

Visible Learning

A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses
relating to achievement

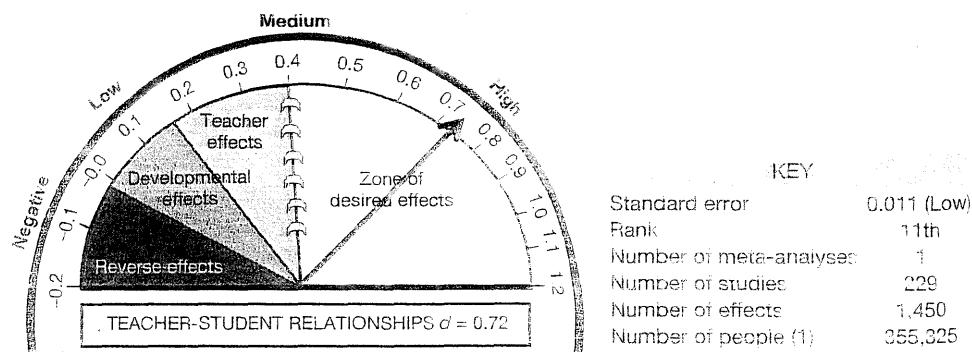
John A. C. Hattie (2009)

p 118-119

Teacher-student relationships

In the first chapter, the work of Russell Bishop and colleagues with Māori students in New Zealand mainstream classes was noted. When students, parents, principals, and teachers were asked about what influences students' achievement, all but the teachers emphasized the relationships between the teachers and the students. The teachers saw the major influence on achievement as a function of the child's attitudes and dispositions, their home, or the working conditions of the school—it is the students who are not learning who are somehow deficient. Building relations with students implies agency, efficacy, respect by the teacher for what the child brings to the class (from home, culture, peers), and allowing the experiences of the child to be recognized in the classroom. Further, developing relationships requires skill by the teacher—such as the skills of listening, empathy, caring, and having positive regard for others.

Cornelius-White (2007) located 119 studies and 1,450 effects, based on 355,325 students, 14,851 teachers, and 2,439 schools. He found a correlation of 0.34 ($d = 0.72$) across all person-centered teacher variables and all student outcomes (achievement and attitudes). The highest relations between person-centered teacher variables and achievement outcomes were for critical/creative thinking ($r = 0.45$), math ($r = 0.36$), verbal ($r = 0.34$), grades ($r = 0.25$). The effect sizes between the eight affective outcomes are depicted in Figure 7.6.



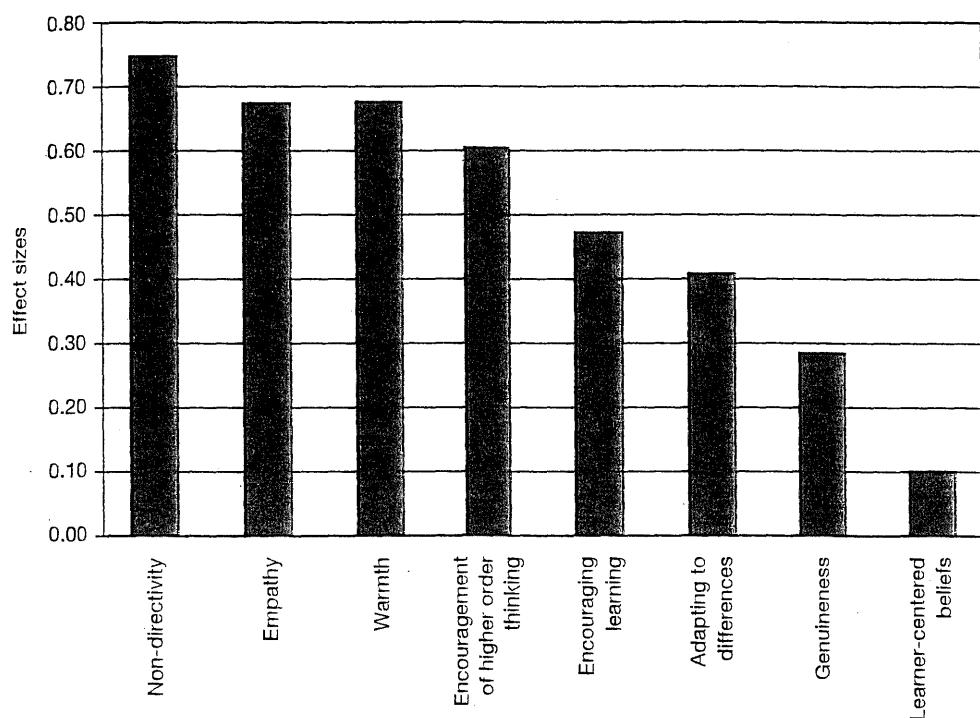


Figure 7.6 Effect sizes for nine teacher-student relationship variables

In classes with person-centered teachers, there is more engagement, more respect of self and others, there are fewer resistant behaviors, there is greater non-directivity (student-initiated and student-regulated activities), and there are higher achievement outcomes. Cornelius-White notes that most students who do not wish to come to school or who dislike school do so primarily because they dislike their teacher. His claim is that to "improve teacher-student relationships and reap their benefits, teachers should learn to facilitate students' development" by demonstrating that they care for the learning of each student as a person (which sends a powerful message about purpose and priority), and empathizing with students—"see their perspective, communicate it back to them so that they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others and the content with the same interest and concern." (p. 23).