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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe and understand positive middle-years teacher-student relationships and their effects on students in order to ascertain if the study's data would be consistent with the study's conceptual framework. The following three research questions provided the direction for this study:

1. In what ways do middle-years teachers create positive teacher-student relationships?
2. What are middle-years teachers' understandings of the effects of positive teacher-student relationships?
3. What are middle-years teachers' understandings of why positive teacher-student relationships are important?

A conceptual framework was developed to guide this study, which outlined the characteristics of positive teacher-student relationships as: having high expectations, networking with parents, creating dialogue with students, practicing social skills, practicing appropriate self-disclosure, and using rituals and traditions in the classroom (Griffin, 1998). Five effects of positive teacher-student relationships on students were identified: improved self-concept, improved motivation to learn, increased desire for others' well-being, increased feeling of security and attachment, and increased desire to improve society (Epp, 1995).

Qualitative research was used in this study. Using semi-structured interviews, data were collected from a purposeful sample of five middle-years teachers. Mayan's (2001) latent content analysis was the process used in analyzing the research data in this study.

The teachers in this study indicated there were five ways they created positive teacher-student relationships: through classroom management and discipline of their students, by having high expectations for their students' behaviour and academics, by communicating with both

students and their parents, by being positive with students, and through spending time with their students outside of the classroom. The participants indicated positive teacher-student relationships had effects on both students and the school. The interviewees found the effects of positive teacher-student relationships on students were: having a sense of belonging and being motivated to learn. The teachers noted the effects of positive teacher-student relationships on the school were: a decrease in student misbehavior and a safe school environment. The study's participants found teacher-student relationships were important, because of the positive effects on students and the school.

Examining these and other findings could provide teachers, administrators, and researchers with some understanding of positive teacher-student relationships and their effects on students and the school. Hopefully, this understanding of positive teacher-student relationships could help middle-years teachers to develop positive relationships with their students, thereby providing students with a sense of belonging, improving students' motivation to learn, decreasing student misbehavior, and improving the school environment.

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