

You Can Get Some Blood from a Turnip: K12 Teachers' Perceptions of their Pre-Pandemic
Relationships with their Students and Strategies they used to Nurture and Develop their
Relationships with Students in the Online Classes

by

Amy L. Keesling

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
(Metropolitan Education)
at the University of Michigan-Dearborn
2023

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Stein Brunvand, Chair
Lecturer Jessica K. Camp, University of Michigan
Instructional Designer and Lecturer Sarah Silverman
Instructional Learning Senior Faculty Alfonso Sintjago, University of Michigan

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my students. In my twenty-seven years of teaching, you never stopped inspiring me. Thank you for the privilege of working with you.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to acknowledge my Master's thesis Chair, Dr. Karen Feathers at Wayne State University for urging me to get my doctorate, and my professional mentor, Dr. Carmen Wilson, for showing me the way.

Second, I also want to acknowledge and thank my amazing committee at the University of Michigan, Dearborn, for their support, encouragement, and enthusiasm. Stein, Jessica, Alfonso and Sarah showed me what a tremendous difference teachers' expectations have on a student's ability to succeed. I would not have finished this without them, and they were a joy and a privilege to work with.

Third, three of my colleagues at Carnegie Learning also provided invaluable mathematical and statistical support for my data analysis. Patricia Vargas, Colleen Conko, and Barbara Calhoun all generously lent me their time, expertise and support. I will forever be grateful to them.

Finally, my precious family members were always in my corner and always believed in me. My mother, Lois Hunt, lifted many prayers on my behalf and always understood when I couldn't talk because I had a deadline. Meredith and Bret generously shared their brilliant mathematical expertise and were willing to take several late-night calls to give me advice. Adele and Elise missed time with their mom when I was taking classes, but they were always my biggest cheerleaders, and they both have always been my biggest inspiration. Finally, my darling husband Chad, who took on my enormous student loan debt, who agonized with me when I was

stressed and celebrated with me when I reached my milestones, deserves endless kudos. He is truly my best friend and is incontrovertibly my rock. I would not have finished this degree with his faithful support.

Contents

Dedication	i
Acknowledgments	ii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Abstract.....	1
Chapter One: Background.....	2
Online Relationships	5
Theoretical Base	7
Critical Theory	7
Restorative Practices	10
Research Questions	12
Need for Study	13
Chapter Two: Literature Review	15
Importance of Relationships.....	15
Relationships in Face-to-Face Classrooms.....	16
Nurturing Teacher/Student Relationships	16
Nurturing Student/Peer Relationships	18
Relationships in Online Classrooms.....	19
Restorative Practices	23
Conclusion.....	26
Chapter Three: Methodology	27
Research Design.....	27
Site and Participants	27
Data Collection.....	29
Data Analysis	30
Limitations	32

Researcher Bias	32
Chapter Four: Results and Discussion.....	34
Research Question 1	34
Research Question 2.....	378
Research Question 3.....	41
Limitations	46
Chapter Five: Conclusions	48
Data Analysis	48
Research Questions	51
Theoretical Implications.....	52
Future Research.....	55
References	56
Appendix A	78
Appendix B	82

List of Tables

Table 1: Open-Ended Question Codes and Number of Occurrences.....40

List of Figures

Figure 1: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Conflict Subgroup.....	34
Figure 2: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Closeness Percentile Ranking	35
Figure 3: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Dependency Percentile Grouping.....	36
Figure 4: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Total Percentile Rankings.....	37
Figure 5: Survey Results of Relationships-Building Strategies in Online Classes by Number....	38
Figure 6: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Total Percentile Ranking Comparison with Percentage of Yes Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies.....	42
Figure 7: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Conflict Percentile Ranking Compared with Percentage of No Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies.....	43
Figure 8: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Closeness Percentile Ranking Compared with Percentage of Yes Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies.....	44
Figure 9: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Conflict Percentile Ranking Compared with Closeness Percentile Ranking.....	45
Figure 10: Number of Yes Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies and Response to the Open-Ended Question to Add Additional Relationship-Building Strategies.....	46

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic led K12 school leaders in the United States of America to make the unprecedented move to pivot from face-to-face to online classes, a move that was challenging for both teachers and students. Research shows that student-teacher and student-student relationships are crucial for student learning. There is much research on strategies to develop relationships in online classes in higher education, but scant research on relationship building in K12 online classes. This dissertation study sought to answer three questions: What were teachers' perceptions of their relationships with their students prior to the start of remote learning in March of 2020? What strategies have teachers used to form relationships with their students in an online context? Were teachers who perceived that they had good relationships with their students in face-to-face classes before the pandemic more likely to incorporate strategies to develop and nurture relationships with their students during online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic? The survey results showed that teachers perceived that their relationships with their students were not strong prior to the pandemic. However, even though there was a slight tendency for teachers with strong relationships with their students prior to the pandemic to try more relationship-building strategies in their online classes during the pandemic, overall, most teachers tried very hard regardless of their perceptions of their relationships with their students, and many teachers tried unprecedented strategies to connect with their students during the pandemic.

Chapter One: Background

For decades, online learning was primarily the purview of higher education, but it has grown in K12 education, especially following the start of the coronavirus pandemic. In 2019, more than 2.7 million K12 students were enrolled in online courses in the United States, and thirty states offered some form of online public schooling options (Schroeder, 2019). The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic forced many schools to transition to virtual learning in the spring of 2020, forcing teachers to learn how to teach online with extraordinarily little notice (Kamenetz, 2020; Lambert, 2020; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). Shortly after this happened, a debate emerged regarding the short-term future of K12 education: the need to curb the pandemic by closing schools was countered by concern over the damage being done to students by keeping them out of school (Brown, 2021; Bushwick, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). With little to no guidance coming from the federal government and contested recommendations coming from the Center for Disease Control, state and local leaders had to decide how to proceed with the opening of the 2020-2021 school year (Catron & Hirt, 2020; Isensee, 2020; Sprunt & Turner, 2020). Some schools decided to begin the year fully face-to-face, some schools were fully online, and some adopted a hybrid model (Brown, 2021; Catron & Hirt, 2020; McLarty, 2020; Tate, 2020). As the school year progressed and the pandemic worsened, many schools abandoned their face-to-face offerings and pivoted to online classes, while others did the opposite, and brought more students into the classroom (Catron & Hirt, 2020; Jones, Glasgow & Wahltinez, 2020; Tate, 2020). Through all of this,

teachers have been forced to be flexible and resourceful to teach fully online, fully face-to-face, or in a hybrid model (Barmore, 2021; Dade, 2020; Merrill, 2020; Porter, 2020; Tate, 2020; Will, 2020b).

The pandemic has made schooling extremely challenging for school administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents (Brown, 2021; Bushwick, 2020; Catron & Hirt, 2020; Tate, 2020; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). The decision to close schools was a conundrum. Schools are so much more than places of learning: they provide nutrition, medical care, respite from abuse, childcare for parents, social connections, and a place to belong (Brown, 2021; Bushwick, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Jones, Glasgow & Wahltinez, 2020). Closing the schools to prevent the spread of the virus meant that not only would socio-economically disadvantaged students fall even more behind academically, but they would also suffer greatly from losing access to these services (Brown, 2021; Bushwick, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Jones, Glasgow & Wahltinez, 2020). Some teachers who taught face-to-face classes were anxious about catching Covid-19 or passing the virus to their family members, but nevertheless some returned to the classroom out of concern for their students (Brown, 2021; Goldstein & Shapiro, 2020; McLarty, 2020). The demands of teaching fully online or hybrid classes was physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting for teachers (Barmore, 2021; Brown, 2021; Bushwick, 2020; Merrill, 2020; NPR, 2021; Porter, 2020; “Teachers and Students Describe, 2020). Fuentes, a high school teacher, explained that hybrid teaching was especially challenging for her (Brown, 2021). She found that she often spent too much time with her online students, or she worked with her in-person students and forgot about her online students, so she always felt like she was failing as a teacher. She was trained to work with her face-to-face students, and she

was trained to work with her online students, but she was not trained to teach a blended class (Brown, 2021). Overall, teachers have struggled emotionally, overwhelmed by their daunting workload and discouraged because their virtual students have been so disconnected from them and from each other (Medina, 2021; NPR, 2021). The challenges that the pandemic brought to the teaching profession were unprecedented.

As hard as it has been for teachers, the pandemic has also been extremely difficult for students. Almost all students have had to adjust to the tedium and frustration of online learning (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Li & Lalani, 2020; Save the Children, 2021; Tate, 2020). While a few students have thrived in this environment, many more have struggled in their pandemic-induced online classes, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, English language learners, and special needs students (Barmore, 2021; Brown, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Li & Lalanie, 2020; Medina, 2021; Save the Children, 2021; Tate, 2020; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). Many students do not have access to the internet, or do not have enough bandwidth to support online classes from home (Brown, 2021; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Li & Lalani, 2020; Medina, 2021; Save the Children, 2021; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). For some, their internet connections are so slow that turning off their cameras helps them maintain their connection to the virtual classroom (Brown, 2021). Other students turn off their cameras because they are not fully paying attention to class or dislike being on camera (Brown, 2021). Indeed, because some people lost their jobs, their older children found jobs to help support their families, and they would try to log in to their classes while at work, but it was challenging for them to pay attention (Brown, 2021). For all of these students, turning off the camera comes with a cost; students are disengaged from their teachers and from each other

(Brown, 2021; Medina, 2021; Save the Children, 2021; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). Lopez, a high school senior from a large urban high school, shared that she came home from work and was tired and had a hard time motivating herself to do assignments (Brown, 2021). She said she had not learned anything from her online classes, and she merely logged into class for attendance purposes. She felt shame because she thought that she was not working hard enough, but she could not motivate herself to do the work. Lopez was representative of much of her school district; indeed, data from the whole district was bleak as indicated by high failure rates from online students because they were not submitting their assignments (Brown, 2021). In sum, dealing with the pandemic was exhausting for children and a strain on their mental health, and schoolwork often suffered as well. Online classes were and continue to be challenging for both teachers and students.

Online Relationships

Classroom relationships are essential for student learning to occur, both in face-to-face and in online classes, so teachers must prioritize relationship-building activities in their classrooms (Baye, Lake, Inns & Slavin, 2017; Griffiths & Graham, 2010; Holmberg, Shelley & White, 2005; Crawford, 2020; Medina, 2021; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). Given that online learning is so challenging for students, teachers need to work harder to form relationships with their students in their online classes than they did in their face-to-face classes. Many teachers have found relationship building in their online classes to be difficult. For example, Fuentes (in Brown, 2021) knew how important it was for her to develop relationships with her students; in her role as a teacher, she is a surrogate mom, social worker, counselor and coach, so she usually developed close relationships with her students, but she was not able to

form those relationships with her online students (Brown, 2021). The difficulty of forming relationships online is particularly problematic for at-risk and high school seniors. These students, who are especially hard to motivate in normal circumstances, are typically motivated by direct contact with their teachers, extracurricular activities, and friends at school. When they were forced to learn online, they were not making these crucial relationships that keep them engaged and learning (Brown, 2021; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020).

Even though it is challenging, it is possible to form relationships in online classes. Breaking down the virtual barriers requires intentionality, energy and creativity (Holmberg, Shelley & White, 2005). For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Peacock, a teacher, struggled day after day with trying to connect with her students (NPR, 2021). She tried many things with no success until she tried being vulnerable and using humor with her students to get them to connect with her, and she got them to share their screens with each other which helped them to connect with their classmates. She realized that she had to model vulnerability for them to open up to her and to each other.

While there is little research on online classes in the K-12 setting, Cavanaugh (2001) found that videoconferencing tools and telecommunications improved student outcomes for online-learning students. However, these strategies were used for a small number of students who could not be present in a face-to-face classroom. Thus, to examine strategies that work for whole classrooms, research on higher education students provides some answers. Strategies that have worked to develop relationships in online higher education classes are mentoring (Baranik, Wright & Reburn, 2017), instructor self-disclosure (Song et al., 2016), videos (Griffiths & Graham, 2010; Glazier, 2016), comments on student work (Glazier, 2016) and collaborative

learning (Abrami et al., 2011). Strategies that instructors use to break down virtual barriers in online classes will be discussed in more depth in the literature review provided in chapter two.

Theoretical Base

This dissertation is rooted in two important theories in education. The first theory, Critical Theory, creates a foundation for understanding how systemic racism operates in K12 education. The second theory, Restorative Practices (RP), provides a blueprint for building strong and healthy relationships between students, peers, and educators (Mirsky, 2007/2011; Velez, et al., 2020). These theories work well together: RP is built upon a framework of CRT and Intersectionality, while both emphasize social justice and the importance of authentic relationships in education. Hence, these theories, which focus on healthy relationship building, provide the framework for this examination of teachers' perceptions of their abilities to form relationships with their students in online classrooms.

Critical Theory

Critical Theory originated in the first half of the Twentieth century with Marxist studies of Marcuse, Horkheimer, and Adorno in the Frankfurt School and addressed inequities between classes, especially as a result of capitalism (Marcuse 1941/2000; Bounds, 2012). Critical Theory, which centers on social justice, evolved to include many fields of study, including “feminism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, reader-response theory, New Criticism, structuralism and semiotics, deconstruction, new historicism and cultural criticism, lesbian, gay and queer theory, African American criticism, and postcolonial criticism” (Tyson, 2014). One notable field in particular is law; Critical Legal Theory examines how lawmakers are self-serving, using laws as a tool to sustain their power and oppress those who are not in power (“Critical Legal Theory”, n.d; Hunt,

1986). CRT emerged from Critical Legal Theory, and it postulates that racism is enacted through social systems, such as the legal system, not just through the actions of individuals (Bell, 1995; Delgado, R., & Stefancic, 1998/2017; Taylor, 1998).

Bell (1995) first used critical theory to posit that racism was behind the performance gap between black and white students in schools and classified this as CRT. Delgado and Stefancic (1998) discuss the complexity of Intersectionality and how it complicates the lives of people of color, although the focus of their discussion is primarily with law. Crenshaw (1991) also furthers the discussion of intersectionality, focusing on the challenges that women, especially women of color, face. She explains that black and brown women have to deal with both racism and sexism, and she discusses the impact this intersectionality has on women in society, including schools, the workplace, and the courtroom.

Regarding education, Ladson-Billings & Tate (2016) posit three things:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States.
2. U.S. society is based on property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity. (p. 12).

Williams (1991) argues that the progress made by the civil rights movement has primarily served the interests of the dominant white culture, and that the idea of color blindness is harmful to black people in America. Furthermore, Williams (1991) suggests that acts of racism are not unique, but instead are the normal outcome of racist systems, especially through the legal system. Likewise, Amiot, Mayer-Glenn and Parker (2019) suggest that schools should be a place of social justice, and that if white teachers recognize that their whiteness impacts their

perceptions and relationships with their black students, and discard their ill-found notions of color-blindness, then schools can be more equitable places for their students. Solorzano and Huber (2020) also contend that racism is enacted as “microaggressions”, which are often unintentional and unrecognized but nevertheless, inflict great harm (p. 1). Thus, through the lens of CRT, schools are places that perpetuate racism, and black students do not benefit from the American educational system in the ways that white students do. According to Duncan (2006), Critical Race Theory “is an especially useful tool for examining how sociotemporal notions of race inform the naturalization of oppression and the normalization of racial inequality in public schools and society” (para. 2).

As with any theory or practice, Critical Theory is not perfect. Academic critics, especially legal critics have expressed concern with a perceived overreliance on storytelling in critical theories (Duncan, 2006; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Subotnik, 1998). Another criticism comes from some white researchers who have felt shut out of the conversation because some theorists, such as Crenshaw, have advised white researchers to study other things and defer critical race studies to black and brown researchers (Subotnik, 1998). Outside of the academy, some people perceive critical race theory as a tool to divide Americans, making Black and brown Americans feel angry and making white people feel guilty about a leftist interpretation of history, further damaging race relations in America (Ganske, 2021; “The New Social Justice”, n.d.). Despite the backlash, professional organizations, such as the American Bar Association, see critical theory as a tool to further social justice in America (George, 2021). While CRT and Intersectionality serve to help educators understand the impact of racism and sexism in schools, Restorative Practices provide an opportunity for healing in schools.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices (RP) originated in Restorative Justice theory from legal theorists. In traditional justice programs, offenders are punished and victims are often blamed or revictimized; however, in Restorative Justice practices, solutions are sought that allow the offender to repair the damage that was done and allow the victim to heal (Gregory, et al., 2014; McCluskey, et al., 2008a; Mirsky, 2007/2011; Shaw, 2007). Ultimately, through an underlying attitude of respect, all participants are involved in resolving the conflict and in repairing the relationships (Drewery, 2016; Gregory, et al., 2014; McCluskey, et al., 2008a; Mirsky, 2007/2011). Furthermore, restorative justice also serves to proactively inhibit future offenses (Gregory, et al., 2014; McCluskey, et al., 2008a; Mirsky, 2007/2011). When RPs are applied in schools, not only are there less acts of violence, less suspensions, and less incident reports, but students have better relationships with their teachers (Drewery, 2016; Gregory, et al., 2014; McCluskey, et al., 2008a; Mirsky, 2007/2011; Shaw, 2007).

According to Gregory, et al. (2014), there are eleven components of restorative practices in schools which encompass the breadth of relationships in a school system. For example, teachers can use proactive circles, which are spontaneous, informal meetings, to involve students in setting classroom behavioral rules. Likewise, if a student has violated a school rule, both teachers and students participate in restorative conference circles which are meetings that are planned ahead of time and allow both the violator and the violated to be heard and to generate an outcome which allows the broken relationships to be restored.

Mirsky (2011) identifies three categories of restorative practice components: the restorative conference which requires planning and is used for serious offenses; affective

statements which allow participants to make personal connections; and the restorative circle which is spontaneous and supports relationship and community building. Some of the questions that a participant who did something wrong might answer in a circle are: “What happened? What were you thinking at the time? Have you thought about it since? Who has been affected by what you did? In what way? What do you think you need to do to make things right?” (McCluskey, et al., 2008b, para.). While a participant who was impacted by the wrongdoing might answer questions like: “What did you think when you realized what had happened? What effect has this incident had on you and others? What has been the hardest thing for you? What do you think needs to happen to make things right?” (Mirsky, 2011, para. 41.)

In addition to respect, all of these components rely on good communication practices, and all of them lead to the development of strong relationships. Likewise, both educators and students must be thoughtful and candid about their actions and about solutions (McCluskey, et al., 2008b; Mirsky, 2007/2011). Indeed, restorative practices are most effective when the whole school implements them, and when staff members understand how restorative practices support school disciplinary policies and when they are reflective about the implementation process (Augustine, et al., 2018; McCluskey, et al., 2008a; Mirsky, 2007/2011; Shaw, 2007). Shaw (2007) notes that some teachers can sabotage the success of a program when they are not willing to sincerely engage in the process. Other challenges include time: teachers need time for training and they need time to fully implement restorative practices (Augustine, et al, 2018). Indeed, Garnett, et al., (2019) suggest that restorative practices should first be implemented between school staff, parents and other community members before they are used with students so they can model those practices for students. Once they are implemented with students, the circles can

take away valuable teaching time which can impact the teacher's ability to meet their curricular mandates (Augustine, et al., 2018).

Because RP in schools evolved from restorative justice programs, they are often viewed through the lens of using RP to better manage students and to prevent criminal acts and other acts of disruption. However, Velez, et al. (2020) suggest that through RP, adolescent inclinations for rebellion can actually be constructive and useful. Moreover, Mirsky (2011) emphasizes the community building that occurs through RP, and Drewery (2016) posits that social relationships are built and strengthened through RP. Since black and brown students are more likely to be called out, punished, written up, suspended and expelled (Blake et al., 2011; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Carter et al., 2016; Morris & Perry, 2016), and RPs seek to stop this, CRT, Intersectionality and RP are a natural fit. Furthermore, since both Intersectionality and RP focus on relationship building as a solution, they are both an excellent lens through which to examine how teachers form relationships with their students in online classrooms.

Research Questions

This research study sought to answer the following three questions:

1. What were teachers' perceptions of their relationships with their students prior to the start of remote learning in March of 2020?
2. What strategies have teachers used to form relationships with their students in an online context?
3. Were teachers who perceived that they had good relationships with their students in face-to-face classes before the pandemic more likely to incorporate strategies to develop and nurture relationships with their students during online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Need for Study

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has changed the world and has changed how schools will function. As a highly contagious airborne disease, coronavirus forced schools to shut their doors to their students and staff. While the overall consensus was that most students learn best in the classroom, the availability and necessity of online classrooms is likely to never go away, especially for students with health concerns (Catalano, 2021; Torchia, 2021). While online classes have been used extensively in higher education, relatively few students have taken online classes in K12 education. Thus, we know a lot about how to teach adults online, but we do not know much about how to teach children online. For this reason, this study is both timely and necessary. During the pandemic, K-12 students struggled with online learning (Bushwick, 2020), especially low socio-economic students (Brown, 2021), so educators need to know what can be done to help students succeed (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Jones, Glasgow & Wahltinez, 2020). We know that strong relationships are a requisite for student achievement, so it is essential that we learn how teachers are able to cross the online barrier to create strong relationships with their students in their online classes (Baye, Lake, Inns & Slavin, 2017; Griffiths & Graham, 2010; Holmberg, Shelley & White, 2005; Crawford, 2020; Medina, 2021; “Teachers and Students Describe”, 2020). This study matters because student achievement matters, and everyone who cares about children and their learning will want to know how to maximize student learning in online classes. This study focuses on the development of respectful and productive relationships between teachers and students and it will help educators better understand how to break down some of the barriers that exist in online classrooms so that students can be successful in the virtual setting. Note that, in this study, online classes refers to

both synchronous and asynchronous learning that took place during the pandemic and was conducted primarily through electronic devices, but may have been supplemented with print resources.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Teaching K12 students during the Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging, especially when teachers were forced to take the unprecedented action of teaching their students online. Not only did teachers find it difficult to teach students in virtual classrooms, but it was also difficult for teachers to connect with students. Thus, students suffered emotionally, and their academic growth was stunted. Despite the obstacles inherent in forming relationships online, some teachers were able to transcend the virtual barriers and develop relationships with their students. This review of literature will begin with a discussion of the importance of relationships in both face-to-face and online classrooms, and then it will explore strategies that teachers can use to develop a sense of classroom community which fosters relationships in face-to-face and online learning environments. This literature review will close with an examination of restorative practices as it is the primary lens through which the data from this study will be analyzed.

Importance of Relationships

Students who have meaningful relationships with their teachers or with their classmates learn more and are more successful in school (Baye et al., 2017; Lewis et al., 2012; Lumpkin, 2007; Ramberg et al., 2018; Witmer, 2005). Not only is this true for students who are not at risk, but this is also true for students who are at risk of dropping out or have behavioral issues (Baye et al., 2017; Bottiani et al., 2020; Decker et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2012). Indeed, as relationships between teachers and students improve, students get along better with their peers, behave better in school, are more engaged in their lessons, and perform better with their studies (Bottiani et al.,

2020; Lewis et al., 2012; Lumpkin, 2007; Decker et al., 2007). Researchers consistently find that students are more motivated when they have positive relationships with their teachers (den Brok et al., 2004; Henderson & Fisher, 2008; Lewis et al., 2012; Liberante, 2012; Lumpkin, 2020; Maulana, 2011; Quek et al., 2007; Ramberg, 2018).

Relationships in Face-to-Face Classrooms

Much of the literature on relationships in K12 education centers on face-to-face interactions. Connor et al. (2005) identified various things that teachers do that impact their relationships with their students and impact student success, namely: “teachers’ regard for their students, their responsiveness to student questions and interests, the emotional climate of the classroom and their expectations” (p. 346). Bouhnik and Marcus (2006) identify “verbal (i.e., giving praise, soliciting viewpoints, humor, and self-disclosure) and nonverbal (i.e., physical proximity, touch, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures)” behaviors that can create connections between them and their students, and improve learning outcomes for their students (p. 301). Teven and Hanson (2004) suggest that teachers who demonstrate caring in both verbal and nonverbal ways are perceived by their students as being more credible and more caring. Some researchers note that female students value having a caring teacher more highly than male students do, and they are more likely to want a close relationship with their teachers as well (Liberante, 2012; Mahalas et al., 2009). That said, regardless of gender, all students benefit from feeling connected to their teachers and their peers.

Nurturing Teacher/Student Relationships

Teachers must be intentional and reflective about forming positive relationships with their students, and they must accept the onus for developing and maintaining those relationships

(Gurgel, 2015). One of the most important things teachers can do to nurture relationships with their students is to care about their students (Bottiani et al., 2020; Gurgel, 2015; Lewis et al., 2012; Lumpkin, 2007; Mihalas et al., 2009; Tosolt, 2012), and one of the most important things teachers can do to show that they care is to listen deeply to their students (Mihalas et al., 2009). Teachers need to talk to their students and learn about their interests and backgrounds (Bottiani, et al., 2020; Mihalas et al., 2009). Teachers need to have high expectations for their students and believe in their students (Gurgel, 2015; Lewis et al., 2012; Lumpkin, 2007; Mihalas et al., 2009). Teachers can learn from their students, ask their students for input and feedback and act on that feedback. This can also involve allowing students to make important decisions (Lumpkin, 2020; Mihalas, 2009), thus empowering the students instead of trying to control them (Mihalas, 2009). Teachers should be responsive to student needs in a timely manner, thus demonstrating that students are important enough to the teachers for them to act right away (Ramberg et al., 2018).

Another aspect of teacher caring that emerged in the literature was the necessity of cultural responsiveness. The majority of teachers are white women, and the student population is increasingly black and brown (“Characteristics of Public,” 2021; Will, 2020a). To this end, teachers need to recognize and address their biases about students’ demographic backgrounds (Bottiani et al., 2020; Gurgel, 2009). Teachers should use a curriculum that is culturally relevant to their students and be culturally responsive in their teaching practices (Bottiani et al., 2020; Gurgel, 2015). Lastly, teachers should understand that while they intend for an action to be a caring action, students may not interpret that action as caring (Lewis et al., 2012; Tosolt, 2009). Teachers need to show their students that they care in culturally sensitive and culturally responsive ways (Ennis & McCauley, 2010; Tosolt, 2009). Because different ethnic and cultural

groups interpret actions differently, teachers need to have conversations with their students to find out what actions show them that their teachers care about them (Tosolt, 2009). Furthermore, all students are individuals, so teachers cannot assume that all students in a certain group will think the same way. Thus, through listening to their students, teachers can expand their understanding of how to show students that they care about them.

Nurturing Student/Peer Relationships

While caring teacher-student relationships are critical for student achievement, strong student-peer relationships are just as powerful, especially for middle and high school students (Baye et al., 2017). Just as teachers need to be intentional about developing caring teacher-student relationships, so, too, they need to be intentional about creating the right conditions for students to develop strong relationships with each other (Schmidt, 2018). Johnson et al. (2019) differentiate between peer bonding and peer bridging relationships. Bonding relationships occur between students of similar interests and backgrounds, and bridging relationships are between students of different interests and backgrounds. Both types of relationships are valuable for students and can be nurtured by teachers. Indeed, when teachers are caring and supportive of their students, they are modeling that behavior for their students to enact with their peers. Likewise, when teachers manage their classes effectively, they create a safe space for students to develop caring and supportive relationships with each other. Ennis and McCauley (2010) argue that trust is so important, especially for urban students, that “it should be a planned, essential curricular component modeled by adults, infused in curricular activities, and explicitly defined and taught as a building block to positive, successful life-interactions and experiences” (p. 152).

Once teachers have created trusting spaces for students, then students can develop trusting relationships with each other.

Classroom management strategies also emerged in the literature regarding supporting student relationships. Student-centered classroom communities--spaces where students can form trusting, caring and empathetic relationships--are not formed in traditional, authoritarian teacher-dominated classrooms. Instead, teachers need to create spaces where students are valued, respected and empowered (Pohan, 2003). Instead of seeking to control students, teachers should seek to help them learn to control themselves out of respect for themselves and for their classmates. Students who are valued and respected are able to value and respect others.

Beyond the affective domain, teachers can use their pedagogy to support their students in developing relationships with each other. They should intentionally create opportunities for students to get to know each other at the beginning of the school year (Schmidt, 2018). Group work, especially cooperative learning groups, are an excellent way to nurture students' relationships with their classmates (Baye et al., 2017; Saville et al., 2012). Classroom discussions are also excellent ways to build classroom community (Dallimore et al., 2016). Teachers can creatively use regular classroom assignments, such as Blogs, to support student relationship building (Alexander & Bach, 2014). Teachers can also support class discussions that incorporate students' lived experiences and support empathy and acceptance of diversity by modeling empathy and acceptance of their diverse classrooms (Bucolo & Fink, 2011; Dzubinski, 2014).

Relationships in Online Classrooms

Almost all of the literature about online classrooms is centered on higher education simply because before the COVID-19 pandemic, only a few K12 students took online classes.

That said, the knowledge gathered about teaching adult learners online can inform K12 teachers. A natural beginning to a discussion of online education is the concept of distance. In his theory of Transactional Distance, Moore (1989) identified three types of interactions that distance educators need to consider: the distance between the teacher and the student, the distance between the students themselves, and the distance between the students and the content to be learned. He suggested that these three distances were of greater concern than the physical distance separating students from their teachers and from each other, and that distance is a misunderstanding which is minimized through interaction. Rumble (2019) argues that these distances are present in face-to-face classrooms as well and not unique to distance learning.

Hillman et al. (1994) posits that Moore's (1989) Transactional Distance Theory is incomplete because it does not include the interaction that students have with the electronic technology. He suggests that teachers need to be prepared to support their students in functioning in an online classroom. The evolution of Moore's Theory of Transactional Distance does not address the disconnection that teachers and students feel in online classes. Indeed, Chen (2001) concludes that "use of the concept 'transactional distance' focuses on and reinforces the elimination of psychological distance from a pedagogical perspective and de-emphasizes the ideas of distance and isolation suggested by geographical perspective" (p. 469). He argues that distance-learners want connections with their instructors and their classmates in online courses more than they do in their face-to-face classes.

The idea that online instructors need to implement strategies to bridge the transactional distance their students face is incontrovertible in the literature, and researchers provide many suggestions to mitigate the distance. Ni and Aust (2008) assert that "classroom community is

critical to enhance students' satisfaction and perceived learning” and “teachers should develop communication behaviors that reduce social and psychological distance in the online learning environment” (p. 477). Huang et al. (2016) recommend that teachers incorporate “high levels of dialogue and structure”, make use of “interactive, two-way instructional media”, and incorporate “group or class discussions” (p 735). Sargeant et al. (2006) concur that online discussions are essential, and they stipulate that teachers must participate in the discussions in timely and meaningful ways with thoughtful comments and thought-provoking questions. They suggest that teachers create an introductory discussion post for students to get to know each other, and they encourage teachers to monitor student participation and reach out to students who are not active in the class. They also mention that the facilitation skills that teachers use in face-to-face classes carry over to online classes. Other researchers have incorporated social media as a means for students to communicate with their instructors in lieu of more formal academic communication tools such as email, office visits or messaging tools in learning management systems. They posit that since students are comfortable using social media, they feel more comfortable using social media for academic purposes and use it more often than they use the formal academic communication tools (Stone & Barry, 2019). The consensus, however, is that teachers need to incorporate discussions into their online classes and make those discussions a significant part of the class grade (Brown, 2001; Picciano, 2001; Swan, 2001).

Another theme that emerges from the literature is that online teachers need to be intentional about nurturing relationships with their students and among their students. For example, Brown (2001) described a strategy she used to help her online students connect with each other. She created a structure for her students to develop friendships and engage in

substantive and lengthy conversations on important topics. She was actively engaged in the class, modeling the desired behavior and quickly responding to students' queries and comments. The result was a sense of deep connection and closeness among the students. Likewise, Brown (as cited in Prothero, 2021) says that she is intentional about setting aside time every morning to talk to her students about their lives. From her own experience of being traumatized as a child, she knows that being consistent and having a routine is good for her students, and she knows that they will feel seen and heard and more connected to her through their daily check-in conversations. Thus, teachers' intentionality about forming relationships with their students is crucial for their success.

Forming relationships with students in online classes requires the same intentionality, but teachers must be creative and use different strategies. A study was conducted with K12 teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic to learn how they created caring relationships with their students in their online classrooms, and three themes emerged (Miller, 2021). The first theme was that teachers were positive with their students while communicating an expectation that students will be successful. For example, teachers personally reached out to students to motivate them to complete their assignments and supported them in managing their time. Second, teachers were responsive and compassionate with their students, noting that they might need to change their academic expectations for their students, and that they needed emotional support more than they needed academic rigor at the moment. Several teachers modified their online classes to incorporate more time for the students to connect with each other as well. Third, teachers made accommodations for students who did not have internet access at home. They modified lessons, called home, texted parents, and mailed work home for students to complete.

The teachers made their relationships with their students their highest priority, and they went out of their way to communicate to their students that they cared about them. They noted that there is a difference between completing a fun activity designed to get to know someone and showing all of their students that they care about them in the middle of a pandemic. They also noted that it was challenging to connect with students who did not have internet access at home, and that these students were often the same students who felt isolated and disconnected from school prior to the pandemic.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices (RP) organically support educators who value students and want to nurture relationships with them and support them in developing relationships with each other. Moreover, RP are most beneficial for students who feel isolated and disconnected from schools—many of whom are dealing with the intersectionality of race, gender and class. Conflict arises naturally in human relationships, and while it is often destructive, it does not have to be. Indeed, conflict can be a tool to help people better understand each other and strengthen their relationships. In schools, RP is an excellent tool to transform conflict into a relationship-building agent because it provides both support and strong limits on behavior instead of being neglectful, permissive or punitive, each of which can lead to further conflict and more harmful behavior. (Rodman, 2007). In RP, there is a clear delineation between the person and the wrongdoing, and there is a clear path for the person to follow to acknowledge the wrongdoing, face the consequences, and find forgiveness and redemption. Through RP, children and adolescents develop resiliency and empathy. They are a valued part of a community, worthy of inclusion, and

they learn to value the community and care for its members. Moreover, they are empowered to break negative cycles that could lead to self-destructive and antisocial behavior.

RP provides a framework for adults to manage their relationships with each other and with their students (Mirsky, 2007). It works best when it is implemented by every person in the school community. It can be implemented in different ways, depending on the nature of the wrongdoing and the number of people involved in the wrongdoing and the number of people who are impacted by it. According to Mirsky (2007) “restorative practices place responsibility on the students, using a collaborative response to wrongdoing. Students are encouraged to both give and ask for support and are responsible for helping to address behavior in other students. This fosters a strong sense of community as well as a strong sense of safety” (p. 6). RP includes the use of journal writing, small group circles, interventions, one-on-ones, and group meetings. These meetings can be planned ahead of time or be spontaneous. They always involve using questions and active listening. Students are encouraged to set goals for their behavior and their relationships, and they are empowered to decide on punishments--not punitive punishments, but redemptive punishments.

RP have many benefits. They can transform the culture of a school, turning a chaotic place with punitive disciplinary practices into an equitable and productive learning community (Buckmaster, 2016; Grossi & Santos, 2012; Kervick et al., 2020; Mirsky, 2007; Boulton, 2006). In fact, even after the first few days of implementing RP, student behavior can improve (Gray & Drewery, 2011). Even if there is not significant improvement in school culture, there is still improvement in the student behavior and students’ perceptions of their experiences (Acosta et al., 2019) Because students create the rules and mete out the consequences, they are much more

likely to follow and respect the rules and follow-through with the consequences (Boulton, 2006). RP create a sense of community and provide a safe place for students to focus on their relationships and on their studies (2006). Furthermore, they are a great tool to support difficult conversations about race, gender, disability and other sensitive topics (Hulvershorn & Mulholland, 2018). Not only do they help support discussions about race and gender, but they help provide a more equitable climate for Black and brown male students who typically experience more disciplinary actions (Joseph et al., 2021; Kervick et al., 2019). The RP are also universal--they are effective in settings around the globe (Chiramba & Harris, 2020; Gray & Drewery, 2011; Grossi & Santos, 2012). Furthermore, they are a great tool to teach preservice teachers so they enter their classrooms equipped with a powerful tool for their classrooms and to transform the lives of their students (Silverman & Mee, 2018).

RP are not a magic bullet. The practices are hard work to implement (Hulvershorn & Mulholland, 2018), and they can take years to use effectively (Mirsky, 2007), and frequently it is hard to get all of the staff members on board to use the practices (Boulton, 2006; Joseph et al., 2021; Mirsky, 2007). Even after a few years, the school culture may not exhibit significant change (Acosta et al., 2019). Staff members often need multiple training sessions to understand and effectively implement RP, and sometimes schools require the services of a coach to help them implement the practices, which can be expensive (Boulton, 2006). Standing et al. (2012) provides an example that RP may not work with every student right away by explaining that RP helped open a line of communication between a student and his teacher, but he reverted to his former disruptive behavior when he returned to the classroom. In time, continued RP may help this student, but he may never fully accept the practices. Thus, RP are not a quick fix and require

buy-in, time and great effort, and not every school community is willing to invest the time, money and energy to implement it. However, for the schools that are willing to invest in it, it will provide the reward of improved relationships, transformed lives, and improved academic performance.

Conclusion

Positive and caring relationships are essential for students to be successful in school. Students need to be seen, heard, and cared for by their teachers, and they need to have respectful and empathetic relationships with each other. It takes great effort for teachers to create nurturing classroom communities in their face-to-face classes, and even greater effort to achieve this in their online classrooms. Furthermore, many schools have punitive discipline policies (“Bennet, Duckworth, Murphy,” 2021) that inequitably target male students, students of color, and impoverished students—students whose intersectionality creates a great burden for them. These same students are some of the ones who struggled the most in online classes and were the hardest hit by the pandemic (Brown, 2021; Bushwick, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Jones, Glasgow & Wahltinez, 2020). Because Restorative Practices can be a great tool to transform punitive school cultures into nurturing and equitable places for students to learn, the principles of RP can give us some clues to understand how to support students who are dealing with intersectionality in their online classes. Moreover, RP, with its focus on relationships, is a great lens through which to discuss relationship building in online classes as well.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study sought to discover teachers' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their students before the pandemic and what those K12 teachers did during remote learning to initiate, create and develop caring relationships with their students during the COVID-19 lockdown, using Critical Theory and Restorative Practices theory to interpret the results. The research will answer the following three questions:

1. What were teachers' perceptions of their relationships with their students prior to the start of remote learning in March of 2020?
2. What strategies have teachers used to form relationships with their students in an online context?
3. Were teachers who perceived that they had good relationships with their students in face-to-face classes before the pandemic more likely to incorporate strategies to develop and nurture relationships with their students during online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research Design

The research design for this exploratory study used concurrent mixed methodology (Creswell, 2009; Morrell & Carroll, 2010). Study results were triangulated by basing findings on both the quantitative and qualitative results (Morrell & Carroll, 2010).

Site and Participants

This researcher recruited a convenience sample (Creswell, 2009) of 96 volunteer participants who taught K12 online classes in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants for this study were recruited through social media contacts on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, through University of Michigan student lists, and through professional contacts.

Participants were self-selected and took the survey through an anonymous link. Sixty of the participants were from Michigan, six each were from Colorado and West Virginia, four were from Texas, two each were from Georgia, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin, and one each were from Arizona, California, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington. Two participants did not identify a state. Twenty-nine participants identified their school district as urban, fifty-two as suburban, and fifteen as rural. Regarding the quality of their students' access to the internet at home, five said it was a poor connection, thirty-two said it was fair, forty-four said it was good, and fifteen said it was high quality.

Participants were asked to identify if their online classes were mostly synchronous, mostly asynchronous, or a blend of both. Twenty-nine participants indicated that their online classes were mostly synchronous, eleven indicated that their online classes were mostly asynchronous, and fifty-six indicated that they were a blend of both. Participants were also asked how many years they have been teaching. Eleven participants said that they taught for five or less years, twenty-four said that they taught for six to ten years, fifteen said ten to fifteen years, seventeen said fifteen to twenty, and twenty-nine said over twenty. Regarding their age groups, seven participants are in their twenties, twenty-eight are in their thirties, twenty-four are in their forties, thirty-four are in their fifties, and three are sixty or over.

The years in question include the 2019-2020 school year, the 2020-2021 school year, and the 2021-2022 school year. The COVID-19 pandemic started in the winter of 2019-2020, and

most schools started remote learning in March of 2020 (Ferren, 2021; “Map: Coronavirus,” 2021). During the 2020-2021 school years, schools held classes remotely or in person based upon the COVID-19 outbreak in their areas or at their schools (Ferren, 2021). While most schools have held face-to-face classes in the 2021-2022 school year, many schools have had to conduct online classes at different points during the year to contain or stop a COVID-19 outbreak in their schools (Park & Dey, 2022). Having participants who experienced teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed the researcher to gain knowledge about what teachers did to initiate, create and develop caring relationships with their students. All participants are anonymous. All participants gave consent acknowledging that their participation in the study is voluntary and that their identities will be protected through the use of assigned numbers and through the removal of any data that could reveal their identities. Coding of data used random numbers and letters for the participants’ names. The various school districts did not need to give permission for their stakeholders’ experiences and interpretations of those experiences.

Data Collection

The data was collected using Qualtrics software, Version December 2022 (Qualtrics, 2022), a digital survey tool (Creswell, 2009). The researcher gathered information to learn about teachers’ perceptions of their relationships with their students before the COVID-19 pandemic, and strategies they used to develop and nurture caring relationships with their students when they were teaching students online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were asked to share additional actions they took when they were teaching online to develop and nurture relationships

with their students starting in March 2020 and continuing during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years while they were teaching students online.

The survey began with quantitative demographic questions. Those were followed by Pianta's (2001) Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) long form (See Appendix B). The reliability and validity of this form was validated by Koomen et al. (2012). Pianta gave this researcher permission to modify this form from singular to plural. Pianta's survey was followed by a list of twenty strategies that teachers have used to create and develop relationships with their students in online classes. These strategies were discussed in the literature review and were gleaned by the researcher by identifying strategies that the researchers suggested were effective for developing relationships in online classes. The surveys are essential because they will provide a first-hand perspective about what the teachers did. Pianta's Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) contains twenty-eight statements that teachers ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating *Definitely Does Not Apply* and five indicating *Definitely Does Apply* (See Appendix A). The next part of the survey listed twenty strategies that teachers use to develop relationships with students in online classes, and teachers indicated Yes/No regarding whether they utilized that strategy. The survey concluded with a Qualitative question in which teachers were provided a text box to supply any additional strategies they tried that helped them develop and nurture their relationships with their students (See Appendix B).

Data Analysis

As an exploratory study using a concurrent mixed methods design, the data analysis used both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Creswell, 2009). As mentioned above, the data were collected concurrently, and it was analyzed concurrently as well. Following Clarke and Braun's

(2013) explanation of reflexive thematic analysis, the coding was done in an inductive manner, allowing the themes and codes to emerge from the data. Hence, the researcher created codes for the questions in the second half of the survey and counted the number of times that they appeared. This researcher identified trends between the teachers' perceptions of their relationships with their students and the effort they expended during online teaching during the pandemic to create and develop relationships with their students.

The quantitative data was exported from Qualtrics (Version December 2022) to IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28) for analysis, and the data were cleaned in preparation for analysis. First, automatically generated variables created by the Qualtrics system were removed. Next, seventy-eight incomplete cases were deleted, which is 44% of the submissions. Missing variables were also addressed using the formula provided by Pianta for accounting for missing values in the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale. There were fifteen missing values for the twenty relationship-building strategies, so they were eliminated from the final percentage calculations. Prior to analysis, the scores on the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale percentages were checked for univariate outliers, linearity, and normality. It was revealed that <insert domains and number of outliers here (e.g. the conflict domain had two extreme outliers, the closeness domain had X outliers, and the dependency domain had X outliers.) and any other data adjustments you made at this stage.

The results from the Pianta's Student-Teacher Relationship Scale needed scoring before the results could be analyzed. First, sums were calculated for conflict, closeness and dependency. These raw scores were then converted to percentile rankings using the table that Pianta provided. Lastly, the percentile rankings were coded as low, medium low, medium high or high. The

results from the relationship-building strategies were tabulated and then converted in percentages. The “yes” responses were divided by the number of (yes + no) responses to account for the missing values.

Limitations

The data collected were limited to the people who were willing to respond to the survey and complete it, and thus will not be generalizable. Note that seventy-eight submissions were discarded because they were incomplete. The data were biased according to each person’s limited knowledge and experience with online teaching. Furthermore, when teachers reflect upon their relationships with their students prior to the pandemic, their memories may be impacted by their experiences with their students during the pandemic. Thus, the results are dependent upon the researcher maintaining a neutral stance and interpreting the results with an open mind. The findings are unique to each teacher and each school setting and thus not generalizable to other schools.

Researcher Bias

The researcher is a middle-class, white, cis female, former teacher who taught BIPOC students in a large urban school district and taught diverse students in a large urban community college and two universities. While the researcher taught online classes in higher education, this researcher never taught online classes to K12 students. It should be acknowledged that this researcher has a significant lived history of forming caring relationships with students. Likewise, this researcher did not teach during the pandemic, and she acknowledges that she has great empathy and respect for the teachers who did. This researcher believes that teachers have a

responsibility to attempt to form relationships with their students, and she understands the great effort that this requires.

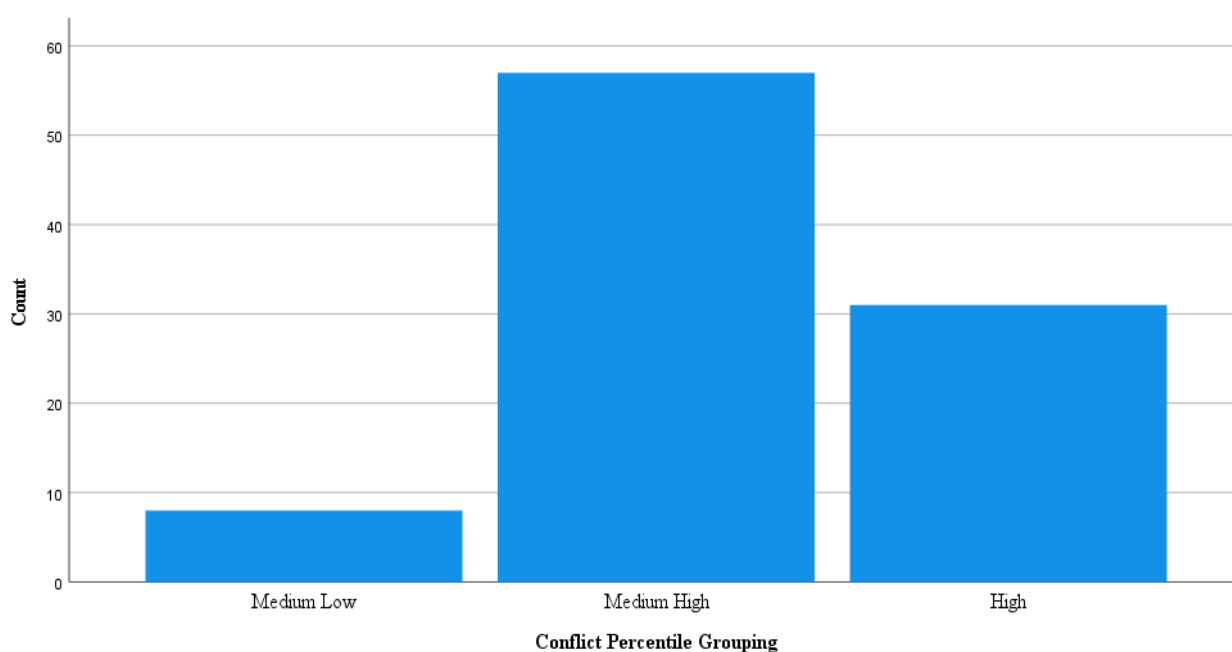
Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

The first research question this study sought to answer is “What were teachers’ perceptions of their relationships with their students prior to the start of remote learning in March of 2020?” Pianta’s Student-Teacher Relationship Scale was used to determine the answer. The scale is divided into three aspects of student-teacher relationships: Conflict, Closeness and Dependency.

Figure 1

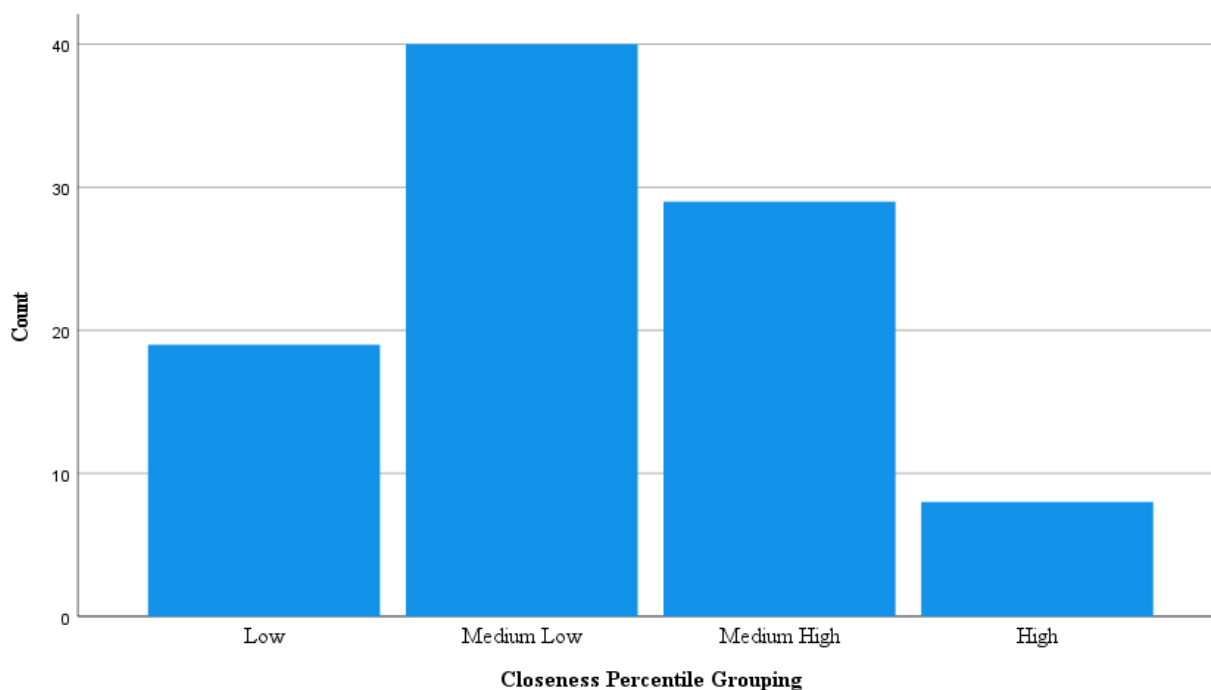
Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Conflict Subgroup



For this dissertation, conflict is defined as a disagreement, argument, or incompatibility; closeness is defined as affection, caring and an affinity for each other, and dependency is defined as a reliance upon or a need for affirmation and confirmation of thoughts and actions. Conflict results showed that only 8 participants were in the medium low category, 57 were in the medium high category, and 31 were in the high conflict category (See Figure 1 above). Zero participants were in the low conflict category, so it is not shown on the bar graph. In sum, over 90% of the participants indicated that they had medium to high conflict with their students before the pandemic.

Figure 2

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Closeness Percentile Ranking



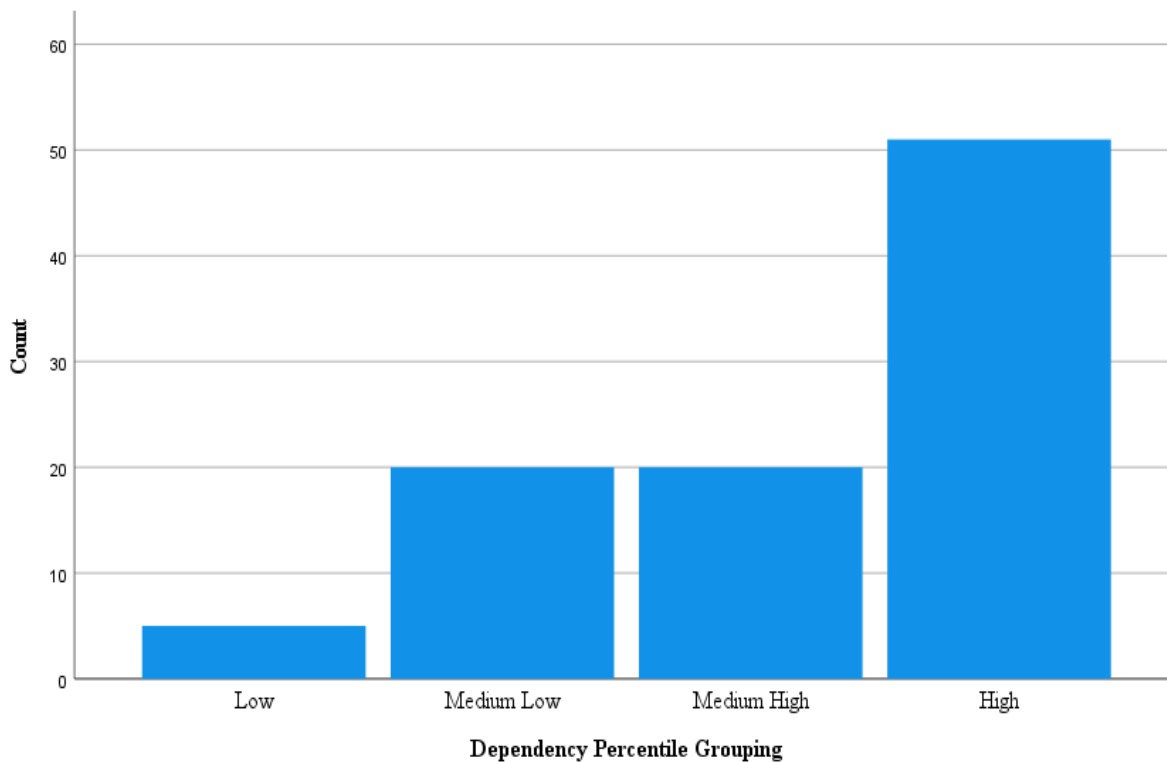
The second aspect of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale is closeness. Figure 2 above shows the results of the survey with regards to closeness percentile ranking. 19 participants rated

themselves as low in closeness; 40 rated themselves as medium low; 29 rated themselves as high, and only 8 rated themselves as highly close to their students before the pandemic. Note that these results are aligned with the previous rating of conflict.

The third aspect of Pianta's Student-Teacher Relationship Scale is Dependency, which is seen in Figure 3 below. 5 participants rated their students as being highly independent, and 20 rated their students as being medium high in independence. Conversely, 20 teachers rated their students as medium high in dependence and over half the participants (51) rated their students as being highly dependent on them.

Figure 3

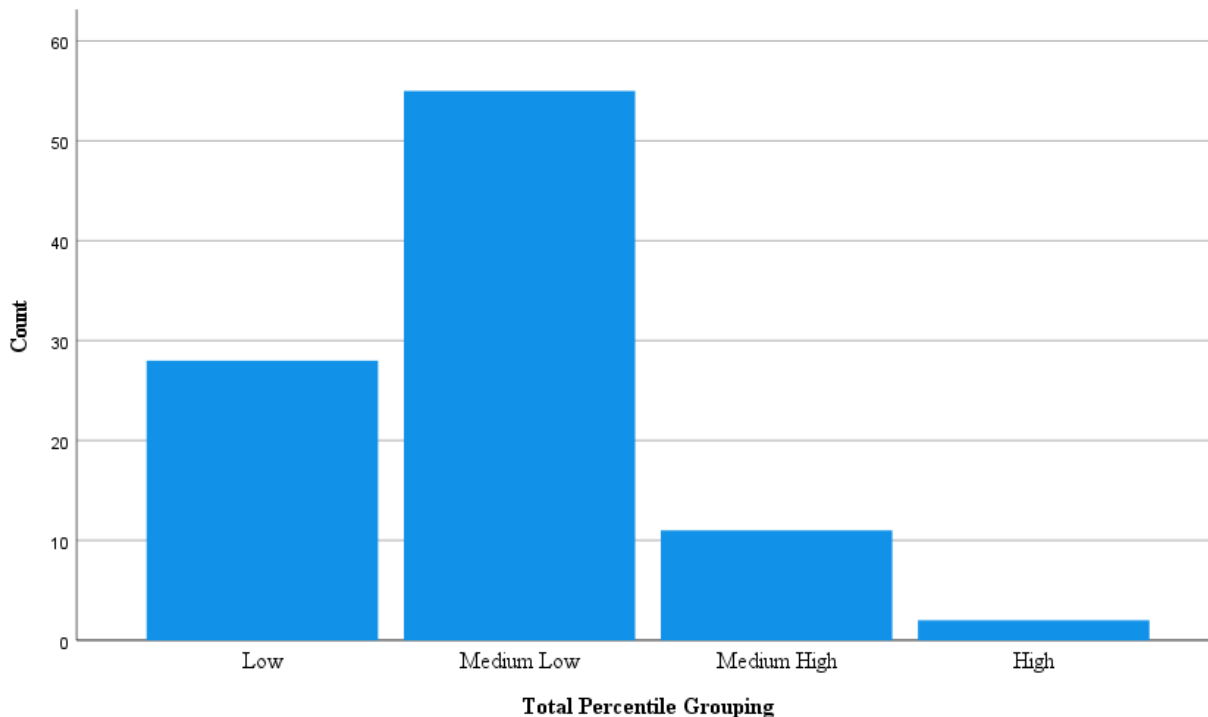
Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Dependency Percentile Grouping



Pianta's Student-Teacher Relationship Scale also provides an overall ranking of student-teacher relationships. Figure 4 below shows the total percentile rankings.

Figure 4

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Total Percentile Rankings



Out of ninety-six participants, twenty-eight of them fall in the low level of student-teacher relationships, and fifty-five fall in the medium low level. This means that over 86.5% ranked themselves as having poor relationships with their students before the pandemic. Only eleven participants were medium high, meaning that they had good relationships with their students, and only two participants rated themselves as high, having excellent relationships with their students. These results are consistent with what the subgroup results showed us, that teachers perceived

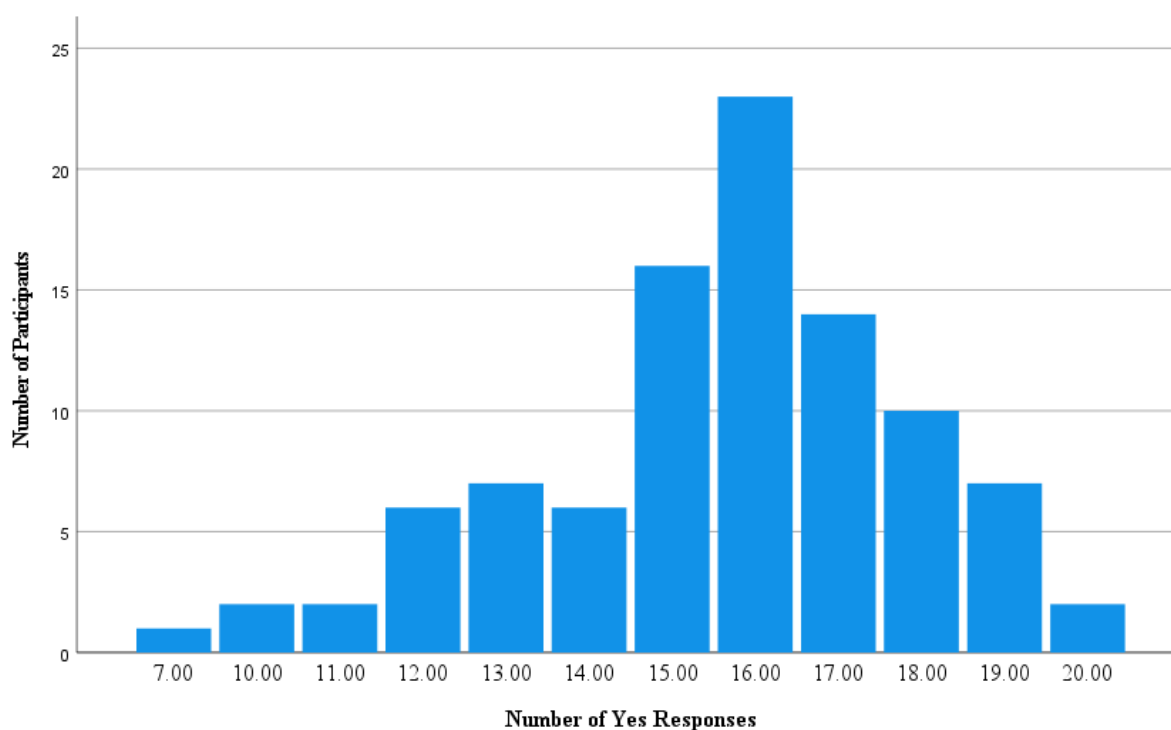
that prior to the pandemic their relationships with their students were high conflict, low closeness, and high dependency.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, “What strategies have teachers used to form relationships with their students in an online context?” This question was addressed in two ways. First, a review of the literature revealed twenty strategies that teachers have used to nurture relationships with their students during the pandemic. (See Appendix B for a list of strategies.)

Figure 5

Survey Results of Relationships-Building Strategies in Online Classes by Number



Participants were asked to respond “Yes” if they used the indicated strategy in their online classes during the pandemic, and answer “No” if they did not use the strategy. Only 1 of the 96

participants used less than half of the twenty strategies, and most of the participants used fifteen or more strategies. Figure 5 above shows the number of “Yes” responses. Note that most participants said “Yes” fifteen or more times.

The second way research question 2 was addressed was by asking participants to add additional strategies they used to form relationships with their students during the pandemic. 51% of the participants chose to respond in the text box. See Appendix B for their responses. While a few wrote short sentences, most of them used the space to write more detailed responses. The responses were coded for themes, and many of the responses received multiple codes because the participants shared multiple strategies. Refer to Table 1 below for the list of codes and the number of occurrences. Note that “whole person” is the most common code. This code was used for strategies that recognized that both students and teachers are human, and have lives and interests beyond the state standards, lessons and assignments. Strategies that received this code made mention of making space for teachers and students to connect as human beings, not just as teachers and students. For example, one participant said that her middle school students “wanted/needed more than just work.”

The second and third most common codes were “other forms of communication” and “make extra time and space”, respectively. The “other forms of communication” code was used for strategies that teachers used to communicate beyond the school-based emails, learning management systems, or video conferencing tools. Teachers made use of various other strategies to communicate with their students. One teacher mentioned that she had her students give “video game student-led presentations”. The “make extra time and space” code was used for strategies in which teachers made extra time for students beyond the designated learning time. Several

teachers also found alternative spaces to spend time with students beyond their video conferencing tool.

Table 1

Open-Ended Question Codes and Number of Occurrences

Code	Number of Occurrences
Face-to-face contact	8
Connect with parents	5
Whole person	25
Other forms of communication	16
Extra time/alternative space	14
Fun	12
Feedback from students	4
Clear and detailed directions	2
Small groups	3

For example, a participant mentioned that staff at her school took turns hosting a Zoom meeting all day every weekday so that students could log in to the call any time they needed to. Both of these codes demonstrate how teachers made an extra effort to communicate and have time with their students beyond the time they were required to be together.

Many teachers also mentioned that they looked for ways to make their time together to be fun. Some used fun activities for instruction, and some used fun activities to build community with their students. One participant mentioned that they made silly music videos and posted them to entertain their students. Several teachers also mentioned that they found a way to see their

students face-to-face. Some teachers drove to their students' homes to wave at them through the window; some teachers met with small groups of students at school, and some teachers had parents drive to the school for learning packets and the teachers could wave to their students through the car windows. One participant mentioned that they did this monthly and the come-to-school day was intentionally designed to be a celebratory event. Finally, a few participants discussed going out of their way to connect with parents, to accept and act upon feedback from students, to meet with students in small groups, and to give clear and detailed directions to their students. The variety of these strategies demonstrates the teachers' creativity and commitment to their students.

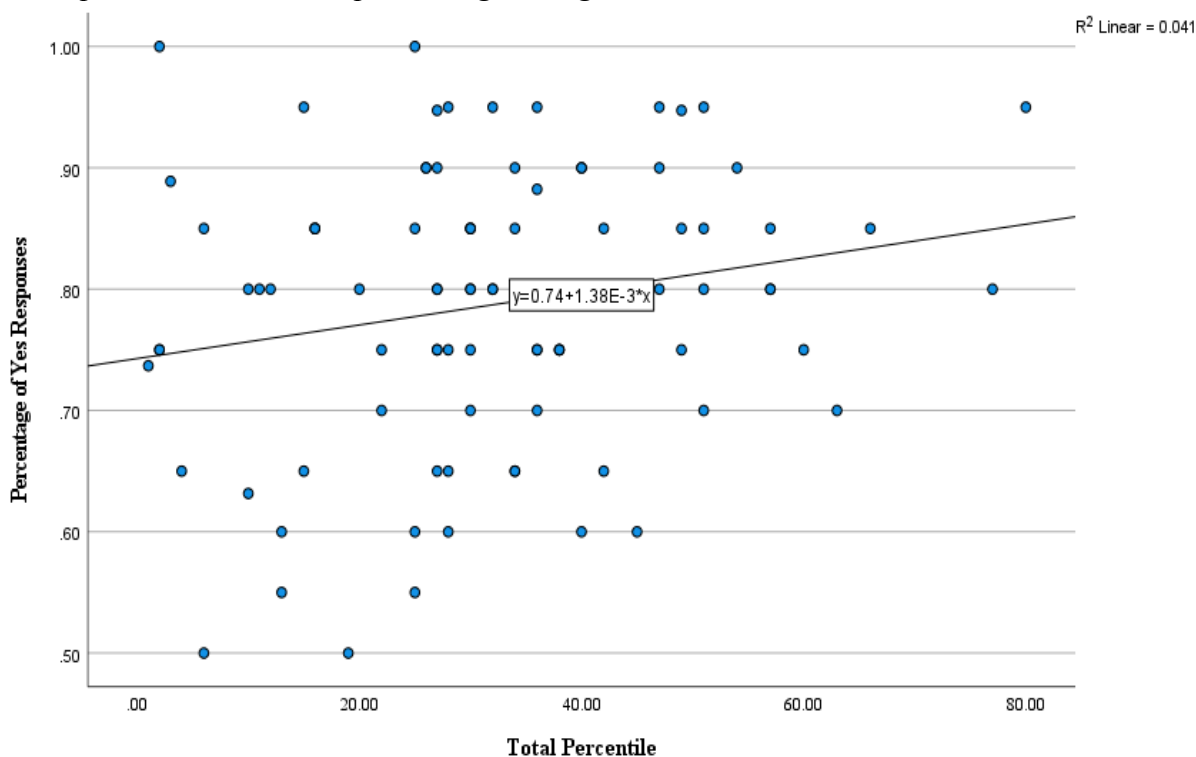
Research Question 3

The third research question is, "Were teachers who perceived that they had good relationships with their students in face-to-face classes before the pandemic more likely to incorporate strategies to develop and nurture relationships with their students during online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic?" Scatter Plot graphs were created to look for relationship slopes, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) tests were used to examine this relationship. The first two variables compared were the total percentile ranking for Pianta's Student-Teacher Relationship Scale with percentage of yes responses for the relationship strategies. Figure 6 below shows that results are mostly random, with the exception that the very highest in the relationship scale also were very high in the number of yes responses. A Pearson's r correlation demonstrated that there was a weak but significant relationship between the number of relationship-building activities the teachers used and their relationship scores, $r(95) = 0.20, p < 0.05$ (0.048). Thus, in general, teachers with higher relationship percentile rankings are only

slightly more likely to work hard to form relationships with their students than teachers with lower percentile rankings. Indeed, because the vast majority of teachers ranked themselves as medium low to low on the relationship scale, and because the vast majority of teachers tried at least fifteen of the twenty relationship building strategies, the results of the scatter plot and the correlation coefficient are not surprising. This result clearly shows the resilience of teachers and the caring hearts that teachers have.

Figure 6

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Total Percentile Ranking Comparison with Percentage of Yes Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies

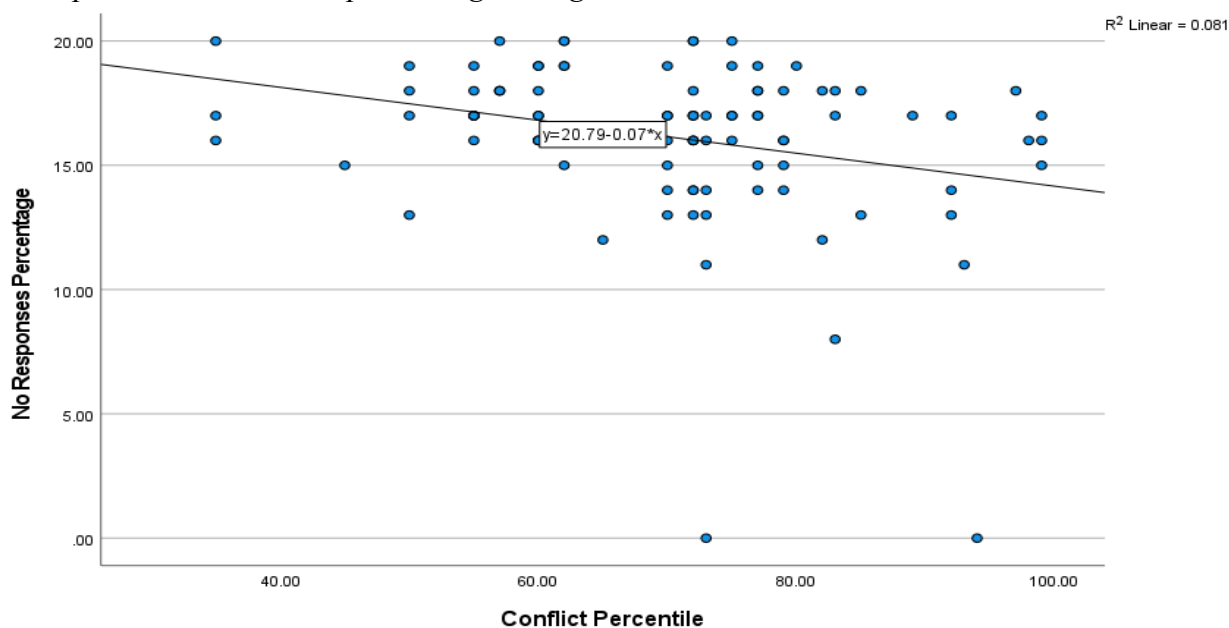


The second analysis was to compare the relationship between the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale conflict percentile ranking with the percentage of “no” responses. Figure 7 below shows a

slight downward slope; (note that the two outliers on the scatter dot graph were identified on a histogram and were removed for the Pearson correlation analysis.) The Pearson's r correlation demonstrated that there was a slight negative, but significant correlation: $r(95) = -0.27, p \leq 0.05$. In this case, the higher conflict levels were slightly more likely to indicate that they did not try as many relationship-building strategies. Logically, it makes sense that a few of the high-conflict teachers would not have tried quite as many strategies as the other teachers tried, and this shows that teachers are human, and that while they are resilient, they eventually run out of capacity.

Figure 7

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Conflict Percentile Ranking Compared with Percentage of No Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies

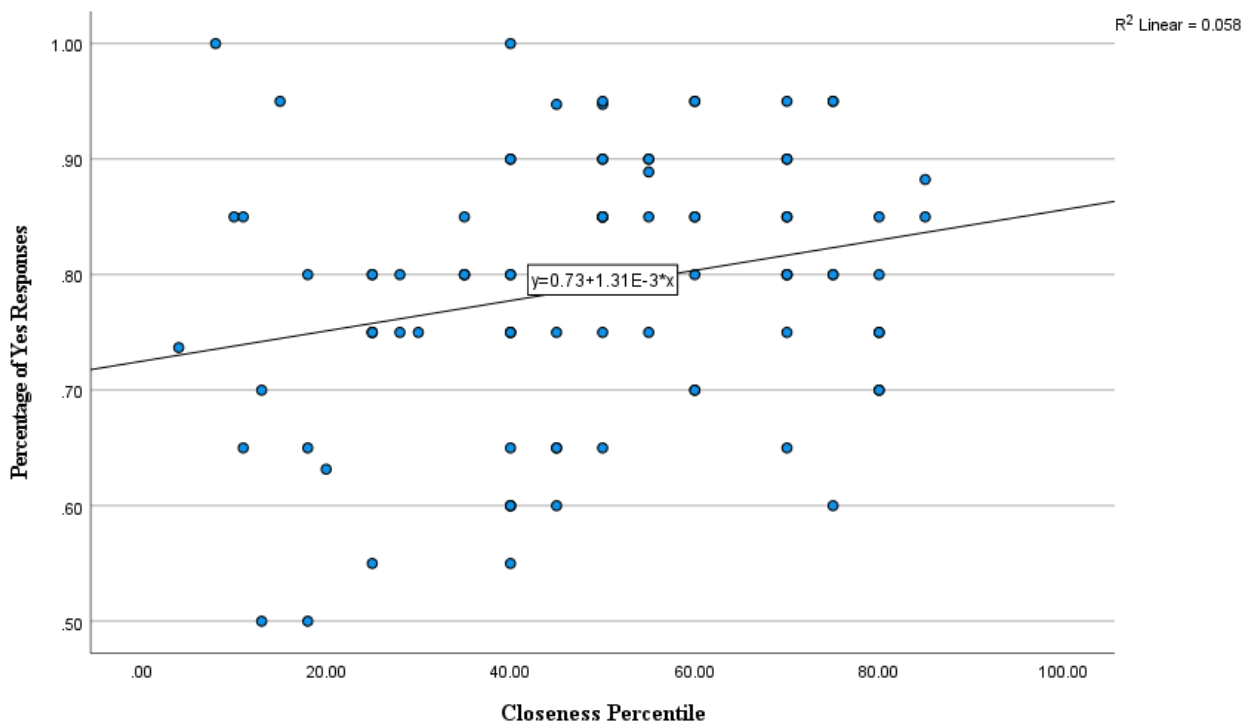


The third analysis was conducted on the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale closeness percentile ranking in comparison to the percentage of yes responses to the relationship building strategies. Figure 8 below shows a weak but significant relationship between the two as the

Pearson r correlation is $r(95) = 0.24$, and $p < .05$ indicates. This result confirms that there is a slight tendency for teachers who felt close to their students before the pandemic to try harder to form relationships with their students. The fact that the relationship is weak indicates that even teachers who didn't feel close to their students before the pandemic still worked hard to form relationships with them during the pandemic.

Figure 8

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Closeness Percentile Ranking Compared with Percentage of Yes Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies

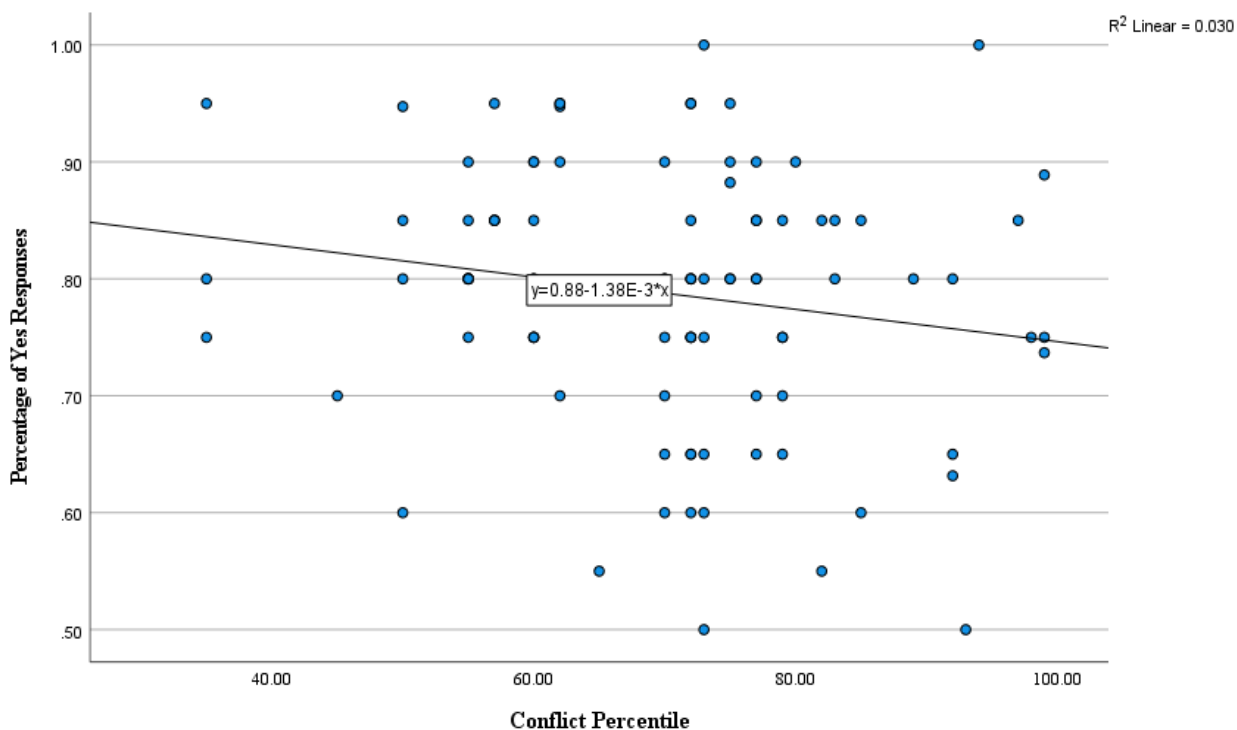


The next analysis was to compare the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale closeness percentile ranking with the conflict percentile ranking. Figure 9 below shows a very slight negative slope, and the Pearson r correlation is $r(95) = -.299$, and $p < 0.05$ (.003) which shows a very weak but significant negative correlation. This is consistent with the finding that most of the

participants rated themselves as medium-high to high conflict, and most of participants rated themselves as medium low to low closeness. Thus, teachers who perceived that they had a lot of conflict with their students also perceived that they do not feel very close to their students.

Figure 9

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale Conflict Percentile Ranking Compared with Closeness Percentile Ranking

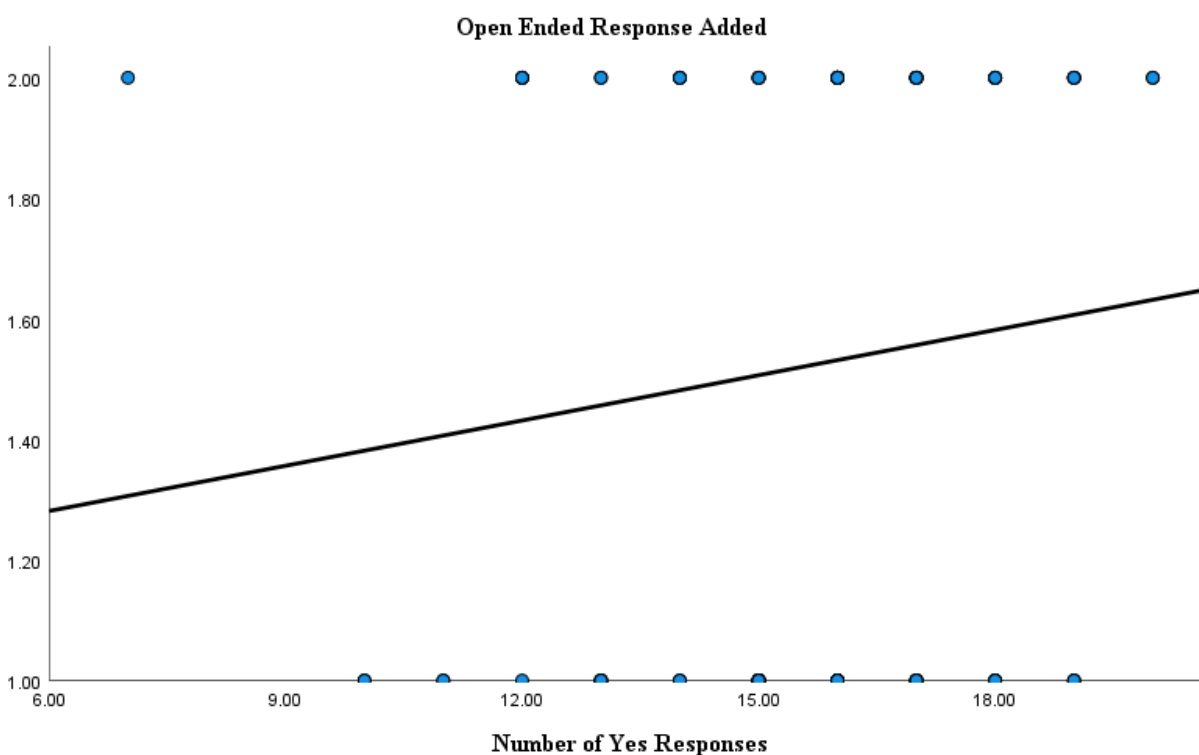


A final analysis was done to compare if there is a relationship between the percentage of “yes” responses to the relationship-building strategies in the online classes and whether the participants added additional strategies to the open-ended question textbook on the survey. First, a Goodness of Fit Test was done to see if there is a relationship between the two variables. Figure 10 below shows that there is a clear correlation between the two variables because the line goes up to indicate an open-ended response was added as the number of “Yes” responses to the

survey increases. A Pearson's r test was also run for the number of "Yes" responses and the open-ended response added. The Pearson's r correlation demonstrated significance and showed that there was a slight positive correlation: $r(95) = 0.118, p > 0.05 (.252)$.

Figure 10

Number of Yes Responses to Relationship-Building Strategies and Response to the Open-Ended Question to Add Additional Relationship-Building Strategies



Limitations

There are several limitations with this study. First, because this is an exploratory study, the results are not generalizable as the sample size of 96 is not enough to make generalizations about the data. Another limitation is that the majority of respondents were from Michigan. It would have been better to have greater representation from other states, and it would have been

interesting to learn about regional differences. A further limitation is the high rate of non-completion. 78 incomplete surveys is 44% of the submissions, which is a fairly high rate for a relatively short survey. Did participants abandon the survey because they did not have the time, or was it because they did not have the emotional capacity to finish? Also, a limitation is the amount of demographic information the survey collected. For instance, the survey did not ask for the participants' gender. Might there have been a difference between male or female teachers? Also, the survey did not ask for grade levels. Did elementary school teachers make a greater effort to connect with their students? With a smaller number of students than middle and high school teachers, they might have had greater capacity to do so. Likewise, the survey did not differentiate between public, charter, or private schools.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Data Analysis

This research study was designed to learn more about how teachers form relationships with students because student learning and achievement is dependent upon strong relationships in classrooms. An analysis of Pianta's (2001) Student-Teacher Relationship Scale subgroup of conflict showed that over 90% of the participants indicated that they had medium to high conflict with their students before the pandemic. This is a concerning number because students who are in conflict with their teachers are not learning as much as they could be. Furthermore, teachers who are in conflict with their students are unhappy, frustrated, and likely to experience burnout (Spilt, Koomen & Thijs, 2011). The teacher attrition rate was a concern before the pandemic, and this may be an indicator of why it was so high.

Next, an analysis of Pianta's (2001) Student-Teacher Relationship Scale subgroup of closeness revealed that very few teachers rated themselves as high. Indeed, twice as many teachers rated themselves as low or medium than rated themselves as medium high. It makes sense that teachers who are in high conflict with their students would not feel close to their students. The closeness score also presents concerns related to student achievement and teacher satisfaction with their professions.

The third subgroup of Pianta's (2001) Student-Teacher Relationship Scale, dependency, revealed that teachers perceived that their students were very dependent on them. These results are also concerning. Highly dependent students do not trust their intellects and rely on teachers to

provide them with the right answers. They are not critical thinkers; they are not creative problem solvers, and they are not well-prepared to function in higher education, in the workplace, or in a democracy. Also, highly dependent students are more demanding of their teachers' time and resources, thus contributing to teacher stress and burnout.

The overall percentile ranking of Pianta's (2001) Student-Teacher Relationship Scale shows that the majority of teachers ranked themselves as low on the scale, meaning that they perceived that they did not have good relationships with their students prior to the pandemic. Teachers do not enter the teaching profession with the intent to make a lot of money; they enter the profession because they love learning and want to work with children. For teachers to have such poor relationships with their students is also a possible explanation for the inability of schools to improve. Schools have been undergoing decades of school reform efforts. Test scores are low and student learning outcomes are below society's expectations. Is reform churn and administrative recrimination also part of the problem, or are they reasons for the poor student-teacher relationships? Perhaps they feed off each other in a downward spiral. One thing is clear: teachers were emotionally ill-prepared to enter a global pandemic.

The response to the twenty-question survey regarding strategies that researchers identified were effective in building relationships in online classes showed that teachers overwhelmingly tried many of the strategies to form relationships with their students during the pandemic. These numbers are remarkable because even though teachers perceived that their relationships with their students were not strong before the pandemic, they did almost everything the research suggests is effective for building relationships with their students in their online classes. Teachers entered the pandemic with low morale, but they pushed themselves to not only

learn how to teach online classes, but also to connect with their students and form relationships with them as well. This is indicative of the hearts of people who enter the profession—to work with children, care for them, and help them learn.

Over half of the participants (51%) responded to the open-ended question which asked them to share additional strategies they used to develop relationships with their students in online classes. When the responses were coded, the most common code was “whole person” which means that teachers tried a variety of strategies to humanize the online classroom. Making space for teachers and students to be human with each other is a very effective way for them to connect and develop strong relationships, so it is not surprising that this was the most common code to emerge from the dataset. The second and third most common codes were “other forms of communication” and “make extra time and space”. In all, nine codes were used to classify the teachers’ responses. These codes show that teachers went beyond their job requirements to connect with their students, and the variety of the strategies the teachers used shows their creativity and determination to make it happen. Because communication is essential for relationships to form, it is not surprising to see that teachers prioritized communication with their students, and they did whatever it would take to make it happen.

There are several takeaways from the number and the content of the written responses. One takeaway is that the participants were eager to share everything that they did. Teachers clearly need to be seen, heard and honored for their work. Teachers have not received much recognition, so they were willing to share detailed responses with an anonymous researcher. One participant, an outlier, used the textbox to candidly share with the researcher about how hurt she was by the parents. She saw the researcher as a safe person to confide in. It is obvious from her

comment that she is hurting very deeply. That said, the big takeaway from this data is that the teachers overwhelmingly were creative, resourceful, loving and caring; they tried very hard to connect with their students in their online classes despite their perceptions of have poor relationships with their students prior to the pandemic.

Finally, the last data point to be collected was a comparison between the quantitative variable of the number of “Yes” responses to the list of relationship-building strategies and the qualitative variable of whether the teacher participants added a strategy to the open-ended question about what other strategies they used to form relationships in their online classes. The analyses showed that teachers who responded “Yes” more frequently were slightly more likely to respond to the open-ended question. It is logical that teachers who were trying more research-based strategies to form relationships with their students in their online classes would have also tried other, more creative strategies as well. Their goal was to connect with their students, so they tried both proven and unproven strategies to improve the likelihood of connecting with their students.

Research Questions

The first research question asked, “What were teachers’ perceptions of their relationships with their students prior to the start of remote learning in March of 2020?” The study showed that most teachers perceived that they did not have strong relationships with their students before the pandemic. The second research question asked, “What strategies have teachers used to form relationships with their students in an online context?” The study showed that teachers were creative, innovative and worked hard to implement multiple strategies to connect with their students in their online classrooms during the pandemic. The third research question asked,

“Were teachers who perceived that they had good relationships with their students in face-to-face classes before the pandemic more likely to incorporate strategies to develop and nurture relationships with their students during online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic?” The study showed that there was very little correlation between teachers’ perceptions of their relationships and the effort they expended to form relationships with their students during the pandemic.

Theoretical Implications

At first glance, Restorative Practices (RP), which focus on how to manage student discipline problems in school buildings and face-to-face classrooms, and Critical Theory and Intersectionality might have seemed like unusual choices for a research study about relationships in online classrooms. However, the foundational principle of Critical Theory and of RP is about seeing and honoring humanity in all people—including administrators, teachers and students—and about valuing relationships. The purpose of this study, and the results of the study, are closely aligned to that understanding that both adults and children are complex. Everyone struggles, everyone needs to be seen and heard, and educators and students need to see and care for the humanity in each other.

The first big finding from this study, that teachers perceived that their relationships with their students were not good before the pandemic, is better understood through the lens of both Critical Theory and RP. First, because Critical Theory addresses power structures and maintaining power, and traditional classroom management practices focus on teachers maintaining control over their students, it is possible that pre-pandemic, teachers were engaged in classroom practices that alienated their students instead of nurturing close relationships. The

teachers might have been focused on authoritarian classroom behavioral expectations, or they might have had poor classroom control. Either way, they were likely focused on disciplinary practices that were not restorative, as RP suggests, but instead served to degrade relationships. Moreover, in light of the culture of schooling in America in the shadow of No Child Left Behind in which districts, schools and teachers are punished for low test scores, and in light of the fact that many district and school administrators have poor relationships with their teachers (Morris, 2016), teachers spirits might have been so overwhelmed with all of the expectations that had been placed on them, or so discouraged by the lack of respect and care from their administrators (Gonzalez, 2022), that they did not have the capacity to nurture their relationships with their students.

The second big finding is, that despite their perception of having high conflict, high dependency, and low closeness relationships with their students before the pandemic, the majority of teachers tried very hard to form relationships with their students in their online classes. The strategies that teachers used to form relationships with their students in their online classes are aligned with both Critical Theory and RP. The most common code for the strategies is “whole person” which is completely aligned with RP because teachers made space for their students and themselves to be human. Teachers created time and space for students to hang out with them online to talk, play games, share their pets, and eat meals together. Another strategy that teachers used was to ask for feedback. This strategy is aligned with Critical Theory because it shifted some of the power to students and their parents to make decisions about the online classroom and student learning. Also, it is aligned with RP because the teachers honored the input by listening to it and acting upon it. All of the strategies, in their own ways, showed respect

for the students, acknowledged them as human and made space for that humanity, and thus are aligned with the RP principles of respect, problem solving and being accountable for the harm that students were experiencing by virtue of the school closures.

The fact that teachers tried so hard to form relationships with their students during the pandemic is especially meaningful in light of the fact that teachers did not have good relationships with their students going into the pandemic. Moreover, Kush et al. (2022) just reported that teachers suffered more during the pandemic than healthcare workers. The fact that teachers tried so hard and were so resourceful in connecting with their students during the pandemic is even more remarkable because they were suffering so much during the pandemic as well.

Now that students are back in schools, teachers have been faced with making up for tremendous learning losses and students experiencing a mental health crisis. Indeed, Gotlib et. al. (2022) just reported that adolescents' brain's matured three times faster than they should have during the pandemic, which is a symptom of severe trauma. Thus, teachers who were already struggling with their students before the pandemic, and who gave everything they had to support their students during the pandemic, are tasked with working with traumatized students while making up for their learning losses. It should not come as a surprise that teachers are leaving the teaching profession at rates never seen before. Teachers need to be honored for their innovation, their effort, and receive the help and care that they so greatly need.

The principles of Critical Theory and RP are desperately needed in our schools today, not only for the students who are struggling with their mental health, but also for the teachers who have reached the limit of their capacity to give. Indeed, the lesson from RP, to move from a

stance of blame to a stance of healing, reparation and support, may be the stance that both teachers and students need to move forward from the pandemic-induced trauma and learning losses. Students need grace for their emotional, psycho-social, and academic deficiencies, and teachers need grace for their seemingly insurmountable and ever-growing list of demands that are placed on their shoulders.

Future Research

This study focused on the state of student-teacher relationships pre-pandemic and strategies that teachers used in their online classes during the pandemic to form relationships with their students. A follow-up research study would be useful to ascertain the efficacy and impact of these strategies on the student-teacher relationships during and after the pandemic. Another study should be done to see if any teachers are continuing some of the strategies they used in their online classes now that they are back in face-to-face classrooms. This study should also be replicated with a larger dataset to see if the results are generalizable beyond the small population of this study. Finally, given the large teacher attrition rate, more studies should be done on why teachers are leaving and what school and district leaders could do to recruit and retain caring teachers.

References

- Abrami, P. C., Bernard, R. M., Bures, E. M., Borokhovski, E., & Tamim, R. M. (2011). Interaction in distance education and online learning: Using evidence and theory to improve practice. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 23(2-3), 82-103.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-011-9043-x>
- Acosta, J., Chinman, M., Ebener, P., Malone, P. S., Phillips, A., & Wilks, A. (2019). Evaluation of a whole-school change intervention: Findings from a two-year cluster-randomized trial of the restorative practices intervention. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48(5), 876-890. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01013-2>
- Alexander, J., & Bach, D. (2014). Creating classroom community with reflective blogs. *International Journal of Technology, Knowledge & Society: Annual Review*, 9(2).
<https://doi.org/10.18848/1832-3669/CGP/v09i02/56364>
- Amiot, M. B., Mayer-Glenn, & Parker, L. (2020) Applied critical race theory: educational leadership actions for student equity. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 23(2), 200-220.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2019.1599342>
- Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Wang, E. L., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). Can restorative practices improve school climate and curb suspensions. *An evaluation of the impact of restorative practices in a mid-sized urban school district*.
https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2800/RR2840/RAND_RR2840.pdf

- Baranik, L. E., Wright, N. A. & Reburn, K. L. (2017). Mentoring relationships in online classes, *The Internet and Higher Education*, 34, 65-71. <https://doi-org.wizard.umd.umich.edu/10.1016/j.iheduc.2017.05.001>
- Barmore, P. (2021, March 16). Schooling has changed forever: Here's what will stay when things go back to normal. *The Hechinger Report*. <https://hechingerreport.org/schooling-has-changed-forever-heres-what-will-stay-when-things-go-back-to-normal/>
- Baye, A., Lake, C., Inns, A. and Slavin, R. E. (2017). Effective reading programs for secondary students. *Best Evidence Encyclopedia*. <http://www.bestevidence.org/word/Secondary-Reading-08-03-17.pdf>
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Literature Review*, 893. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/unilllr1995&div=40&id=&page=>
- Bennet, Duckworth, Murphy call on Biden administration to better address discriminatory, punitive discipline practices in schools.* (2021). Washington: Federal Information & News Dispatch, LLC. <https://www.proquest.com/other-sources/bennet-duckworth-murphy-call-on-biden/docview/2530858080/se-2>
- Blake, J. J., Butler, B. R., Lewis, C. W., & Darenbourg, A. (2011). Unmasking the inequitable discipline experiences of urban Black girls: Implications for urban educational stakeholders. *The Urban Review*, 43(1), 90-106. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-009-0148-8>

- Bottiani, J. H., McDaniel, H. L., Henderson, L., Castillo, J. E., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2020). Buffering effects of racial discrimination on school engagement: The role of culturally responsive teachers and caring school police. *Journal of School Health, 90*(12), 1019-1029. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12967>
- Bounds, P. (2012). Just say no: Marcuse and the politics of negotiation. In D. Berry (Ed.), *Revisiting the Frankfurt School: Essays on Culture, Media and Theory*. (pp. 49-70). Ashgate Publishing Group.
- Bouhnik, D., & Marcus, T. (2006). Interaction in distance-learning courses. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 57*(3), 299-305. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.20277>
- Bradshaw, C. P., Mitchell, M. M., O'Brennan, L. M., & Leaf, P. J. (2010). Multilevel exploration of factors contributing to the overrepresentation of black students in office disciplinary referrals. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(2), 508. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018450>
- Brown, A. (Host). (2021, February 6). Odessa, Part: The School Year Begins [Audio Podcast Episode]. In *The Daily. The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/26/podcasts/texas-schools-reopening-odessa.html?searchResultPosition=5>
- Brown, R. E. (2001). The process of community-building in distance learning classes. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 5*(2), 18-35. https://cmappublic2.ihmc.us/rid=1150237884140_552530918_4532/process%20of%20Community%20building.pdf

- Buckmaster, D. (2016). From the Eradication of Tolerance to the Restoration of School Community: Exploring Restorative Practices as a Reform Framework for Ethical School Discipline. *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration*, 12(3), n3.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1186305.pdf>
- Bucolo, J. (2011). Survivor: Satis house: Creating classroom community while teaching Dickens in a reality-TV world. *English Journal*, 100(5), 29.
<https://www.proquest.com/eric/docview/864564608/3E50D17118A24712PQ/7?accountid=14578>
- Bushwick, S. (2020, September 5). Schools have no good options for reopening during Covid-19: Bringing students back into classrooms or keeping them home can both have negative consequences. *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/schools-have-no-good-options-for-reopening-during-covid-19/>
- Carter, P. L., Skiba, R., Arredondo, M. I., & Pollock, M. (2017). You can't fix what you don't look at: Acknowledging race in addressing racial discipline disparities. *Urban education*, 52(2), 207-235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916660350>
- Catalano, F. (2021, February 9). Remote learning is here to stay, raising concerns about teacher training and data privacy. *Ed Surge*. <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2021-02-09-remote-learning-is-here-to-stay-raising-concerns-about-teacher-training-and-data-privacy>
- Catron, D. & Hirt, S. (2020, July 10). 'Like a pawn in a political game': Contradictory school reopening plans leave teachers, parents reeling. *USA Today*.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2020/07/10/covid-19-chaotic-school-reopening-plans-scary-teachers-parents/5412066002/>

Cavanaugh, C. S. (2001). The effectiveness of interactive distance education technologies in K-12 learning: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Telecommunications* 7(1).

[https://0-go-gale-](https://0-go-gale-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&%20u=lom_umichdearb&id=GALE%7CA75959118&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon)

[com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&%20u=lom_umichdearb&id=GALE%7CA75959118&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon](https://0-go-gale-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/ps/i.do?p=AONE&%20u=lom_umichdearb&id=GALE%7CA75959118&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon)

“Characteristics of Public School Teachers.” (2021) National Center for Education Statistics.

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/clr>

Chiramba, E. N., & Harris, G. (2020). Restorative Discipline Practices: An Action Research Project in Zimbabwean Primary Schools. *Educational Research for Social Change*, 9(2), 118-122.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2462684811/fulltextPDF/9D756271177347A1PQ/34?accountid=14578>

Chen, Y. J. (2001). Dimensions of transactional distance in the world wide web learning environment: A factor analysis. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 32(4), 459-470. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8535.00213>

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners. *Successful Qualitative Research*, 1-400.

Connor, C. M., Son, S. H., Hindman, A. H., & Morrison, F. J. (2005). Teacher qualifications, classroom practices, family characteristics, and preschool experience: Complex effects on first graders' vocabulary and early reading outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology*, 43(4), 343-375. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2005.06.001>

- Crawford, S. (2020, October 19). Opinion: Educators deserve praise for flexibility during pandemic. *Springfield Business Journal*. <https://sbj.net/stories/opinion-educators-deserve-praise-for-flexibility-during-pandemic,71274>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Critical Legal Theory. (n.d.). Legal Information Institute. Cornell Law School.
https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/critical_legal_theory
- Dade, C. (2020, September 30.) Teachers say flexibility, creativity key to school during a pandemic. *WKOW 27*. <https://wkow.com/2020/09/30/teachers-say-flexibility-creativity-key-to-school-during-a-pandemic/>
- Dallimore, E. J., Hertenstein, J. H., & Platt, M. B. (2016). Creating a Community of Learning through Classroom Discussion: Student Perceptions of the Relationships among Participation, Learning, Comfort, and Preparation. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 27(3), 137-171.
<https://www.proquest.com/eric/docview/1871579516/3E50D17118A24712PQ/39?accountid=14578>
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (1998). Critical race theory: Past, present, and future. *Current Legal Problems*, 51(1), 467. <https://doi.org/10.1093/clp/51.1.467>

- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical race theory*. New York University Press. <https://0-www-degruyter-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/document/doi/10.18574/9781479851393/html>
- Decker, D. M., Dona, D. P., & Christenson, S. L. (2007). Behaviorally at-risk African American students: The importance of student–teacher relationships for student outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology, 45*(1), 83-109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.09.004>
- den Brok, P., Brekelmans, M., & Wubbels, T. (2004). Interpersonal teacher behaviour and student outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 15*(3-4), 407-442. <https://0-www-tandfonline-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/092434505123313832621016/j.jsp.2006..1>
- Drewery, W. (2016). Restorative practice in New Zealand schools: Social development through relational justice. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48*(2), 191-203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2014.989951>
- Duncan, G. A. (2005). Critical race ethnography in education: Narrative, inequality and the problem of epistemology. *Race ethnicity and education, 8*(1), 93-114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341015>
- Dzubinski, L. (2014). Teaching presence: Co-creating a multi-national online learning community in an asynchronous classroom. *Online Learning Journal, 18*(2). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1036267.pdf>
- Ennis, C. D., & McCauley, M. T. (2002). Creating urban classroom communities worthy of trust. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 34*(2), 149-172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270110096370>

Ferren, M. (2021, July 6). Remote learning and school reopenings: What worked and what didn't. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/remote-learning-school-reopenings-worked-didnt/>

Ganske, G. (2021, May 22). Opinion: Understanding critical race theory reveals how it's harmful to race relations: Rejecting Martin Luther King Jr.'s ideas, advocates of this way of looking at the world stoke divisiveness and discrimination. *Des Moines Register*. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/columnists/iowa-view/2021/05/22/critical-race-theory-harmful-race-relations/5076052001/>

Garcia, E. & Weiss, E. (2020, December 10). Covid-19 and student performance, equity, and U.S. education policy: Lessons from pre-pandemic research to inform relief, recovery and rebuilding. *Economic Policy Research*. <https://www.epi.org/205622>

George, J. (2021, January 11). A lesson on critical race theory. *American Bar Association*. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/civil-rights-reimagining-policing/a-lesson-on-critical-race-theory/

Glazier, R. A. (2016). Building rapport to improve retention and success in online classes. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 12(4), 437-456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2016.1155994>

Goldstein, D. & Shapiro, E. (2020, August 13). 'I don't want to go back': Many teachers are fearful and angry over pressure to return. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/11/us/virus-teachers-classrooms.html>

- Gonzalez, J. (Host) (2022, May 12). Why so many teachers are leaving, and why others stay (No. 190) [Audio Podcast Episode]. In *The Cult of Pedagogy*.
<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teachers-leaving/>
- Gotlib, I. H., Miller, J. G., Borchers, L. R., Coury, S. M., Costello, L. A., Garcia, J. M. & Ho, T. C. (2022, December 1). Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and brain maturation in adolescents: Implications for analyzing longitudinal data. *Biological Psychiatry: Global Open Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsgos.2022.11.002>
- Gray, S., & Drewery, W. (2011). Restorative practices meet key competencies: Class meetings as pedagogy. *International Journal on School Disaffection*, 8(1), 13-21.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ962368.pdf>
- Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2016). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 26(4), 325-353.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2014.929950>
- Griffiths, M., & Graham, C. (2010). Using asynchronous video to achieve instructor immediacy and closeness in online classes: Experiences from three cases. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 9(3), 325-340. Retrieved from <https://0-www-proquest-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/scholarly-journals/using-asynchronous-video-achieve-instructor/docview/757168298/se-2?accountid=14578>
- Grossi, P. K., & Santos, A. M. D. (2012). Bullying in Brazilian schools and restorative practices. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 35(1), 120-136.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1018563029/9D756271177347A1PQ/11?accountid=14578>

Gurgel, R. (2015). Building strong teacher–student relationships in pluralistic music classrooms.

Music Educators Journal, 101(4), 77-84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432115574554>

Henderson, D. G., & Fisher, D. L. (2008). Interpersonal behaviour and student outcomes in vocational education classes. *Learning Environments Research*, 11(1), 19-29.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-007-9034-z>

Hillman, D. C., Willis, D. J., & Gunawardena, C. N. (1994). Learner-interface interaction in distance education: An extension of contemporary models and strategies for practitioners.

American Journal of Distance Education, 8(2), 30-42.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08923649409526853>

Holmberg, B., Shelley, M., and White. C. J. (2005). *Distance Education and Languages : Evolution and Change*. Multilingual Matters.

Huang, X., Chandra, A., DePaolo, C. A., & Simmons, L. L. (2016). Understanding transactional distance in web-based learning environments: An empirical study. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 47(4), 734-747. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12263>

Educational Technology, 47(4), 734-747. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12263>

Hulvershorn, K., & Mulholland, S. (2018). Restorative practices and the integration of social emotional learning as a path to positive school climates. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-08-2017-0015>

Innovative Teaching & Learning. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-08-2017-0015>

Hunt, A. (1986). The theory of critical legal studies. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*,(6)1.

<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/oxfjls6&div=5&id=&page=>

IBM Corp. (2020). IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows (Version 28.0) [Computer software]. IBM Corp.

Isensee, L. (2020, August 10). Houston parents face back-to-school dilemmas amid conflicting messages from leaders. *Houston Public Media*.

<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/education-news/2020/08/10/379406/houston-parents-face-back-to-school-dilemmas-amid-conflicting-messages-from-leaders/>

Johnson, H. E., Molloy Elreda, L., Kibler, A. K., & Futch Ehrlich, V. A. (2020). Creating Classroom Communities in Linguistically Diverse Settings: Teacher-Directed, Classroom-Level Factor Effects on Peer Dynamics. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 40(8), 1087-1120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431619891238>

Jones, R., Glasgow, S. & Wahltinez, O. (2020, December 2). Should schools stay open? Not so fast. *U.S. News & World Report*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2020-12-02/shut-them-down-why-schools-might-not-be-safe-during-covid-19>

Joseph, A., Hnilica, R. J., & Hanson, M. (2021). Using Restorative Practices to Reduce Racially Disproportionate School Suspensions: The Barriers School Leaders Should Consider During the First Year of Implementation. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 20(2), 6.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2545665694/fulltextPDF/9D756271177347A1PQ/22?accountid=14578>

- Kamenetz, A. (2020, March 26). The biggest distance-learning experiment in history: Week one. NPR. <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/radio-broadcast-references>
- Kervick, C. T., Moore, M., Ballysingh, T. A., Garnett, B. R., & Smith, L. C. (2019). The emerging promise of restorative practices to reduce discipline disparities affecting youth with disabilities and youth of color: Addressing access and equity. *Harvard Educational Review, 89*(4), 588-610.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2331216915/fulltextPDF/9D756271177347A1PQ/23?accountid=14578>
- Kervick, C. T., Garnett, B., Moore, M., Ballysingh, T. A., & Smith, L. C. (2020). Introducing Restorative Practices in a Diverse Elementary School to Build Community and Reduce Exclusionary Discipline: Year One Processes, Facilitators, and Next Steps. *School Community Journal, 30*(2), 155-183.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2479492956/fulltextPDF/9D756271177347A1PQ/25?accountid=14578>
- Koomen, H. M., Verschueren, K., van Schooten, E., Jak, S., & Pianta, R. C. (2012). Validating the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale: Testing factor structure and measurement invariance across child gender and age in a Dutch sample. *Journal of School Psychology, 50*(2), 215-234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2011.09.001>
- Kush, J. M., Badillo Goicoechea, E., Musci, R. J., & Stuart, E. A. (2022). Teacher mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Educational Researcher*. Prepublished November 15, 2022. <https://www.doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221134281>.

- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (Eds.). (2016). *"Covenant keeper": Derrick Bell's enduring education legacy*. Peter Lang.
- Lambert, D. (2020, April 3). First few weeks of remote teaching is learning experience for teachers and students: Most school districts intend to move to online learning by end of April. *EdSource*. <https://edsources.org/2020/first-few-weeks-of-remote-teaching-is-learning-experience-for-teachers-and-students/627956>
- Lewis, J., Ream, R., Bocian, K., Cardullo, R., Hammond, K., & Fast, L. (2012). Con cariño: Teacher caring, math self-efficacy, and math achievement among Hispanic English learners. *Teachers College Record*, 114(7), 1-42.
<https://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=16472>
- Li, C. & Lalani, F. (2020, April 29). The Covid-19 pandemic has changed education forever: This is how. *World Economic Forum*.
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning/>
- Liberante, L. (2012). The importance of teacher–student relationships, as explored through the lens of the NSW Quality Teaching Model. *Journal of Student Engagement: Education Matters*, 2(1), 2-9.
- Lumpkin, A. (2007). Caring teachers: The key to student learning. *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 43(4). 158-160. <http://www.kdp.org/publications/publications.php>
- “Map: Coronavirus and school closures in 2019-2020”. (2021, October 13). *EducationWeek*.
<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures-in-2019-2020/2020/03>

Marcuse, H. (1991). *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

----- (2000). *Reason and Revolution*. London: Routledge. McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J.,

Riddell, S., Stead, J., & Weedon, E. (2008a). Can restorative practices in schools make a difference? *Educational Review*, 60(4), 405-417.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131910802393456>

Maulana, R., Opdenakker, M. C., den Brok, P., & Bosker, R. (2011). Teacher–student interpersonal relationships in Indonesia: profiles and importance to student motivation.

Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 31(01), 33-49.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2011.544061>

McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Stead, J., Kane, J., Riddell, S., & Weedon, E. (2008). ‘I was dead restorative today’: From restorative justice to restorative approaches in school.

Cambridge Journal of Education, 38(2), 199-216.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640802063262>

McLarty, C. (2020, July 20). Teacher dies from coronavirus: Pasco County parents nervous to send kids back to school. *WFLA News Channel 8*.

<https://www.wfla.com/community/health/coronavirus/teacher-dies-from-coronavirus-pasco-county-parents-nervous-to-send-kids-back-to-school/>

Merrill, S. (2020, March 19). Teaching through a pandemic: A mindset for this moment.

Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-through-pandemic-mindset-moment>

Medina, J. (2021, January 21). In Los Angeles, teachers and students struggle with no human contact. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/21/us/coronavirus->

- schools-los-angeles-california.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage§ion=Education
- Mihalas, S., Morse, W. C., Allsopp, D. H., & Alvarez McHatton, P. (2009). Cultivating caring relationships between teachers and secondary students with emotional and behavioral disorders: Implications for research and practice. *Remedial and Special Education, 30*(2), 108-125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932508315950>
- Miller, K. E. (2021). A Light in Students' Lives: K-12 Teachers' Experiences (Re) Building Caring Relationships during Remote Learning. *Online learning, 25*(1), 115-134. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1287112.pdf>
- Mirsky, L. (2007). SaferSanerSchools: Transforming school cultures with restorative practices. *Reclaiming children and youth, 16*(2), 5. <https://0-www-proquest-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/docview/214192657?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>
- Mirsky, L. (2011). Restorative practices: Giving everyone a voice to create safer saner school communities. *Prevention Researcher, 18*(5), 3-6. <https://0-www-proquest-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/scholarly-journals/restorative-practices-giving-everyone-voice/docview/1011399685/se-2?accountid=14578>
- Mirza, Q. (1999). Patricia Williams: Inflecting critical race theory. *Feminist Legal Studies, 7*(2), 111-132. <https://0-link-springer-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/content/pdf/10.1023/A:1009216000956.pdf>
- Moore, M. G. (1989). Three types of interaction. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923648909526659?journalCode=hajd20>

- Morrell, P. D. and Carroll, J. B. (2010). *Conducting Educational Research: A Primer for Teachers and Administrators*. Sense Publishers.
- Morris, E. W., & Perry, B. L. (2016). The punishment gap: School suspension and racial disparities in achievement. *Social Problems*, 63(1), 68-86.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44014895>
- Morris, J. (2016). *Teacher misery: Helicopter parents, special snowflakes, and other bullshit*. Truth Be Told Publishing.
- Ni, S. F., & Aust, R. (2008). Examining teacher verbal immediacy and sense of classroom community in online classes. *International Journal on E-learning*, 7(3), 477-498.
<https://www.proquest.com/pqrl/docview/210333926/596A35781B4D463APQ/1?accountid=14578>
- Nierenberg, A. & Pasick, A. (2021, January 29). The Impact of Teacher Deaths: They have shaken communities and upended the school reopening debate. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/29/us/the-impact-of-teacher-deaths.html>
- NPR [@npr]. (2021, March 23). It's been a year since teachers were handed an unprecedented request: educate students in entirely new ways amid the backdrop of the pandemic. In this comic series, we'll illustrate one teacher's story each week from now until the end of [Instagram slideshow].
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CMxGZ2kgWxO/?igshid=k7zac83hbswy>
- Park, B. and Dey, S. (2022, January 14). Texas schools struggle to stay open as teachers and bus drivers call in sick with COVID-19. *The Texas Tribune*.
<https://www.texastribune.org/2022/01/13/texas-schools-staffing-shortage-closures/>

- Parker, L., & Lynn, M. (2002). What's race got to do with it? Critical race theory's conflicts with and connections to qualitative research methodology and epistemology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 7-22. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/whats-race-got-do-with-critical-theorys-conflicts/docview/221646509/se-2>
- Picciano, A. G. (2002). Beyond student perceptions: Issues of interaction, presence, and performance in an online course. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 6(1), 21-40. <https://doi.org/10.1.1.98.6506&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Pohan, C. A. (2003). Creating caring and democratic communities in our classrooms and schools. *Childhood Education*, 79(6), 369-373. <https://www.proquest.com/eric/docview/210384715/3E50D17118A24712PQ/33?accountid=14578>
- Porter, T. (2020, June 22). Reflecting on teacher well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Regional Educational Laboratory Program Pacific*. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/blogs/blog28_reflecting-on-teacher-wellbeing-during-COVID-19-pandemic.asp
- Prothero, A. (2021). The pandemic will affect students' mental health for years to come. how schools can help. *Education Week*, 40(28). <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/pandemic-will-affect-students-mental-health-years/docview/2562862111/se-2?accountid=14578>
- Qualtrics. (2022, December). Qualtrics (December 2022) [Computer software]. <https://www.qualtrics.com>

- Quek, C. L., Wong, A. F., Divaharan, S., Liu, W. C., Peer, J., & Williams, M. D. (2007). Secondary school students' perceptions of teacher–student interaction and students' attitudes towards project work. *Learning Environments Research*, 10(3), 177-187.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-007-9030-3>
- Ramberg, J., Låftman, S. B., Almquist, Y. B., & Modin, B. (2019). School effectiveness and students' perceptions of teacher caring: A multilevel study. *Improving Schools*, 22(1), 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480218764693>
- Rodman, B. (2007). Reclaiming youth: What restorative practices add to the thinking. *Reclaiming children and youth*, 16(2), 48.
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/214193726/9D756271177347A1PQ/9?accountid=14578>
- Rumble, G. (2019). *The Planning and Management of Distance Education*. Routledge.
- Sargeant, J., Curran, V., Allen, M., Jarvis-Selinger, S., & Ho, K. (2006). Facilitating interpersonal interaction and learning online: Linking theory and practice. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 26(2), 128-136.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/chp.61>
- Save the children. (2021). Childhood in the time of Covid. *Save the Children Foundation*.
<https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/advocacy/2021-us-childhood-report.pdf>
- Saville, B. K., Lawrence, N. K., & Jakobsen, K. V. (2012). Creating learning communities in the classroom. *New directions for teaching and learning*, 132, 57-69.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20036>

Schmidt, S. J. (2018). Creating a classroom culture built on community.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1541-4329.12133>

Schroeder, B. (2019, August 14). Disrupting Education. The rise of K-12 online and the entrepreneurial opportunities. *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernhardschroeder/2019/08/14/disrupting-education-the-rise-of-k-12-online-and-the-entrepreneurial-opportunities/?sh=34535eb048a2>

Shaw, G. (2007, October 26). Restorative Practices in Australian schools: Changing relationships, changing culture. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 25(1).

<https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.198>

Silverman, J., & Mee, M. (2018). Using restorative practices to prepare teachers to meet the needs of young adolescents. *Education Sciences*, 8(3), 131.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2125236775/9D756271177347A1PQ/15?accountid=14578>

Solórzano, D. G., & Pérez Huber, L. (2020). *Racial Microaggressions: Using Critical Race Theory to Respond to Everyday Racism. Multicultural Education series*. Teachers

College Press. <https://www.proquest.com/books/racial-microaggressions-using-critical-race/docview/2535194232/se-2>

Song, H., Kim, J., & Luo, W. (2016). Teacher–student relationship in online classes: A role of teacher self-disclosure. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 436-443.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.037>

- Spilt, J.L., Koomen, H.M.Y. & Thijs, J.T. (2011). Teacher wellbeing: The importance of teacher–student relationships. *Educational Psychology Review*, 23, 457–477.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-011-9170-y>
- Sprunt, B. & Turner, C. (2020, July 8). White House stumbles over how best to reopen schools, as Trump blasts CDC guidance. *NPR*.
<https://www.npr.org/2020/07/08/888898194/trump-blasts-expensive-cdc-guidelines-for-reopening-schools>
- Standing, V., Fearon, C., & Dee, T. (2012). Investigating the value of restorative practice: An action research study of one boy in a mixed secondary school. *International Journal of Educational Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513541211227764>
- Stone, D. M., & Barry, D. S. (2019). Improving virtual learning interactions: Reducing the transactional distance of online anatomy modules. *Anatomical sciences education*, 12(6), 686-687. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ase.1889>
- Subotnik, D. (1998). What’s wrong with critical race theory: Reopening the case for middle class values. *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 7(3)
<http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cjlp/vol7/iss3/1>
- Swan, K. (2001). Virtual interaction: Design factors affecting student satisfaction and perceived learning in asynchronous online courses. *Distance education*, 22(2), 306-331.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0158791010220208>
- Tate, E. (2020, December 10). As districts return to remote learning, are they any better prepared? *EdSurge*. <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-12-10-as-districts-return-to-remote-learning-are-they-any-better-prepared>

Taylor, E. (1998). A primer on critical race theory: who are the critical race theorists and what are they saying?. *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, (19), 122. <https://0-www-proquest-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/docview/195567578?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>

Teachers and students describe a remote-learning life: They talk about how the change to online instruction has affected them. (2020, April 23). *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/23/education/learning/coronavirus-teachers-students-remote-learning.html>

“The new social justice makes everyone guilty: A primer on critical race theory” (n.d.)
Goldwater Institute. <https://goldwaterinstitute.org/criticalracetheory/>

Teven, J. J., & Hanson, T. L. (2004). The impact of teacher immediacy and perceived caring on teacher competence and trustworthiness. *Communication Quarterly*, 52(1), 39-53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0146337049370177>

Torchia, R. (2021, April 26). Are remote and virtual learning here to stay for K12? *EdTech Magazine*. <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2021/04/virtual-learning-here-stay-k-12-perfcon>

Tosolt, B. (2009). Middle school students' perceptions of caring teacher behaviors: Differences by minority status. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 405-416. <https://www.proquest.com/eric/docview/222126886/fulltextPDF/D099A1A2239B443DPQ/16?accountid=14578>

- Tyson, L. (2014). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Routledge. <https://0-www-taylorfrancis-com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/books/mono/10.4324/9781315760797/critical-theory-today-lois-tyson>
- Velez, G., Hahn, M., Recchia, H., & Wainryb, C. (2020). Rethinking responses to youth rebellion: recent growth and development of restorative practices in schools. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 35, 36-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.02.011>
- Will, M. (2020a, April 14). Still Mostly White and Female: New Federal Data on the Teaching Profession. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/still-mostly-white-and-female-new-federal-data-on-the-teaching-profession/2020/04>
- Will, M. (2020b, November, 4). Six lessons learned about better teaching during the pandemic. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/technology/6-lessons-learned-about-better-teaching-during-the-pandemic/2020/11>
- Williams, P. J. (1991). *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*. Harvard University Press.
- Witmer, M. M. (2005). The fourth r in education—relationships. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 78(5), 224-228. <https://doi.org/10.3200/TCHS.78.5.224-228>

Appendix A

Research Survey: Part 1 – Quantitative Data Collection

STRS: Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (Long Form)

(Modified from singular to plural with permission from Pianta)

Please reflect on how much each of the statements below applies to your relationship with the children in your classroom when you are teaching face-to-face (either before the pandemic or with the children you have been teaching face-to-face this most recent school year.) All relationships are individual, but in responding, please think about your relationships with the children in your classroom in general. Use the scale below to choose the appropriate response to each item.

1 – Definitely does not apply

2 – Does not really apply

3 – Neutral, not sure

4 – Applies somewhat

5 – Definitely applies

1. I share an affectionate, warm relationship with these children.
2. The children and I always seem to be struggling with each other.
3. If upset, the children will seek comfort from me.
4. The children are uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.
5. The children value their relationships with me.
6. The children appear hurt or embarrassed when I correct them.

7. When I praise the children, they beam with pride.
8. The children react strongly to separation from me.
9. The children spontaneously share information about themselves.
10. The children are overly dependent on me.
11. The children easily become angry with me.
12. The children try to please me.
13. The children feel that I treat them unfairly.
14. The children ask for my help when they really do not need help.
15. It is easy to tune in to what the children are feeling.
16. The children see me as a source of punishment or criticism.
17. The children express hurt or jealousy when I spend time with other children.
18. The children remain angry or are resistant after being disciplined.
19. When these children are misbehaving, they respond well to my look or tone of voice.
20. Dealing with these children drains my energy.
21. I've noticed these children copying my behavior or ways of doing things.
22. When these children are in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.
23. The children's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.
24. Despite my best efforts, I'm uncomfortable with how the children and I get along.
25. The children whine or cry when they want something from me.
26. The children are sneaky and manipulative with me.
27. The children openly share their feelings and experiences with me.
28. My interactions with the children make me feel effective and confident.

Research Survey: Part Two – Qualitative Data Collection

Please indicate whether you used any of the following strategies with your students when you were teaching online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. For each item that you respond “Yes” to, please provide some description of how often you did it, your students’ responses to it, and how successful you think it was in improving your relationship with your students.

1. I started the day/class session by checking in with my students to see how they were doing.
2. I sent personal emails to my students.
3. I connected with my students on social media.
4. I was vulnerable with my students, sharing my frustrations, hurts or pain points.
5. I posted videos of myself talking to my students.
6. I shared personal things about myself with my students.
7. I used humor with my students.
8. I had one-on-one video calls with my students.
9. I made phone calls to my students.
10. I used collaborative learning activities with my students.
11. I made comments on my students’ work.
12. I looked for opportunities to praise my students.
13. I asked for my students’ opinions.
14. I listened to my students.
15. I asked my students for feedback and acted on that feedback.
16. I allowed students to make important decisions.
17. I responded to student requests in a timely manner.
18. My curriculum is culturally relevant to my students.

19. I ask my students who are from a different cultural group from me if they feel like I care about them, and I inquire about what I can do to better show that I care.

20. I encourage my students to take risks, and I affirm their efforts.

Open ended question: Did you do anything else to develop or nurture relationships with your students when you were teaching online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, please explain what you did and how the students responded to it.

Appendix B

Open-Ended Question Survey Results

Open ended question: Did you do anything else to develop or nurture relationships with your students when you were teaching online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, please explain what you did and how the students responded to it.

1. We had asynchronous Wednesdays. On these days, students could log in whenever they wanted to just ask questions or just chat.
2. I asked the kids regularly for feedback about what worked & what didn't. They were super-helpful!
3. I gave directions on using the schoology conferencing app when we were in class.
4. I made many explanatory videos and took detailed screen shots to help my students as much as possible.
5. I think this pretty much covers it. Building relationships with students where they see their teacher as a human and know that you care about them and their success always helps student engagement, effort, and success.
6. Many times family members would "pop in" when meeting with students and would ask questions, touch base and just "sit in" with us. Made some good school/home connections this way. I taught hybrid (2 days in person and 2 days online) and the days that the students were home, they really missed being in class. Also, they indicated that they felt "left out" of the class-since they only saw 1/2 of the class when it was their turn to be in person.
7. Drive through pick up of materials so that I could see them and wave in person. The students that were able to come enjoyed it.
8. We made up special days of the week, like dress up days. We had bring your pet to school days, and we dressed them up. I invested in online tech to help keep the learning valuable and engaging. I refused to teach to students who turned their cameras off, and I explained that I needed to see their faces to do my job, just like in school.
9. I would do learning labs with students, but if there was nothign to work on for class, then I kept the call open for any students who wanted to come in and just have a conversation.

10. Just staying open to all forms of communication, always giving students chances to fix or improve things
11. We had asynchronous Wednesdays. On these days, students could log in whenever they wanted to just ask questions or just chat.
12. When online. I used Google Meet and interactive apps like Jamboard just to make sure that every student had an opportunity to participate in meaning making for the lesson.
13. I met only with small groups, not class-sizes of 30 or more. This helped form some of the strongest student-teacher relationships I've had in teaching.
14. planned several class gatherings (Covid safe); 1 gathering was to give out end-of-year 'awards' and recognize student achievement. I also drove packets of info to the students' houses (yes, even the out of district students from Westland, Redford, and Livonia)
15. Weekly one on one meetings
16. Deliver "goodie" bags
17. I had them share or show things about their home life
18. We would do virtual lunches where students could stay in the zoom meeting and just hang out while eating or play games.
19. Talking to them via Zoom, asking them to share something from home, share their work they did at home. Students were responsive and excited to share their work or items from home. I work with 4 year olds so it is slightly different than older kids
20. I asked them to join me in looking for ways to support our communities and neighborhoods while we were all apart. We then shared our experiences and reflected on how those experiences changed how we look at one another & our communities. About 30% of my students joined in this project
21. I drove materials to their houses. Books, paper, supplies - kids were smiling from the windows and I did receive Thank you notes
22. We also had an ice storm and I had to call the families but my apartment was actually ruined during the storm and I was staying at my boyfriend's house and I didn't have all my stuff. Parents used to screenshot and email and point out every little mistake I made. When I didn't have an apartment of my own and I was still remote teaching I parent did this to me because I misused a common and spelled a word wrong. I cried and cried then emailed her back "thanks for that catch :)". Parents screaming in my classroom at meet the teacher night that their child will not sit near a child without a mask. Emails to my principal complaining about who their kid sits by and demanding more outside time. I still hate parents. I know so

many teachers who cried because parents were so nasty to them.
23. virtual lunch bunch, reading nights in the evening, optional read aloud book study, etc.
24. I wrote and sent letters to each of my students during the pandemic. There was a positive response as the students felt an extra connection and loved getting mail.
25. Whip arounds (asking a question every day and going around the classroom for everyone to answer if they want. Fun attendance questions that help me get to know them. Using breakout rooms on Zoom so I could interact with students in small groups.
26. Fun attendance questions such as If you could have a song play every time you entered a room, what song would it be and why? Most of them had fun with it. We did breakout room on Zoom and I would enter each breakout room to work with small groups.
27. I had meetings on Friday with students and their parents or caregivers to talk about ways that I could support them or their children the following week. Sometimes it would be to go over the teaching expectations for writing or reading so that the adult understood the work that was expected in the following week. I might also have to share where and when there would be a food truck or breakfast lunch pick ups. I asked parents to join us for a lesson and read the Spanish while I read the English of a book. I asked what materials or supplies were needed to assist their child.
28. I would take private messages along with speaking out loud so they could ask more private questions.
29. I would visit their houses and drop off books. I talked to parents via social messenger.
30. The biggest tool I had was immediate response times as much as possible. It was a bit draining, but I think it made them feel like I was there when they needed me.
31. Most of my classes were asynchronous, so I relied on individual Zoom time, personal emails and phone calls to connect with my students.
32. The students were able to log onto Google Classroom before the official class time so that they could talk to each other. At this time they were able to laugh and say silly things. It became almost like a contest to see who could be the first to login so that they could be the greeter for the others. I was teaching first and second graders.
33. One student simply asked me to read a story out loud. They're MS students and wanted/needed more than just work.
34. Zoom Show and Tell, Zoom Field Trips, Online Video Game Student-Led Demonstrations with Teacher Participation; Read-Alouds read by me; shared my pets and their antics; Some students stayed on longer than others, some checked out as soon as appropriate, with many

checking out because of family commitments, sharing resources (devices/bandwidth/room space, etc.) Some checked out because they were just "done." It was quite a spectrum of levels of participation. Several of the students were home alone. Some stayed on zoom much longer than necessary, others spent minimal time with me and said that navigating our communication platform was "too hard." My relationships with a few of my older students definitely depleted.

35. We had a sharing time at the start of every day, and I often followed up by asking about how a game (or other activity went) after they told me it was going to happen later that day. I was my true, goofy self with them, and I truly feel like my class made good relationships with me and with each other, as much as was possible in a virtual setting

36. As a school, we went to student's houses to drop things off, to touch base and check-in. We held optional zoom sessions during asynchronous times so students could check in at any point during the school day. There was always an adult available via zoom during school hours. We had material pick-up days where families would drive in to pick up what they needed for the next month. We turned that into as celebratory thing as we could; every month there was some small treat or extra in their bags

37. I used Class Dojo and Google classroom to chat with my students. I offered immediate feedback in Seesaw and Google Classroom. I communicated daily with parents. Developing a strong, positive relationship with my students was very important to me.

38. They sent in a photo of themselves and I posted it to slide and sent out to group each Friday so kids could feel connected.

39. I sent them letters in the mail.

40. We had a weekly lunch bunch when we would zoom and eat lunch together and chat. I usually had a discussion question that I asked everyone to answer.

41. Send postcards

42. I made music videos, singing popular songs with my own lyrics, to motivate and encourage my students, letting them know I was thinking of them.

43. Reaches out to student who didn't attend synchronous classes. Also asked students for their favorite songs and started each class with one of their choices.

44. I do a lot of parent coaching as an early childhood special ed teacher. Over 75% of my families had at least one parent that was an essential worker and over 50% of my families had both parents identified as essential workers. We work 8-4 and I DO NOT work outside of my hours, but I facetedimed/zoomed when families were available to touch base.

45. I ask my students to show their hobbies and achievements that they are proud of, and my students are very active and confident in teaching online

46. When I teach online, my students greet and care about them one by one

47. We would do a show and tell time. Which my 6th graders loved because we were all craving social interactions.

48. I made my students aware that I cared about their growth intellectually and emotionally. They were aware that I wanted them to have the best opportunity possible for a positive future. They were aware that our classroom tasks were designed to create struggle in order to grow their thinking skills. They were aware of these things because I discussed them with them individually and as a group on a regular basis. They were also aware because of my actions.

49. I made efforts to deliver books and other interesting resources to the students if they had an event (birthday, new sibling, move to new home). They loved seeing me, despite a mask and standing on the sidewalk outside the house!