

This literature review aimed to explore familial effects on students, student-teacher connections effects on students, and different implementations of student-teacher connections and their effects. This literature review demonstrated that students greatly benefit from emotional support and financial support from their families, strong student teacher connections, and a calming classroom environment. All of these aspects benefit the student in their emotional state, academic achievements, and overall school experience. Very few studies on these topics are completely generalizable and much of the data is self reported. This makes it so the studies can be skewed. I suggest we further the research into longitudinal studies as well as have more quantitative data. More research must be done on the topic of teacher supporting students to ensure students are put in environments where they can succeed and reach their highest potential.

Part 3: Methodology/Data Source

Introduction

I am conducting my research at various high schools, from different districts around a technical high school in the area. My survey had 18 responses, with most of the participants (12) being female, and half the participants (9) were 17 years old. The school district's high school with the most responses has a student-to-teacher ratio of 10:1, and this includes all teachers aid and support teachers (www.lmsd.org/harritonhs/about/school-profile). This research was done to investigate how students feel about their relationships with their teachers and how these connections impact them.

Researcher context

I sent my survey to juniors and seniors at various school districts around the technical high school. I used a survey and interviews to get the data I needed. In the survey, I asked questions on an agree/disagree or 1-10 basis, to get some baseline data on the student-teacher connections made in high school in my area. In this interview, I asked questions about the student-teacher connection and how it helped them. This helped me gain insights into the relationships between students and teachers in the area.

Participant section

I used these participants out of convenience. I had access to people within these districts to help me send out the survey. Because of the convenience of these participants, I was unable to get that many participants for my survey. These participants had the opportunity to be chosen to participate in the interview, if they consented. I chose three people who consented to participate in interviews based on my ability to reach them in a timely manner.

Methods of Data Collection

The methods used were surveys and interviews. The survey consisted of 8 questions that asked about their connections with teachers in the present and past. The questions were based on scales of 1 to 10 or Very Disagree to Very Agree. I set up the survey this way because I wanted data that could be compared easily to each other and other studies. I also conducted 3 interviews that went more into depth about the student-teacher connections that they have had

and how they have impacted their lives. I chose this method of getting data because I could go into detail about the student-teacher relationship. I could also ask questions that I didn't even know I needed to ask based on the responses of the participants.

Part 4: Data Analysis

Introduction to your Data Analysis Section

I interviewed three people, who I had easy access to, but each had a different academic experience. Each was surrounded by different teachers and had different needs; different experiences made it so I could see how these teachers were making connections with students. A few themes that showed up in my interviews were **warm tone, communication, and professional**.

Data Themes

Warm Tones

By warm tones, I mean the warm feeling of being cared for and comfortable in that space, like the teacher understands you. In every interview there was an aspect of these warm feelings; each teacher connected with the student in the interview and, in some way, shape, or form, made them warm. This is seen in interview D, with a student who is more reserved with teachers and focuses very much on her studies:

She just, like, really cared a lot about her teaching and really, like, put a lot a lot of herself, like, into it and just, like, I don't know, really made me feel comfortable in the classroom and made, like, the experience, like, a really, enjoyable one. (In-person Interview D, 4/25/25) (See Appendix 5)

In this segment the student is talking about her ninth-grade English teacher, and she is continuing to use the connection with this teacher to improve her writing through a club.

In another interview with a different student (L), she spoke about how her favorite teacher helped her get through some really hard times in her life, and just how kind and caring he was to her. He made her feel seen and like someone cares about her. L is a very outspoken

person who has gone through all of life's ups and downs. This teacher's understanding gave her the ability to find a passion, because "If I was going through something at home, he would sit and listen" (In-person Interview L, 4/24/25) (Appendix 4)

Not all students have strong connections with all of their teachers, but the ones who did, report strong relationships. They made them feel comfortable, so that they could at least grow in that subject area.

How many strong student-teacher connections have you had in you secondary education?
18 responses

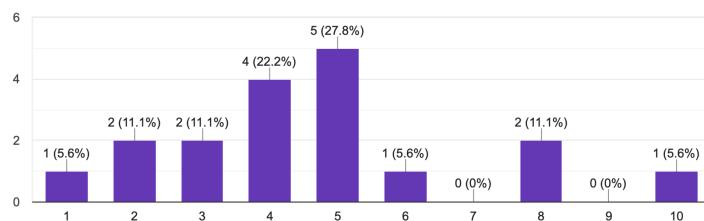


Figure 1

On a scale of one to ten how would you rate your student-teacher connection with your favorite teacher?
18 responses

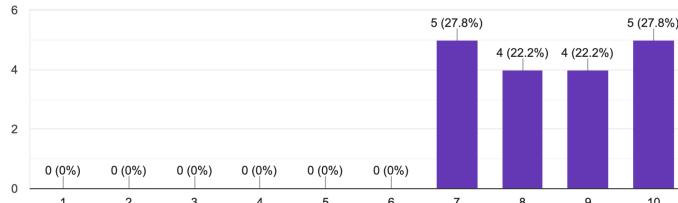


Figure 2

Figure 1 demonstrates how many students that participated in the survey have had teachers connections that they could rely on, with only one participant only having 1 strong student-teacher connection. But all it takes is one teacher to futile the support needed.. Figure 2 is adding onto the idea that these were strong connections with all answers being above a 7.

Communication

Communication is needed in any strong relationship, it is no different for student-teacher relationships. Students like it when teachers communicate with them and listen to what they are saying. In my first interview (Interview M) (Appendix 3), the student's favorite teacher was her French teacher. Student M said in response to the question "How would you say your teacher-student connection was built?" with, "I would say because we both like to communicate with other people" (In-person interview M, 4/24/25). M's connection with her favorite teacher was literally because of his passion for communication. This teacher communicated with M throughout the year about assignments and how to complete them. When asked about how the connection affected school, she said, "I think it made it way easier. It made it more fun whenever I was like, I got stressed a lot writing in French class, but all of the reassurance and everything, it helped me calm down." (In-person interview M, 4/24/25). The communication made her feel calmer and more comfortable in school.

Communication between the students and teachers is also important because if the teacher understands that something is going on, they can be more patient and understanding about why a student may need more time to complete an assignment. Teachers don't need to be told this but according to L;

"Well, when I was going through something and I wasn't able to complete assignments because I was going through stuff that's outside of school, he was willing to work with me and give me a lot of extensions for two weeks and didn't even penalize me and spent countless lunch and learns just sitting with me and going over things I just didn't understand." (In-person interview L, 4/24/25) (See Appendix 4)

Professional

This theme was something I didn't expect to find, I found that students are also keeping the relationship professional and not being too personal with teachers. Students would much prefer to turn towards their peers for emotional support than their teachers. If specifically about

the subject area they are more likely to, but still mostly kept emotional needs to themselves. This showed up within two of the interviews and many who took the survey had similar answers. In interview D, she said:

"I mean, like, we totally had some really interesting conversations about stuff that wasn't just school. Like, we we we've had many philosophical debate and stuff, but I wouldn't say, like, we really, like, I really relied on her for emotional support when, like, things were hard at, like, my house or stuff like that. So I didn't really, I didn't, like, rely on that sort of emotional connection. " (In-person interview D, 4/25/25) (Appendix 5)

In interview M, she talked about how when stressed about the class she will talk to her teacher,, but only that class not anything else. Not other classes, not when she is stressed in-general, only when it was about French. She only used him as a resource for French, even though their conversations together made her day. This would pose the question: are students the ones not using the student-teacher relationship to its fullest capacity?

According to my survey, many other students are also only relying on their teacher connections for just subject area needs, nothing outside of that. 77% of students say they agree in some way that the connection with the teacher has helped them in that subject area, whereas only 33.4% agree in some way that the connection helps in day to day life.

For the classes in which I had a strong student-teacher connection, that connected helped me in the subject area.

18 responses

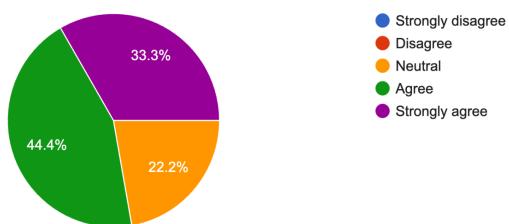


Figure 3

Having a strong student-teacher connection has helped me in my day to day life.
18 responses

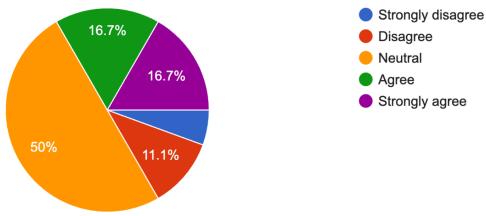


Figure 4

Figure 3 demonstrates that 77.7% agrees to some degree that the student-teacher connection benefited them within the subject area. But compare that to the 33.4% from figure 4 that agrees that that student-teacher connection helps them in their day to day life. These statistics directly show that students right now are only using their connections in specific academic matters, not using it to its fullest potential.

Conclusion

Based on the data collected in this study, it highlights that student-teacher relationships play a significant role in shaping students' emotional and academic experience. Through the use of survey and interview coding, three major themes arose: warm tones, communication, and professionalism. Providing a warm and caring environment fosters connections and growth within the students, especially for students going through personal or academic hardships. Communication is the foundation for trust, it was shown to help students feel supported and less overwhelmed. Though not expected, professionalism showed that students are cutting off the relationship, as to keep professional boundaries in place for the teachers. The students are mainly using the teacher connections for academic benefits and not the possible emotional help, thus not using the connections to its fullest. These findings truly demonstrate the importance of making it known that you as a teacher are willing to make that connection and be available for the students.

Part 5: Findings

Introduction to your Findings Section

According to the survey I conducted, my data provided evidence that suggests the teachers in the area around the Technical High school do make connections with the students, within school. On the other hand the data also points out that students do not turn to their teachers for non-academic (social and emotional) help. With further investigation with the use of interviews, students also prefer to keep the student-teacher connection strictly to school and sometimes just that subject. Adding onto that data point, none of the participants agreed that student-teacher connections are like families.

Connections

The connections these students have with the teachers is important to their academic growth within the specific subjects (Teacher Connections survey, 2025) (Appendix ____). Even only having just one connection can have a positive impact on a student compared to not having any (Conner, Miles, and Pope, 2014). These findings are similar in findings to Conner, Miles, and Pope (2014,) the concept that knowing even one teacher cares about you and is there for you greatly improves your emotional and academic sides of schooling. Even though none of the participants compared their teachers to their family, when asked “Is there something you would turn to your teachers at school for more than your family?” (Interview questions, 2025) (Appendix ____) the participants indicated that their families helped them feel comfortable and helped them socially and emotionally. This does demonstrate that the family aspect to a students life is important to the students, and can affect them. This is shown to have a positive impact on academic performance in many studies, some being Cheng, Ickes, & Verhofstadt (2012) and Wang & Sheikh-Khail (2014). This is an area where I could expand my research.

Environment

The interviews backed up the idea that creating a classroom environment (teacher's role breadth) is important for those student-teacher connections, as well as academic performance

(Brackett, Reyes, River, Elbertson & Salovey, 2011). In each interview conducted the participants spoke about how the teacher made them feel comfortable in some kind of way, whether it was the classroom itself or the teacher themselves. The way you open the classroom environment can greatly affect students' ability to focus and retain information (Family Business, Warren & Lessner, 2014). The participants also spoke about how these teachers opened passions for them within the subject and how those have carried with them till the present day.

Part 6: Conclusion/Research & teaching implications

Introduction to the conclusion

The data I collected provided inconclusive results to my question, "How can teacher-student connections affect a student and what makes that connection similar to a familial one?" While my findings don't reveal that students consider their classrooms as familial spaces they do in fact that students are aware that, concept commonly seen within certain communities is that teachers only teach content and do nothing else for their students, is false. This is not all they do within their classroom and my data proved that students do in fact grow from the experience that they get from being in those teachers' classrooms; the data doesn't demonstrate how similar it is to the families connections and benefits.

Pose New Questions

I found a new question while going through my interviews, "Are the students the ones not letting the connections form to their full extent to keep it professional?" One of my participants in her interview said, "I don't wanna overstep that, like, professional balance because she's a teacher, and, like, I don't wanna force my emotional burdens on her" (In-person Interview D, 4/25/25)(Appendix 5). This seemed to be a trend to people I spoke to, that they didn't want to be a burden or cross a line with these connections. This is an area where I feel research could be expanded upon, there are plenty of studies about the effects of the

connections formed, but not many about *how* they are formed or *how much* the student is allowing the teacher in.

Research Implications

My research allows teachers to see how the environments built within the classroom affect students, and what type of figure they mimic within the classroom (coach, parentish, sibling, friend). It means teachers need to make their students aware that they are completely available to be that figure they need in their lives, because sometimes the students will not take that step. Students might not need a family at school, but they do need someone there for them, and when they receive it they will flourish in that subject area at least. Teachers may not be aware of how much stress they take or add to a student's life, but a connection with a student can remove a little at least, and that is always a start. I recommend that teachers make it known that they are ready and willing to build those strong connections with their students, and set up their classroom in a way that makes it so the students know they are willing. Schools could add more time for teachers to facilitate these connections instead of only having time to barely get the lesson done. My research shows just how important it is to provide time for the students to build connections in school, not only with their peers but with their teachers. Student-teacher relationships are just as important as friends and family connections,, and I hope that all that have read this research paper, now see this.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Survey

Section 1 of 3

Teacher Connection Survey

B **I** **U** **↶** **↷**

Hello, my name is Kat Moose and I'm enrolled in CMTHS Secondary Education Academy, a one year program for high school students interested in majoring in Education.

As part of my Teacher Research paper, I am conducting a small research study. My research question is: How can teachers-students relations support students in the same way that family student relations do?

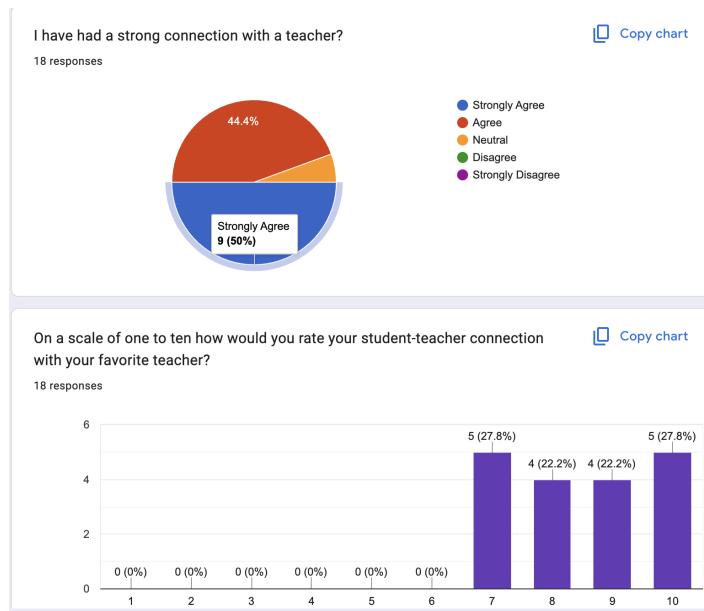
Thank you in advance for your participation in my study!

Do you consent to having your data anonymously used in this teacher study? *

Yes

No

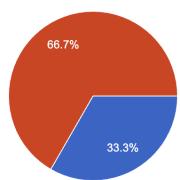
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Have you ever call a teacher "Mom" or "Dad"?

18 responses

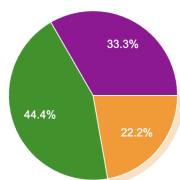
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For the classes in which I had a strong student-teacher connection, that connected helped me in the subject area.

18 responses

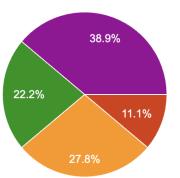
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Having a strong student-teacher connection helped me in all of my academic life.

18 responses

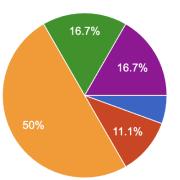
[Copy chart](#)



Having a strong student-teacher connection has helped me in my day to day life.

18 responses

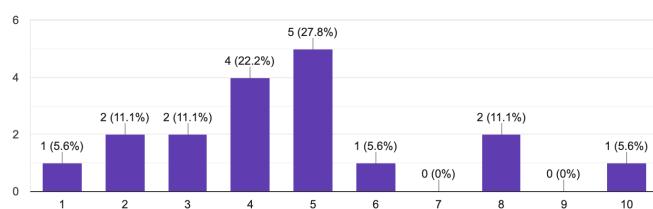
[Copy chart](#)



How many strong student-teacher connections have you had in you secondary education?

18 responses

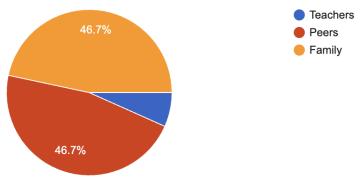
[Copy chart](#)



Do you feel more comfortable turning to your teachers, peers, or family for emotional needs? (You do not have to answer this question if you are not comfortable, but do keep in mind all data will be confidential.)

15 responses

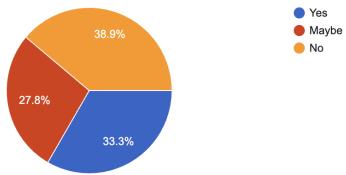
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Would you be willing to participate in an interview about a similar topic?

18 responses

 Copy chart



Appendix 2: Interview questions

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your favorite teacher.
2. Why was this teacher your favorite?
3. In your opinion, how did the connection with this teacher affect your school life?
4. How did the connection with this teacher affect your daily life?
5. To what extent would you rely on this teacher (emotional, academic, or neither)
6. Would you say this teacher was or is a popular teacher amongst students?
7. Is there something you would turn to your teachers at school for more than your family?
8. If you could say anything to your favorite teacher now, what would it be?

Appendix 3: In-person Interview M (4/24/25) Transcript

[00:00:57.870] - Kat moose
Would you. Would you say you connected with him about language, or how would you say your connection was built together?

[00:01:07.770] - Marlene
I would say because we both like to communicate with other people, and we're both really interested in different culture around the world. I would say that's what really connected us.

[00:00:00.830] - Kat moose
Yes. Okay. This is Marlene.

[00:00:04.000] - Marlene
Yeah.

[00:00:04.720] - Kat moose
All right. The first question, tell me about your favorite teacher.

[00:00:10.820] - Marlene
Should I put the name?

[00:00:13.600] - Kat moose
You don't have to if you don't want to.

[00:00:14.670] - Marlene
My favorite teacher is my French teacher right now.

[00:00:17.810] - Kat moose
Okay. Can you tell me more about him?

[00:00:22.740] - Marlene
He is a trilingual, and he speaks Spanish, French, and English. What do you mean more about them?

[00:00:39.070] - Kat moose
Why is this teacher your favorite? Is there personality?

[00:00:42.430] - Marlene
Oh, because we have a lot in common, and they really helped me improve my language skills for French and Spanish, which I like.

[00:00:53.390] - Kat moose
Yeah, especially since this is a hobby for you.

[00:00:55.910] - Marlene
Exactly.

[00:01:19.980] - Kat moose
In your opinion, how did the connection with this teacher affect your school life?

[00:01:29.320] - Marlene
I think it. It made it way easier. It made it more fun whenever I was like, I got stressed a lot writing in French class, but all of the reassurance and everything, it helped me calm down.

[00:01:51.090] - Kat moose
So would you say this connection with him only helps you in French class or in school in general?

[00:01:57.520] - Marlene
School in general, I would say.

[00:02:00.100] - Marlene
I would say it helps me.

[00:02:01.470] - Kat moose
Is it because this causes you to stress less in that one class or because something else?

[00:02:08.600] - Marlene
I just think the connection, simple connections like that really make me happy, and they get me less stressed about other classes and everything. And that's how it really helps.

[00:02:22.850] - Kat moose
Would you say this connection with your French teacher affects your daily life outside of school in any way, or is it just in school?

[00:02:34.100] - Marlene
I wouldn't say outside of school. It affects it in a positive way because it's like when I'm down in the morning, it's just talking to him about music and stuff. It just makes my day.

[00:02:56.940] - Kat moose

Okay. So it affects your daily life. But not really in-

[00:03:01.600] - Marlene

No. It's positive.

[00:03:03.310] - Kat moose

It makes you feel good?

[00:03:04.680] - Marlene

Yeah.

[00:03:04.960] - Kat moose

Okay. To what extent do you rely on this teacher? Emotionally, academic, social?

[00:03:13.210] - Marlene

During C days, a lot of C days, I stay in the last set of the day.

[00:03:23.010] - Marlene

I just chill in there and we just talk the whole set.

[00:03:28.390] - Kat moose

So would you say you rely on him a lot for a lot of emotional needs? When you're stressed, you go talk to him?

[00:03:38.580] - Marlene

Not all the time.

[00:03:40.370] - Marlene

Not really. But we don't really talk too much about personal personal things. Mostly about interests and stuff.

[00:03:54.810] - Kat moose

Academically, though, when you're stressed about his class, would you turn to him?

[00:03:58.830] - Marlene

Yes.

French-related. Yes. Okay.

[00:05:12.420] - Kat moose

If you could *if you* could say anything to your favorite teacher, what would it be?

[00:05:20.000] - Marlene

What?

[00:05:20.820] - Kat moose

If you could say anything to him at all, pretend it's the last day of school, what would you say?

[00:05:30.980] - Marlene

Should I say in French?

[00:05:32.730] - Kat moose

You can say in French and then translate it. Yeah.

[00:05:36.860] - Marlene

Thank you for everything. You are very kind.

[00:05:44.940] - Marlene

Okay. I would just thank him and all of that.

[00:05:48.090] - Kat moose

Thank you very much for participating in my interview. Yeah, no problem.

Appendix 4: In-person Interview L, 4/24/25

[00:00:00.340] - Kat

This is Lauren Gordon. Tell me about your favorite teacher of all time.

[00:00:09.170] - Lauren

Dr. Fritz. Dr. Fritz. He was one of the nicest teachers I ever met. He cares about his students. He's just a kind person who is just willing to listen. He was actually the person who wrote my recommendation for college.

[00:00:25.370] - Kat

Would you tell me why he's your favorite teacher?

[00:00:29.640] - Lauren

Well, when I was going through something and I wasn't able to complete assignments because I was going through stuff that's outside of school, he was willing to work with me and give me a lot of extensions for two weeks and didn't even penalize me and spent countless lunch and learns just sitting with me and going over things I just didn't understand.

[00:00:52.730] - Kat

So in your opinion, how did this connection with your favorite teacher affect your school life?

[00:00:58.550] - Lauren

It definitely made me understand the importance of why it's important to learn more. It made me actually love English. And I started working harder in English because I just found a passion for it. And now I'm getting better grades in English.

[00:01:13.640] - Kat

Okay.

[00:01:14.620] - Kat

So did you use this connection with your teacher to help you in your daily life, like outside of school?

[00:01:23.460] - Lauren

Yeah. It just made me feel like I can do things, that people care about me in this world. When I was going through my I felt sad. I realized that I have a teacher who actually thinks I'm a really great student. I gave him a letter today, and he seemed really touched. He said he might cry when he reads it. So it made me feel like I have a connection.

[00:01:40.920] - Kat

Okay.

[00:01:41.230] - Kat

To what extent did you rely on this teacher? You already touched on this.

[00:01:46.870] - Lauren

I relied on him a lot for mental health as well when I was going through situations. So if anything, I would tell him and he would help me in solutions. So it was even outside of English. If I was going through something at home, he would sit and listen. Okay.

[00:02:00.520] - Kat

That's actually perfect. Would you say this teacher is popular among students?

[00:02:06.730] - Lauren

Definitely. Whenever I ask a teacher, any student, Did you like Dr. Fritz? They have only compliments to tell me about him.

[00:02:15.420] - Kat

Okay.

[00:02:16.250] - Kat

Is there something you would turn to your teacher about that you wouldn't turn to your family about? Of course, I don't think there's the academic part of it, English, but would you say anything else other than that?

[00:02:35.810] - Lauren

Not because I tell my family everything, but do I tell him more than I tell other teachers? Yes.

[00:02:42.770] - Kat

Okay. If there's anything you could say to Dr. Fritz right now, pretend it's the last day of school, what would you say?

[00:02:50.670] - Lauren

Well, I actually just gave him a letter saying, Thank you for everything you've done for me. I will never forget you and you've packed in my life, and I always remember the things you taught me for going into college, and I'm just grateful that I was able to meet such an amazing person.

[00:03:03.980] - Kat

Okay.

[00:03:04.320] - Kat

Thank you. That's all.

Appendix 5: In-person Interview D, 4/25/25

Kat Moose
Alright. So this is Della's interview.

Della
Mhmm.

Kat Moose
Okay. So tell me about your favorite teacher. Like, whole school group, not just high school.

Della
Yeah. Okay. I mean, I've had a lot of good teachers, but I think my favorite has been my ninth grade teacher my ninth grade English teacher, Miss Freshay. She was just really cool and, like, had a really kind of, like, non-traditional approach to teaching.

Like like like, the classroom was just, like, very open and it was a very fun vibe.

Kat Moose
So would you say those are the reasons why she's your favorite teacher, or is there, like, a specific one why?

Della
I mean yeah. But, like, I don't know. She just, like, really cared a lot about her, like, teaching and really, like, put a lot a lot of herself, like, into it and just, like, I don't know, really made me feel comfortable in the classroom and made, like, the experience, like, a really, enjoyable one. That makes sense to me.

Kat Moose
So, you were in the middle of saying why she's your favorite teacher.

Della
Oh, yeah. Well, it was just I don't know. I kinda ended, but she just, like, had, like, like, she was just, like, very, like, a calming presence. You know what I mean? Like, it was, like, just being in her classroom was really enjoyable, and it didn't feel stressful in, like, a certain way that a lot of other classes feel.

Kat Moose
Yeah. I know the teacher you're talking about. Yeah. So you kinda already briefly touched on this. Feel free not to answer this one because this one is very personal.

But is there something you would turn to miss Fresci, at, like, for at school more than you would your family?

Della
No. I don't think so. No. I I I don't know. I don't wanna overstep that, like, professional balance because she's a teacher, and, like, I don't wanna force my emotional burdens her.

Kat Moose
That's fair. That's fair. Yeah. So we're gonna pretend this is your senior year, last day. What would you say to her?

Della
I guess I would I guess I could just, thank her for being so, like, kind and understanding of, like, when I messed up and, like like, as like I said, she's, like, club leader and stuff, and so she's been very instrumental in, like, just helping me kind of figure out how to be a good leader and how to connect with people. She's really, like, just taught me so much about, how to, like, just do a lot of the stuff I do. You know what I mean? So, yeah, I would thank her for just being so patient, I guess.

Kat Moose
Alright. Thank you, Della. Nice. Thank you.