The Human Student: The Essentiality of the Teacher-Student Connection in Higher Education

Geraldine Torrissi-Steele, Griffith University, Logan Campus, Australia

ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions are investing significant effort into the improvement of student success, retention and satisfaction. Some effort is being expended in research seeking to understand influencing factors, but the majority of effort is directed towards improving teaching quality. Effort to improve teaching quality is characterised by professional development initiatives, the general aim being to facilitate the shift away from traditional teacher-centred approaches, towards student-centred approaches. Though these initiatives are useful there exists an omission (or at the very least an area of severe-under-emphasis) within the discourse surrounding teaching quality in higher education – explicit attention to the teacher-student connection. The premise of the present article is that to make greater inroads into bettering student experiences and outcomes, the teacher-student connection, along with the humanist perspective in which it is embedded, is integral to the quality teaching practice in higher education.

KEYWORDS

Active Learning, Constructivism, Hierarchy of Needs, Higher Education, Humanism, Quality Teaching, Student Experience, Student Retention, Teacher-Student Relationship

INTRODUCTION

The themes of student satisfaction, success and retention reverberate loudly throughout institutions of higher education around the world. Effort to fulfil the mission of ‘gaining the edge’ in student success, retention and satisfaction is precipitating a great deal of activity within higher education: programs of study are being evaluated and revised; courses and teaching practices are being subjected to scrutiny as never before; the myriad of factors that influence student success and retention are being researched; and significant investment is being made into raising the quality of teaching by building teaching staff capabilities in student-centred learning, online learning, flipped classrooms, and a host of other ‘innovative’ teaching strategies. In hallway conversations among teaching staff it is not uncommon to hear concern about how to get students to come to class, how to build students’ academic skills, and how to get students to engage with assessment. Most recently, in the author’s home institution, active learning has become a high-profile concept. Numerous staff development workshops have been initiated, and an ‘active learning’ lecture capture platform has been implemented. High on the learning and teaching agenda is the institution wide uptake of active learning as a teaching approach

DOI: 10.4018/IJAVET.2018040101

impacting positively on student experiences, success and outcomes. Amid the intense activity and discourse surrounding student satisfaction, success and retention, there exists a stark omission (or at least an area of severe under-emphasis) - the teacher-student connection.

Interestingly, although the teacher-student connection is neglected in higher education teaching, in Pre-K to 12 education the teacher-student connection receives a significant degree of attention and has been well researched (Bernstein, Yamashiro, & Nonan, 2013). In the domain of formal schooling, the crucial role played by positive teacher-student connections in helping to achieve high learner engagement and positive learning outcomes is often acknowledged (e.g. Liberante, 2012; Gallagher, 2013). It is often argued that during the years of formal schooling the teacher-student connection warrants particular attention because in the younger years, children are still developing, and so they have a strong need for nurture. Indeed, much of the literature around teacher-student connection is positioned in the earlier years of schooling, and is often aligned with attachment theories relevant to child development, and linked with facilitating students' social and academic development (Gallagher, 2013). But, positive teacher-student connections have a significant impact on student learning outcomes regardless of age and thus there is no reason why attention to the quality of teacher-student relationships should be limited to young students in their formal years of schooling. Grounded in humanist theory, a positive teacher-student connection is vital to the success of student-centred learning approaches across educational domains, higher education included. Strong teacher-student connection impacts positively on student motivation, boosts confidence, improves academic self-efficacy and ultimately plays an important role in students' successful achievement of academic outcomes (Markle & O'Banion, 2014).

In the domain of higher education discussion of teaching quality often revolves around constructivism. Featuring in higher education teaching professional development initiatives, constructivism is a well-recognised and often cited educational theory, but its co-requisite, humanism, in which the teacher-student connection is situated is not nearly so well acknowledged. The intent with which the present article is written is to bring humanism and the embodied notion of teacher-student connection, into the discussion of quality teaching in higher education. It is argued that if we are to make inroads into better student experience, greater student success, and higher levels of retention, then establishing a positive teacher-student connection should, and must, be integral to quality teaching in higher education.

Given that the teacher-student connection is grounded in humanist theory, prior to embarking on further discussion of the importance of the teacher-student connection in higher education teaching, it is useful to very briefly consider the foundational concepts of humanist theory.

HUMANISM AT A GLANCE

Distinct from behaviourism with its emphasis on behaviour and operant conditioning, and distinct from the notion of knowledge discovery and learning as construction of meaning, found in cognitivism, humanism pivots on the principles of human relatedness and the human need for relationships to others. As a paradigm, humanism taps into ideas about human dignity, potential empowerment and freedom. Humanist theory espouses a view of the world not from the perspective of others, but from the subjective standpoint of the individual. Humanist practitioners seek to understand how each individual perceives and interprets phenomena. Thus, humanism is about conscious experience. Importantly, humanism positions people not as helpless 'victims' of circumstance or simply reacting to 'stimulus', but rather as creative and active agents able to overcome adversity.

People, according to the humanist perspective are essentially good. They are innately driven by the need for self-improvement. Each individual's need for continued growth, improvement and fulfilment is captured in the notion of self-actualisation. As defined by Maslow (1943), self-actualisation refers to the human need to realize one's full potential, to be fulfilled and to do all they are capable of

doing. The need for self-actualization occupies the top most position of the well-known Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. At the base of Maslow's hierarchy is psychological need, followed by the need for safety, love, self-esteem and finally, at the top of the hierarchy the need for self-actualisation. Human motivation stems from the desire to meet these basic needs and to move through to a state of self-actualization. Though the process of self-actualization is not specifically defined, humanists such as Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1969) espouse to the idea that for a person to 'grow' towards self-actualization they need an environment characterised by genuineness, acceptance and empathy.

HUMANISM AND CONSTRUCTIVISM IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

Humanism has its roots in client-centred psychotherapy. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers being two of humanism's most well-known proponents. Among others, Maslow and Rogers extended their ideas to the education domain and wrote about teaching and learning. One of the most influential works on education is Rogers' (1969) book *Freedom to Learn*. The notion of 'freedom to learn' revolves around providing an environment conducive to learning that involves the whole person. Such learning is self-initiated and self-directed. It is achieved through active experimentation and experiences, and is facilitated through self-criticism and evaluation. Significant learning, to use Roger's (1969) own words, "is a 'gut level' type of learning that is profound and pervasive" (pp. 162-163). With emphasis on self-initiated and self-directed learning, the role of the teacher in the Rogerian classroom is that of facilitator rather than instructor. Learning strategies are experiential and learner-, rather than, teacher- centred.

Through a brief discussion of Roger's humanist approach to education, we have arrived at what are likely to be familiar ideas to readers well versed in constructivist approaches. Significant (or deep-learning), self-directed learning, and active learning are at the nexus of humanism and constructivism. This is why the author, when attending teaching professional development workshops, is surprised to find that constructivism and its components such as active learning are always present and discussed at length yet, explicit discussion of humanism and the teacher-student connection is usually absent. Shared central tenets aside, there is a dimension to humanism that makes humanism and constructivism two related, if not co-dependent, guiding philosophies for quality teaching and learning.

Constructivism focuses on the individual and/or social construction of knowledge, but humanism, more so than any other paradigm, brings to the fore the notion of the 'whole person' involved in learning. Involvement of the whole person in the learning process brings a conceptualisation of learning as an activity occurring across cognitive and affective domains, and if attending to Bloom (1956), the psychomotor domain as well. If we speak of the affective domain, then values, attitudes and feelings become involved. Taking this one step further, values, attitudes and feelings lead into recognising the social nature of people. Humanism brings squarely into focus human relationships and the need people have for connection with each other. Maslow (1948), in his hierarchy of needs defines, above the base of the physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest), needs associated with relationships with others - the need for security and safety, the need for belongingness, and esteem.

Rogers also recognizes the centrality of human connectedness. In his discussion of significant learning, Rogers (1969) explicitly refers to the importance of the teacher-student connection and clearly establishes the teacher student relationship as an essential condition for significant learning:

We know that the facilitation of such [significant] learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the leader, not upon his curricular planning, not upon his use of audio visual aids, not upon his lectures and presentations, not upon an abundance of books though each of these might at one time or another be utilized as an important resource. No, the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and learners. (pp. 105-106)

To see more clearly the reasons why the teacher-student connection is so crucial to the quality of learning and teaching in higher education, consider again constructivism and its student-centred ideals. In the absence of a connection between teacher and student, how can the teacher come to know students well enough to understand their needs and to subsequently provide conditions for optimising student-centred learning? In social constructivism, Vygotsky (1978) refers to the difference between what a student can achieve alone and what they can achieve through the guidance and scaffolding offered by the teacher. Effective guidance and scaffolding depends not only on the teacher's understanding of the 'where the student is at' (which is facilitated by a relationship with the student), but also if the student is to engage effectively with the support provided by the teacher, then the student must value and trust the teacher's input.

At risk of labouring the point, consider also, the conversational framework for effective teaching and learning espoused to by theorists such as Pask (1975) and Laurillard (1993). The conversational framework emanates from social constructivism, and refers to learning and teaching as the negotiation of knowledge occurring through the process of exchange and discussion of ideas between learner and teacher. Think for a moment how difficult it is to have a conversation with someone that is not known or trusted. How likely is one to expose their inner thoughts in an environment where there is little or no connection among participants in the conversation? The emphasis in social constructivism is on the dialogue and the co-operative or co-construction of knowledge (Wells, 1999) and as such the teacher-student connection is implicit to social constructivist approaches.

Thus far, we have discussed the teacher-student connection and its essentiality to significant learning. It is necessary however to expand further on the nature of the teacher-student connection, and what it means to say that it is a 'positive' connection. Maslow's (1948) hierarchy of needs provides good guidance into nature of a positive teacher-student relationship. In Maslow's hierarchy, the need for safety, belonging and self-esteem are foundational to reaching one's full potential. Thus, establishing a positive teacher-student connection is partly about establishing a climate of trust and safety, not only between teacher and student, but also among all others in the classroom.

Adopting the views of Maslow, Rogers and other humanists, establishing a non-threatening, supportive and trusting environment is a necessary condition for engaging actively in deep learning. The necessity of trust and support in the active learning classroom is obvious when one considers that in asking students to participate in active learning, we are asking students to speak in front of others, to present their ideas and so expose themselves to the risk of ridicule and judgement from their teacher and peers. It is only when students feel safe to share their ideas and expose their own learning that a sense of belonging emerges and the co-generation of knowledge can take place. Effective teachers strive to initiate and model the connections they wish to create within their teaching spaces. Utilizing the framework of Maslow's hierarchy positive teacher-student connections, promote a non-threatening environment, foster a sense of belonging, raise self-esteem and confidence, and enable the student-centred approaches that, in turn, facilitate deep learning and induce progression towards the ideal of self-actualization.

The present discussion on the need for teacher-student connection in higher education is well and good, but what evidence is there that concern for establishment of a positive teacher-student connection is justified. A good place to start to look for evidence is in the classroom and in the perceptions of students themselves.

EVIDENCE FROM THE TRENCHES

From the preceding discussion the interrelationship of student-centred teaching approaches, humanist perspectives and the teacher-student connection is brought to the fore. At this stage, the authors' point of view on the importance of the teacher-student connection is evident. In fact, part of the motivation for writing the present article stems from results of the author's investigation of her

students' perspectives on what makes a 'good teacher' as well as from the author's own observations and university classroom experiences.

Caught up in the institutional push for creating more positive student experiences, and in effort to continually improve her own practice, the author conducted a simple open-ended, online questionnaire, in which the cohort of undergraduate students enrolled in small multimedia program were asked to list up to five items in order to complete the sentence "I expect that a great university teacher will..."

With 75 (of approximately 250 enrolled students to whom the survey was sent) students responding, so far, 260 comments were entered. A preliminary theme analysis of the responses reveals 60% of comments linked to humanistic concepts (other comments related to an areas such as knowledge of discipline, organisation, ability to explain ideas, relevance of information provided, giving timely feedback, being on time, giving real life examples.), and related to the teacher-student relationship. The comments can be loosely categorised as follows. Some direct quotes are included to better illustrate the ideas and give an indication of the breadth of responses.

Supportive and helpful in a non-judgmental way

- "Be willing to help anyone"
- "Helps me"
- "Be non-judgmental"
- "Help anyone, even if it's a simple task"
- "Provide a healthy learning environment"
- "Make time to help me"
- "Support struggling students"
- "Treats students fairly"

Approachable and inviting

- "Be inviting of queries"
- "Engaging and friendly"
- "Be approachable and easy to communicate with"
- "Easy to approach for help"

Caring, empathetic, connected

- "Be understanding of real life problems"
- "Be understanding"
- "Be fun"
- "Understand students"
- "Be understanding of our other commitments but having high expectations"

Mentor

- "Help me become a better student"
- "Be a mentor"
- "Assist students in going beyond their inspirations"
- "Take pride in the success of their students"
- "Inspire students in some ways to reach their goals in life"

The message conveyed by the responses thus far is loud and clear.

When a thematic analysis is conducted on the author's student evaluations of teaching across courses taught in the past, a similar trend is observed. The great majority of positive comments on the formal student evaluations relate to help, support, respect and empathy demonstrated to students. Furthermore, in the course of informal interactions with students, the author has encountered much anecdotal evidence of the student need for connection and a humanist approach to teaching. In one most memorable instance, a student was heard to say, "You know, I think the teacher really cares about us and really, really wants to help". Such a comment encapsulates the argument for building strong relationships between student and teacher.

Other teachers in higher education likely have similar stories to tell. Thomas (2002, p. 432) in investigating student retention in a UK institution notes:

If students feel that staff believe in them and care about their outcomes...they seem to gain both self-confidence and motivation, and their work improves...students seem more likely to feel that they are valued by staff if lecturers and tutors know their names and exhibit other signs of friendship, are interested in students and treat students as equals.

Thomas (2002) goes on to report on other anecdotal evidence of the importance of teacher and student relationships. “Acts of kindness” reduce the distance between student and teacher, and implicitly convey the teacher’s belief in the potential of the student.

ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTION

The need to establish teacher-student connection and to also adopt elements of the humanist perspective in teaching is difficult to refute. How to proceed from here though is much more complex and challenging. Echoing the complexity of human interaction, there is no simple solution or formula that can be adopted. Furthermore, there is the unarguable difficulty of how to adopt such an approach in very large classes of 100 or more students. Establishing a teacher-student connection is positioned in the humanist perspective and the corresponding affective domain. It is to be considered more of an approach than a technique. Establishing and maintaining the connection needs to permeate all that is done in and out of the class, and the entire teaching team must be on board.

Adding a humanist dimension to teaching may require some re-calibration of one’s views about learning and teaching. Unfortunately, the higher education teaching context is firmly entrenched in the cognitive domain with little explicit consideration of humanist and embodied affective elements (Beard, Clegg, & Smith, 2007; Atkinson, 2015; Markle & O’Banion, 2014). Traditionally, the affective domain in universities has been relegated to specific counselling and advising services existing within the university, and although these services are undeniably needed and must exist, the affective domain in the university classroom is mostly neglected as a factor impacting on learning and teaching. Though many educators may acknowledge the importance of the affective, it is not well understood and subsequently least applied in the higher education classroom (Markle & O’Banion, 2014). For example, an examination of learning objectives for the vast majority of courses focus on cognitive elements and there is little attention paid to the affective domain. This is not to say that cognitive domain must be de-emphasised, but rather that there must be explicit acknowledgement of the affective domain and along with the humanist ideas that it necessarily incorporates.

The neglect of the affective domain in higher education teaching and the need to raise its profile has some (but insufficient) recognition in literature. Making inroads into the affective and humanist perspectives in higher education is Mortiboys’ (2012) *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence: A Step by Step Guide for Higher and Further Education Professionals*. Mortiboys provides some practical activities designed to strengthen the teacher-student relationship and to help develop the emotional intelligence of educators in higher education. Mortiboys assists in bringing humanism and its affective dimensions out of the background to become an explicit component of learning and teaching considerations.

A guiding framework for establishing effective teacher-student connection and for the adoption of the supporting humanist perspective is perhaps best articulated by Carl Rogers (1969) in the three attributes he identifies as important for ‘helping professionals’ to exhibit if they are to nurture personal growth in others:

1. **Genuineness:** This means the relationship between student and teacher is not impeded by fronts or facades. The teacher, in a role of leadership, models genuineness to the student. In a genuine environment, the feelings and thoughts of the learner become more available to the teacher when the teacher also genuinely shares their own thoughts, feelings and experiences. Furthermore, genuineness promotes ‘peership’ between teacher and student, which in turns facilitates the sharing of knowledge and ideas. The teacher, in this capacity, does not present as the authority but rather as one on equal footing that will help the student to ‘learn’ course content by enabling the student to answer questions and engage in fruitful and honest discussion (Rogers, 1969, cited in Burgan & Congos, 2008);
2. **Acceptance:** As one of the students responded to the author’s questionnaire asking students to identify the attributes of a great university teacher, “...be willing to help anyone; take pride in the success of their students...” Acceptance is about exactly that – accepting wholeheartedly each individual learner for who they are and for their individual worth. Acceptance is about respect and pride in the learner’s accomplishments. It is also about expressing, and conveying through actions and behavior, the belief that the learner is able to achieve (Burgan & Congos, 2008). Although, at first thought, the higher education classroom with its great diversity in student capabilities and experiences might seem to present a challenge, from the humanist perspective, the diversity provides rich opportunities to enable students to contribute to the learning of each other, and indeed even to the learning of the teacher. Given a genuine relationship with the teacher, the way is paved for using questioning and conversational techniques that allow students to make valuable contribution to the knowledge constructed by the student cohort. By enabling and acknowledging their contribution to the learning of the cohort, students feel valued and accepted. Consider also that acceptance, like genuineness forms the basis of meeting the need of safety and belonging found in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs;
3. **Empathy:** One of the characteristics of the student cohorts in higher education is the magnitude of personal struggles many of the students are dealing with in the course of their study. Some students are perhaps struggling academically and trying to cope with pressure from themselves or others to do well or quickly finish their program of study. Many may be students with family commitments or perhaps caring for someone with serious illness, may have a serious illness themselves or perhaps are experiencing financial difficulties.

As humanism encourages, it is important for the teacher to understand the subjective experience of the student, and the teacher must realize that within that subjective experience, it is impossible to separate cleanly academic and personal life. Academic and personal life are inevitably tangled together. One will necessarily impact on the other. It is relatively common place in the author’s experience to find students who have apparently failed to attend classes or failed to submit assessment items. In the absence of connection with the student, it is all too easy for the teacher to think that the student is simply lazy or not interested. Most of the time though, initiating contact with the student reveals a very different scenario. Some significant personal event has (not surprisingly) affected their academic work, and when given the opportunity to re-engage with their academic work, such students are always very grateful and given a second chance put in maximum effort to succeed. As Rogers predicts, students find high levels of motivation when “they feel understood without judgement” (Burgan & Congos, 2008, p. 6). Among the rigor and discipline of academic work, a small act of kindness on the part of the lecturer or tutor has the potential to increase motivation and commitment of students to their academic study.

Surrounded as academic teachers are by the intricacies of discipline knowledge and the drive to evaluate the knowledge and skills of students through assignments and examinations, it is understandable how the human side of teaching can become obscured. It is much simpler to define academic objectives in cognitive terms, to plan teaching strategies around the more concrete objectives of knowledge and skills, and to evaluate achievement only in terms of those objectives. While

academics acknowledge the human side of teaching in higher education, it is much more challenging to address. It may be worth remembering on a regular basis that before those we teach have become students, they are people first.

CONCLUSION

The thread of discussion in the present article began with the observation that the response to the higher education agenda of improving the quality student experience has manifested as an emphasis on constructivist theory and student-centred initiatives, and there is lack of emphasis on the importance student teacher connection. Yet, the relationship between teacher and student is a well-acknowledged, significant factor impacting on the quality of learning. In the course of the discussion, the teacher-student connection was positioned in humanist theory. An overview of the core tenets of humanism lead to recognition of the shared ground between humanism and constructivist student-centred ideals:

The works of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow have been called upon as a guiding framework throughout preceding discussion, and were used to establish the teacher-student connection as a requirement for helping students engage in significant or deep learning. It has been argued that when humanism is adopted as a co-requisite to student-centred approaches, teaching is enriched and deeper learning is fostered. Adopting a humanist perspective encourages explicit acknowledgement of the involvement of the whole person (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains) in the learning process, and helps teachers to recognize the propensity of people for relatedness, and the need people have for connection. Humanism helps teachers to see their students (and themselves) in the light of an innate tendency towards self-actualization, and helps teachers to position themselves as facilitators and guides.

Importantly, adopting the humanist perspective alongside student-centred approaches reinforces that learning in the higher education classroom is a part of the larger lifelong process of learning, driven by the need to be the 'best they can be', and that education should provide opportunities for empowerment, students should have a voice in what they do, how they do it and also bear responsibility for that choice, educators convey an underlying faith in the capabilities of students and their potential and the work of the teacher is to facilitate rather than direct learning and there is little "power differential" between teacher and learner. The relationship between teacher and learner is one characterised by unconditional positive regard and empathy. (Tangney, 2014, p. 269)

Though the case for building strong teacher-student connections is made quite strongly and relatively easily, addressing the challenge of how to establish and maintain those connections in the complex environment of higher education is difficult. The best there is to offer at present in terms of guidance is a general sense of direction. How to build firm teacher-student connections and how to humanise higher education teaching is certainly an area worth investing some research effort into.

In researching the teacher-student connection within the context of higher education, it is important to highlight that it is a multi-dimensional concept. As emerges in the present paper, a discussion of teacher-student connection cannot take place effectively unless there is also discussion of humanist theory and the affective domain (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). Hagenauer and Volet (2014) observe that while some research in the area of teacher and student connection exists, the research addresses only the existence of activities that indicate some degree of connection between student and teacher. Evidently, merely knowing that the connection between student and teacher exists and that it is positive generally, is insufficient for truly understanding (and therefore harnessing) the nature of the interaction and its subsequent benefits. Hence, one desirable research direction is to better describe the quality of the student teacher relationship.

It may be that the student experience and success agendas encircling higher education become the catalyst required to raise the profile of the humanist framework and its importance in higher education teaching (Markle & O'Banion, 2014), and will potentially spawn the much-needed research. So far, research is narrow and needs to expand beyond simply showing that affective factors are significant predictors of academic achievement (Markle & O'Banion, 2014). Perhaps, research may be further propelled forward by the emphasis on the so called 21st century skills. The 21st century skills include interpersonal skills and personal qualities such as self-esteem, creativity, responsibility, etc., and provide further impetus for the explicit recognition of humanist approaches in higher education teaching. (Markle & O'Banion, 2014)

Up until now, much of the nurture of students, and affective elements of learning in higher education have been relegated to student advising and particular service units within the universities which offer counselling and pastoral care to students. While such services are undeniably essential to help those needing such specialists services, there remains significant, yet unexplored, opportunity to infuse humanist approaches into the teaching and learning environment such that the conditions present in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and in Carl Roger's notion of 'freedom to learn' are satisfied to a greater extent. Perhaps then we will be better equipped to make significant progress in the mission to not only improve student learning, success, experience and retention, but also to help students on their path towards self-actualization.

The current tribulations of higher education and the necessity of addressing the issues of student experience and quality of teaching, alongside the need to better develop in our graduates desirable 21st century skills, produces a pressing need to inject humanism into the discourse surrounding teaching and learning in higher education. It is hoped that the present article has, at the very least, ignited interest and goes on to fuel rich discussion.

REFERENCES

- Atkinson, S. P. (2015, March 31). *Is Higher Education lacking its affective dimension?* Retrieved from Learning Design and Educational Technologies: <https://spatkinson.wordpress.com/2015/03/31/is-higher-education-lacking-its-affective-dimension/>
- Beard, C., Clegg, S., & Smith, K. (2007). Acknowledging the affective in higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(2), 235–252. doi:10.1080/01411920701208415
- Bernstein-Yamashiro, B., & Noam, G. G. (2013). Teacher-student relationships: Toward personalized education. *New Directions for Youth Development* (, 137–142.
- Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Burgan, W. M., & Congos, D. (2008). The student centered SI leader and Carl Rogers. *Research & Teaching in Developmental Education*, 25(1), 3–9.
- Gallagher, E. (2013, Fall). *The Effects of Teacher-Student Relationships: Social and Academic Outcomes of Low-Income Middle and High School Students*. Retrieved from <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/appsyh/opus/issues/2013/fall/gallagher>
- Hagenauer, G., & Volet, S. (2014). Teacher–student relationship at university: An important yet under-researched field. *Oxford Review of Education*, 40(3), 370–388. doi:10.1080/03054985.2014.921613 PMID:27226693
- Laurillard, D. (1993). *Rethinking university teaching: A framework for the effective use of educational technology*. London: Routledge.
- Liberante, L. (2012). e 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.
- Markle, R., & O'Banion, T. (2014). Assessing Affective Factors to Improve Retention and Completion. *Learning Abstracts*, 17(11), 2–16.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. doi:10.1037/h0054346
- Mortiboys, A. (2012). *Teaching with emotional intelligence: A step-by-step guide for higher and further education professionals*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pask, G. (1975). *Conversation, cognition, and learning*. New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Rogers, C. R. (1969). *Freedom to learn*. Columbus, OH: Merrill.
- Tangney, S. (2014). Student-centred learning: A humanist perspective. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(3), 266–275. doi:10.1080/13562517.2013.860099
- Thomas, L. (2002). Student retention in higher education: The role of institutional habitus. *Journal of Education Policy*, 17(4), 423–442. doi:10.1080/02680930210140257
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Towards a sociocultural practice and theory of education*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511605895