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Trevor Capern
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Exceptional Connections

A cross-cultural exploration of the actual teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with gifted secondary students and secondary students with emotional/behavioural disorders

Trevor Capern, B.A., B. Ed
PhD Dissertation
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ABSTRACT

This cross-cultural study examined the teacher behaviours that contributed to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students and secondary students with Emotional/Behavioural Disorders (EBD) in Western Australia and Canada. The study also examined which categories of social support (emotional, instrumental, informational, appraisal) were considered most important in developing positive relationships according to the exceptional students and their teachers. Behaviours were identified through a mixed-methods approach that included surveys, teacher interviews, and student focus groups. Participants included gifted secondary students (N = 133) and their teachers (N= 49), and secondary students with EBD (N = 89) and their teachers (N=23) in Western Australia and three Canadian provinces. The data established that both gifted students and their teachers valued teacher behaviours that showed respect for students, supported and extended student learning, and promoted cordial and friendly interactions between teachers and students. Gifted students emphasised the importance of informational support, while their teachers put a greater emphasis on emotional support. Students with EBD and their teachers both valued teacher behaviours that displayed warmth, understanding, patience, supported students in their learning, and showed flexibility in instruction and in addressing behaviour. Students with EBD and their teachers both identified emotional support as the most important type of social support for developing positive relationships. Comparisons between the behaviours that were identified for gifted students and students with EBD revealed a set of core behaviours that were essential for developing positive relationships with both groups, but that each group required a unique set of behaviours to address their unique set of needs. Themes emerging from the data were consistent in Western Australia and Canada, indicating that positive relationships with these exceptional secondary students can be developed using behaviours that transcend borders and cultures.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or
- iii. contain any defamatory material;

Trevor Capern

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to study

A wide body of research indicates that relationships between teachers and their students play a vital role in creating positive learning outcomes and environments. This is true for all students, but appears to be especially important for gifted students and students with Emotional/Behavioural Disorders (EBD).

The daily interaction between students and teachers often leads to relationships that contribute to students' social, emotional, and academic well-being. Positive student-teacher relationships have been shown to increase student achievement and attitudes towards school (Cornelius-White, 2007). A comprehensive meta-analysis of 229 studies of student-teacher relationships revealed an effect size of 0.72 on student achievement, indicating a strong positive effect, and ranking student-teacher relationships 11th out of 138 possible influences on student achievement (Hattie, 2009, p.118). For gifted students, strong positive relationships with their teachers may help bridge the gap between their potential and their achievement, a concern of educators for decades (McCoach & Siegle, 2003; Whitmore, 1980; Zilli, 1971). Characteristics that have commonly been associated with gifted student underachievement include negative attitudes towards school, teachers, and classes, low academic self-perception, and low motivation (Dowdall & Colangelo, 1982; Reis & McCoach, 2000; Whitmore, 1980). All of these difficulties can be addressed through the development of positive relationships with teachers. Positive student-teacher relationships may also help to address the academic difficulties that students with EBD often encounter. Compared with their peers, students with EBD tend to have lower grades, experience more school failure, are more likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability (Frank, Sitlington, & Carson, 1995; Koyangi & Gaines, 1993), and experience dropout rates above 50% (Bullock & Gable, 2006; Marder, 1992). The academic benefits of positive student-teacher relationships are clearly valuable to all students, but are of particular significance for these students with high academic risks.

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Not only do strong student-teacher relationships help increase student academic achievement, but they are also crucial to the social-emotional development of students. In recent years, more study has been dedicated to understanding the social-emotional needs of gifted and talented students (Cross, 2011; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathmunde, & Whalen, 1997; Delisle & Galbraith, 2002; Greene, 2003; Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002; VanTassel-Baska, Cross, & Olenchak, 2009). It has been acknowledged that gifted and talented individuals must often deal with depression and feelings of isolation (Jacobsen, 1999; Weisse, 1990). At the same time, it has also been found that developing a sense of belonging in one's school can act as a protective factor against depression in gifted adolescents (Mueller, 2009). One way to increase a student's sense of belonging is to develop meaningful relationships with teachers. This is especially important for students with EBD, as these students are the least liked group of students (Baker, 2005) and show lower levels of satisfaction and affiliation than other students (Murray & Greenburg, 2001). Students with EBD have a higher risk than their peers for juvenile delinquency, incarceration at some point later on in life, and school dropout (Mihalas, Morse, Allsopp, & Alvarez McHatton, 2009), but can have their risk reduced through the existence of strong relationships with teachers, as protective factors against juvenile delinquency include attachment to teachers (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, & Fernandez, 1989).

Positive student-teacher relationships are also beneficial to overall learning environments. Teachers having positive relationships with their students were found to have 31% fewer behaviour problems during the course of the school year than teachers who did not, according to a meta-analysis of more than 100 studies about teacher effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2003). Student misbehaviours have been linked to teacher stress and negative emotions (Yoon, 2002), implying that teachers with positive student relationships have fewer behavioural issues, are less stressed, and are more positive than teachers who do not. This follows a shift in classroom management strategies “from a paradigm that emphasizes the creation and application of rules to regulate student behavior [*sic*] to one that also attends to students' needs for nurturing relationships and opportunities for self-regulation” (Weinstein, 1999, p. 151).

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Clearly, positive student-teacher relationships are important for the successful academic, social, and emotional development of children. While there has been increasing recognition of the importance of addressing the social and emotional needs of gifted students, there is a lack of research regarding the nature of the relationships between gifted students and their teachers. Similarly, there is little literature on the effect of caring student-teacher relationships on outcomes for students with EBD (Mihalas et al., 2009). The gaps in the literature also fail to address how strong student-teacher relationships are formed. Cornelius-White (2007) identifies eight broad teacher-student relationship variables: non-directivity, empathy, warmth, encouragement of higher order thinking, encouraging learning, adapting to differences, genuineness, and learner-centred beliefs. These variables represent broad constructs that are difficult to concretely define in terms of what actions teachers take in developing relationships with students. Further, and more specifically, there is a lack of empirical research that addresses *how* teachers can develop positive and caring relationships with students with EBD (Murray & Greenburg, 2006). According to Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006), “We need systematic inquiry into *how* [italics added] teachers establish and maintain positive, caring relationships with students” (p. 211). This study attempted to address Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein’s appeal by identifying the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to the development of positive relationships with students. Although gifted students and students with EBD are both classified as exceptional, they represent two distinct groups – albeit, not necessarily mutually exclusive – each with their own challenges and needs. The literature shows that positive student-teacher relationships benefit both groups, but more research is needed to understand the teacher behaviours that can be employed to develop positive relationships with either type of student.

Cross-Cultural Context

This study explored the nature of positive student-teacher relationships with exceptional students in Western Australia and in three different provinces in Canada: Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia. The opportunity to compare students from both countries was made available by the researcher having worked in teaching roles in all locations and having established connections with schools interested in pursuing this topic. Comparing teaching practices across cultures:

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...allows educators to examine their own teaching practices from a fresh perspective by widening their knowledge of possibilities... [and] can reveal alternatives and stimulate discussion about the choices being made within a country. Although a variety of teaching practices can be found within a single country, it sometimes requires looking outside one's own culture to see something new and different. (Lokan, Hollingsworth, & Hackling, 2006, p.4)

Stigler and Hiebert (1998) note that teaching is a cultural activity and the scripts for teaching in each country rely on core beliefs regarding the way students learn, the nature of the subject, and the teacher's role in the classroom. Similarly, Hofstede (1986) purports that all social interactions – including those in school settings – are culturally regulated. The Canadian provinces in this study and Western Australia share common characteristics and have differences that make them ideal for cross-cultural study. All locations are in developed nations and are English-speaking, British Commonwealth countries that have long-established systems for providing public education. According to Hofstede (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) five-dimensional model of cultural differences, there are five cultural dimensions that influence the personal interactions of individuals from differing nations, and uses those dimensions to classify nations accordingly. The authors classify Australian culture and Canadian culture in the same category for all five dimensions, signifying the strong similarities in culture between the two nations. Both nations were classified in the same sub-groups of Small Power Distance/High Individualism (p.309, Figure 1) and Weak Uncertainty Avoidance/Masculine (p. 310, Figure 2), and both nations were classified as short-term oriented cultures ("The Hofstede Centre", n.d.). According to the model, in Australian and Canadian societies: individuals look primarily after their own interest and interest of their immediate families (High Individualism); inequalities in power are less accepted by those with less power (Small Power Distance); members are contemplative, less aggressive, unemotional, relaxed, accepting of personal risks and relatively tolerant (Weak Uncertainty Avoidance); there exists maximal distinction between gender roles, and men are expected to be assertive, ambitious, competitive, to value material success (Masculine); and both cultures focus on tradition and measure performance on short-term bases (Short-Term Orientation). Although both Canada and Australia were classified in the same categories for each dimension, their index scores differed in all dimensions, indicating that while the cultures are mostly similar, there is still variance

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in cultural values. The cultural similarities and differences between the two settings presented a dimension to the study that further illuminated the nature of the problem.

With regards to student-teacher relationships, the literature indicates that certain aspects of these relationships transcend borders, while other aspects may vary from culture to culture. Watkins' (2000) meta-analysis that included 4000 students from seven studies in four countries, including China and the UK, found "in all samples that a deep approach to learning is encouraged by a classroom where the students feel involved and believe their teachers to be supportive" (p. 164). However, Jin and Cortazzi (1998) found that British students preferred teachers to be patient and sympathetic towards students who were experiencing difficulty while Chinese students preferred to have a warm, friendly relationship with their teacher that extended beyond the classroom. Cefai and Cooper (2010) found that Maltese students with EBD expressed thoughts and feelings about their relationships with teachers comparable to peers in similar situations across cultural contexts. "Feelings about their negative school experience, such as the sense of injustice, exclusion, failure, helplessness and oppression" (p. 193) were shared by students with EBD in different cultures, as were feelings regarding "the significance of caring relationships with particular teachers and the power of such relationships in realigning their development towards more positive pathways" (p.193). Lang, Wong and Fraser (2005) found that Year 10 gifted students in Singapore "perceived their...teachers more favourably [than non-gifted students] in terms of demonstrating more leadership, helping/friendly and understanding behaviours and less admonishing, uncertain, dissatisfied and strict behaviours" (p. 23) and that helping/friendly behaviours were particularly associated with the talented students' enjoyment in learning, while Suk-Un Jin and Moon (2006) found that gifted Korean high school science students reported satisfactory relationships with their teachers and particular appreciation for high teacher competence and teacher expertise. Some research has shown that teachers in different cultures display different attitudes towards gifted education, which inevitably impacts on the way they interact with their gifted and talented students. Ojanen and Freeman (1994) found that British teachers were more concerned than their Finnish counterparts about the potential problems of their gifted students, while the Finnish teachers preferred to keep gifted students in the regular stream to promote their social skills and protect against isolation. A study comparing teacher attitudes towards gifted

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education involving teachers from the U.S., Hong Kong, and Finland found that teachers in Hong Kong mostly supported the idea of employing gifted students to help struggling students, while there was less agreement from the Finnish and American teachers, which "...reflects the difference between the helpful-oriented Asian culture and the more independent-oriented western culture...[and] revealed that the traditions in Asian culture remain in teachers' attitudes, regardless of the training they have received in gifted education" (Tirri, Tallent-Runnels, Adams, Yuen, Lau, 2002, p.125).

As for what may be expected of teacher/student interactions in Australia and Canada, Hofstede (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) compiled a list of potential characteristics of student/teacher interactions based on the nations' categorisation in his 5-D model of cultural differences. These interactions include:

- Students expect to learn how to learn;
- Individuals will speak up in class;
- Confrontation in learning situations can be salutary; conflicts can be brought into the open;
- Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial (p. 312, Table 3);
- Teachers should respect the independence of their students;
- Student-centred education (premium on initiative);
- Students may speak up spontaneously;
- Students are allowed to contradict or criticize teacher;
- Outside of class teachers are treated as equals;
- Younger teachers are more liked than older teachers (p. 313, Table 4);
- Teachers are allowed to say "I don't know";
- A good teacher uses plain language;
- Students are rewarded for innovative approaches to problem solving;
- Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as a stimulating exercise;
- Teachers and students are expected to suppress emotions (p. 314, Table 5);
- Teachers openly praise good students;
- Students try to make themselves visible (p. 315, Table 6);
- Students see success as a result of chance more than effort; and
- Students are not given gifts as rewards for academic achievements.

However, Hofstede and Hofstede attribute these interactions to all students in the respective nations, and does not take into account the existence of exceptional students who have their own particular needs. The findings of this study established that many of the 5-D model's projections were applicable for exceptional students and their teachers, but that each group of exceptional students contradicted some of the predicted interactions. The contradictions were consistent with findings in other studies involving the same groups, but in different cultures, indicating that exceptional students have their own unique set of needs and cultural values that may transcend cultures and geographical borders. The findings also identified which teacher behaviours were important to student-teacher relationships in Australia and Canada, as well as behaviours that had more value in each particular country.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine which teacher behaviours are perceived by teachers and students to most strongly contribute to positive relationships between teachers and different types of students. Specifically, the study sought to identify the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive relationships with secondary gifted students and secondary students with EBD. The study involved gifted secondary students in Western Australia (N = 58) and Ontario, Canada (N = 75); secondary students with EBD in Western Australia (N = 40) and the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and British Columbia (N = 49); and teachers in both countries. Both student and teacher perspectives were sought. The study also identified which of Tardy's (1985) four support types – emotional, instructional, instrumental, and appraisal – were seen as the most important in developing positive student-teacher relationships with gifted students and with students with EBD. While students have been found to be consistent with each other in their perceptions of teacher behaviour (Levy & Wubbles, 1993), Wilkins (2006) found that “students and teachers have different views about the behaviors [*sic*] that contribute to good relationships” (p.6). The findings of this study identified teacher behaviours that contributed to positive student-teacher relationships, which teacher behaviours transcended cultural and educational contexts, and which behaviours were agreed upon by students and teachers as being the most important.

Current research indicates that positive teacher-student relationships have a positive effect on students' academic achievement as well as their social and emotional development. Wilkins (2006) found that the same teacher qualities that contribute to positive relationships with students were also named by McCabe (1995) as qualities of teachers who were successful in reaching students academically. Similarly, Deci (1995) found that supportive student-teacher relationships have a positive influence on student motivation, which includes the desire to achieve academically. While these relationships can contribute to students' academic success, they can also aid in the social/emotional development of the students. With respect to gifted students, Csikszentmihalyi, Rathmunde, and Whalen (1997) identified three roles that teachers can play in impacting the lives of their gifted and talented students: by serving as moral and professional role models, by matching challenges and skills, and by "perceiv[ing] the emerging needs of often insecure young people" (p. 188). For students with EBD, Cefai and Cooper (2010) found that close relationships with teachers provided students "... a scaffold that helped them to find stability in a sometimes disorganised and chaotic life, to believe in themselves, and to find meaning in their school experiences" (p. 189).

By identifying the teacher behaviours that contributed to positive student-teacher relationships, this study was able to classify the nature of the behaviours as academic, social, or emotional. Particularly of interest were the behaviours employed by teachers of gifted students and teachers of students with EBD, and which behaviours were identified by both teachers and their students. The study focused on the particular definable actions that teachers take to establish and maintain good relationships in order to determine the 'building blocks' on which a positive relationship is constructed.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students in Western Australia and Canada?

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- a. What are the teacher behaviours according to gifted secondary students?
 - b. What are the teacher behaviours according to teachers of gifted secondary students?

2. What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada?
 - a. What are the teacher behaviours according to secondary students with EBD?
 - b. What are the teacher behaviours according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?

3. Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with gifted secondary students?
 - a. Which support type is considered most important according to gifted secondary students?
 - b. Which support type is considered most important according to teachers of gifted secondary students?

4. Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with secondary students with EBD?
 - a. Which support type is considered most important according to secondary students with EBD?
 - b. Which support type is considered most important according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?

1.4 Significance of Study

This study holds significance for four main stakeholders: secondary school students (including gifted students and students with EBD), secondary school teachers (including teachers of gifted students and teachers of students with EBD), secondary

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school principals, and education training institutions. The findings of the study will contribute to educational theory development by helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Secondary School Students

The main benefactors of strong student-teacher relationships are the students. In a study involving 4000 Canadian high school students, Bibby and Posterski (1992) found that good relationships were valued by the students more than any other aspect of school. Research shows that there is good reason for all students to value relationships with their teachers; from high achievers, to students with emotional and behavioural problems. Birch and Ladd (1997) reported a correlation between quality student-teacher relationships and increased academic achievement, while Noblit, Rogers and McCadden (1995) found that caring teacher-student relationships played a large part in encouraging not only academic development, but social development as well.

Secondary school students designated as gifted may be exceptional in their abilities, but are not exceptional when it comes to the need for strong relationships with their teachers. There is a widespread assumption that gifted students exceed norms in all areas of development, score well on achievement tests, and are motivated and mature (Cline & Schwartz, 1999). Despite this perception, it has been found that gifted students often do not fulfil this archetype (Winner, 1996). Gifted and talented students have the capacity for heightened sensitivity and often fall victim to feelings of “not belonging” due to their distinguishing abilities (Coleman, 1996). Resnick et al. (1997) found that protective factors against depression include environmental support (ie. school belonging), and can be addressed through having a positive relationship with at least one adult other than parents (Masten, 2001; McLoyd, 1998).

Students with EBD face numerous difficulties in school, as well as in life after school. Compared to their peers, these students are more likely to have lower grades, fail more courses in school, have higher absenteeism, drop out of school, and are less likely to graduate (Boreson, 2006; Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout, & Epstein, 2004; Shriner & Wehby, 2004). Students with EBD are also more likely to face

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incarceration at some point during their lives, and less likely to obtain post secondary education or maintain a stable job (Bullock & Gable, 2006; Carter & Lundsford, 2005; Gable, 2004; Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005). To compound these difficulties, students with EBD have their voices heard the least, are empowered the least, and are the least liked group of students (Baker, 2005; Cooper, 2006; Lewis & Burman, 2008). With all of these obstacles to success, students with EBD have indicated that the relationship that they have with teachers is one of – if not the most – important factors in their success (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; Garner, 1993; Harris, Vincent, Thomson, & Toalster, 2006; Jahnukainen 2001; Pear, 1997; Sellman, 2009;).

Secondary school students of all backgrounds and abilities not only benefit from high quality relationships with their teachers, but strongly desire to have such connections. By studying the teacher behaviours that contribute to strong relationships with students, these bonds can be better understood and utilized to the advantage of all secondary school students, including those designated as gifted and those with EBD.

Secondary School Teachers

Given strong student-teacher relationships have positive effects on student achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009), it is reasonable to assume that by developing positive relationships with their students, teachers may become more effective at their profession. Additionally, the benefits of developing positive relationships with students can also help to increase job satisfaction and potentially help to reduce attrition rates in the profession. Teaching has been identified internationally as a profession with high incidences of stress, which can often lead to teacher burnout (Brown, Ralph, & Bember, 2002; Pithers & Soden, 1998; Rigby & Bennett, 1996). While it remains true that “individual state education departments have been reluctant to release details about this issue” (Howard & Johnson, 2004, p. 399), a large study of teachers at all levels of schooling in Western Australia found that 10-20% of the participants were suffering from psychological distress, while 9% were suffering severe psychological distress (Louden, 1987). Research has found that incidents involving student-teacher interactions are the primary sources for teacher stress that leads to burnout (Friedmann, 1995; Phillips, 1993).

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Teachers of gifted students are not exempt from this experience. In fact, research has indicated that teachers of the gifted “appeared to be at higher risk for emotional exhaustion than teachers in all other exceptionalities except emotionally disturbed and hearing impaired” (Zabel, Dettmer, & Zabel, 1984, p. 68), while teachers of teen and adolescent gifted students are at an even higher risk than their primary and elementary counterparts. These teachers must deal with the high expectations of administrators, parents, and students, and must become “capable of nurturing many interpersonal relationships” (Zabel et al., 1984, p.68).

Students with EBD are often identified as being the most challenging aspect of teaching for both general and special education teachers (Abrams, 2005; Graham & Prock, 1997; Westwood & Graham, 2003) and have been noted to contribute to teacher stress (Conway, 1994; Graham & Prock, 1997; Richardson & Shupe, 2003). Teachers of students with EBD in particular have reported greater stress levels than other special education teachers (Cross & Billingsley, 1994), which coincides with evidence that teachers of students with EBD have the highest attrition rates among the profession (Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Miller, 1997; Singh & Billingsley, 1996).

It is not surprising that strong bonds with students can help to ameliorate teacher stress and burnout, as studies have shown that relationships with students are among the most satisfying aspects of teaching (Dinham & Scott, 1997; Shann, 1998). Teachers who show resilience to stress and burnout often display elements of strong relationships with their students, including “Respond[ing] to critical incidents and students’ personal problems and needs in genuine but emotionally protective ways” (Howard & Johnson, 2004, p.406).

By triangulating the data of this study, the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships were identified from the perspectives of the two participating parties: teachers and students in two different countries/cultural contexts. This helped to illuminate the behaviours that contribute to good relationships, and whether teachers and students agree upon them. The results helped to shed light on teacher self-awareness, defined by Gold and Roth (1993) as “a process of getting in touch with your feelings and behaviors [*sic*]” (p.141). Teacher self-awareness has been identified as a key component in managing stress (Gold & Roth, 1993). This research

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identified many of the actions teachers can take to develop better relationships with their students, improve their effectiveness, increase their job satisfaction, and reduce the likelihood of burnout.

Secondary School Administrators

The recent move by the Western Australia Department of Education to allow public schools to apply for ‘independent’ status signifies a shift of control from the central education authority to secondary school administrators. According to WA Education Minister Liz Constable, independent public schools benefit from the flexibility to recruit and retain teachers and staff that meet the needs of their students (Cann, 2009; Department Of Education [DOE], n.d.d). In 2010, the initial cohort of 34 public independent schools was selected from more than 100 submissions of interest, while 64 more schools were granted independent public status in 2011 (DOE, n.d.d), 60 more were granted status in 2012 (DOE, n.d.f), and 32 schools are slated to become independent public schools in 2013 (DOE, n.d.e). In total “312 schools, or 40 per cent of all public schools, have expressed an interest to become an Independent Public School” (DOE, n.d.d), indicating an educational shift that moves towards greater autonomy for individual schools to meet their students’ particular needs.

This newfound freedom will empower administrators to choose which teachers will work in their schools, but also places the burden upon them to make the right choices. By understanding the nature and importance of the student-teacher relationship, administrators will be better informed in the selection process when trying to find teachers that will meet the specific needs of their students. This will apply to a wide range of school types; from schools focusing on the arts, to schools for the gifted, to schools with high rates of behaviour problems. This study will be of particular interest to administrators of the 16 schools participating in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs recognised by the Department of Education (DOE, n.d.b), as well as administrators at any of the eight Department of Education Secondary Behaviour Centres (DOE, n.d.a). Each school will have a unique set of students, who will in turn require a unique set of teachers to connect with and learn from. Principals must now take into consideration a teacher’s ability to connect with their unique target group, and therefore have a vested interest in learning about the nature of student-teacher relationships.

Not only will a teacher's ability to develop positive relationships with their students be relevant for administrators in the recruitment process, but it will also be important for the retention of staff. Research indicates that the primary sources for teacher stress that leads to burnout are incidents involving student-teacher interactions (Friedmann, 1995; Phillips, 1993). In their study of teachers that are resilient to stress and burnout, Howard and Johnson (2004) found that "When principals are at liberty to choose their own staff, they can ensure that new staff...have... a moral purpose in their choice of work setting" (p.416), meaning that principals can ensure that staff truly want to be there and will be less likely to suffer from burnout. Given the shift to greater autonomy for schools in WA, combined with the evidence that suggests the importance of student-teacher relationships with regards to academic achievement, social-emotional development, and teacher resilience to burnout, administrators now have greater reason than ever to take interest in the value and nature of student-teacher relationships.

Education Training Institutions

Although the evidence indicates the academic, social, and emotional benefits of positive student-teacher relationships, there is still a gap in the literature as to the nature of the actions that can help construct those bonds. Education training institutions must explore this component of teaching in greater depth to better prepare the teachers of tomorrow for the importance of the human connection in the teaching profession. Despite the high demands of the profession and the importance of social and emotional issues, teachers rarely receive training to help them deal with these issues (Hargreaves, 1998), particularly when it comes to working with exceptional students. With respect to gifted students, teachers are unlikely to have had targeted training for working specifically with gifted pupils (Nevitt, 2001). A study of teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the social and emotional development of gifted adolescents found that teachers concerns included a lack of training and a lack of awareness of the major issues (Greene, 2003). Similarly, teachers have reported feeling unprepared to manage and teach students with disabilities, including students with EBD (Fuchs, Fuchs, Fernstrom, & Hohn, 1991; Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education, 2001). A review of the Secondary Behaviour Centres in Western Australia found that 85% of the staff working in these programs felt that their ability

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to do their job would improve with more training (Smith, 2009). Teachers rarely receive and are often not required to take courses on the social and emotional development of children (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009), yet it has been argued that the understanding of social and emotional issues should be part of standard teacher training curriculum (Poulou, 2005). Student-teacher relationships form a large component of the social and emotional construct that has been overlooked by teacher training institutions over the years, and should be investigated further to better prepare teachers for this vital component of their future careers. The findings of this study will be useful in preparing teachers to engage in effective practices that will produce better outcomes for students.

Further, “[i]n education it is often felt that there is a wide gap between theory and practice” (Dewhurst & Lamb, 2005, p. 907). Often “the somewhat ‘pragmatic cast of mind’ characteristic of many teachers...[makes them] extremely resistant to inquiry of a speculative and analytic kind, which is the essence of educational theory” (Preston & Symes, 1995, p.3). The findings of this study can help bridge the gap between theory and practice by identifying practical teacher behaviours that may be employed to improve practice and increase teacher effectiveness in the classroom and by combining this knowledge with existing educational theory on positive student-teacher relationships. Seeing educational theory in practice may allow teachers to more actively engage in educational theory, as “it is appropriate for teachers to study those subjects that investigate the rationale of educational practice” (Dewhurst & Lamb, 2005, p. 908).

1.5 Definition of Terms

Terms referred to in this study were operationally defined as follows:

Gifted Students, are defined by Gagné (1991) as possessing and making use of outstanding natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain, to the extent that places the student among the top 10 percent of their age peers. The students referred to as *gifted* in this study are those students possessing the above mentioned abilities and who have been identified as gifted by their schools and placed in programs that suit their abilities and educational needs.

Talented Students refers to students that achieve or perform at a level significantly above what might be expected at a given age (Gagné, 1991). The term *gifted* refers to a student's abilities, whereas the term *talented* refers to the realisation of a student's potential through those abilities.

Students with Emotional Behavioural Disorders (EBD) refers to students who “display behaviour problems—either internalizing or externalizing—that are severe, chronic, pervasive, and negatively impact on his or her ability to learn and function in a classroom setting” (Whitley, Lupart, & Beran, 2009, p.15). Students identified as having EBD in this study are those who fit the above description, have an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) relating to their behavioural difficulties, have been placed in a behaviour program within their school, or have been placed in a behaviour centre or alternate education facility to address their needs and difficulties.

2. Literature Review

A wide body of research currently exists on student-teacher relationships and the nature and benefits of those relationships. There is very little research that identifies the actual behaviours that constitute good student-teacher relationships, especially with regards to these behaviours in different contexts. Most of the research defines positive relationships in terms of broad constructs, such as warmth or understanding, which results in a lack of understanding of what it is that teachers actually do to show warmth or understanding. Also, the literature fails to adequately address the nature of relationships between teachers and diverse groups of students, such as gifted students and students with EBD. This review examines the existing research on student-teacher relationships with regards to the teacher behaviours desired by students, teachers' perspectives, and the importance of positive student-teacher relationships.

2.1 Student-Teacher Interactions Desired by Students

In their study of four multiethnic California school districts, Poplin and Weeres (1994) asked the question "What is the problem with schooling?" to teachers, students, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders. The problem of relationships was identified above all others. They wrote, "Participants feel the crisis inside schools is directly linked to human relationships. Most often mentioned were relationships between teachers and students" (p.12). They further found that, "Students desire relationships where they are trusted, given responsibility, spoken to honestly and warmly, and treated with dignity" (p.20). The students indicated that what they appreciated the most about school were occasions when they experienced being cared for by adults.

Christman and Macpherson (1996) conducted a study of high schools in Philadelphia that were restructured to address elevated failure rates. Data collection through interviews with students, observations, and focus-group discussions revealed that students felt the main problems in their schools were connected to poor interpersonal relationships. Students further indicated that they preferred teachers who asked for their input, encouraged them to be active learners, and responded to their needs and interests. Similarly, Phelan, Davidson and Cao (1992) found that students desired

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teachers who were sensitive to their needs, cared about them, and treated them with respect. The study of student perceptions and their effect on student involvement in the high school community also found that students particularly enjoyed classes where the teacher saw them as individuals.

This sentiment was echoed by Turley's (1994) finding that students wanted to feel that their teachers had an interest in them as individuals. Turley conducted surveys with 87 students and interviewed eight of those students to explore how teachers promoted effective learning. He found that, "Openness, authenticity, humour, fairness, patience, a real interest in students as people and a willingness to listen to them are characteristics students appreciate in teachers" (p.14).

In their study of student perspectives on their high school experience, Certo, Cauley, and Chafin (2003) interviewed 33 students from seven comprehensive high schools in Richmond, Virginia. Students identified caring teachers "as 'relating to us,' 'encouraging,' and 'helpful'" (p.714). The most common description of a teacher who cares was that they listened. This involved allowing the students to have input on classroom rules or projects, while the teachers who listened could read student moods and offer appropriate guidance. "In contrast, they described uncaring teachers as those who did not try to connect with students, did not thoroughly explain concepts, and did not care about student achievement" (p.714). While caring was seen as immensely important by the students, Certo et al. caution that "teachers should be aware that caring is not about being students' friends, but rather about providing authentic learning experiences and showing interest in students" (p.721).

Drawing on qualitative data from a South Australian longitudinal study which ran from 1997 until 2005, Johnson (2008) was able to identify "ordinary, everyday, relational, 'little things' that teachers do to promote their students' resilience at school" (p.385). According to the 130 randomly selected students (aged 9-12) who were interviewed, these 'little things' included: being available and accessible to students, being interested in their lives, meeting regularly, listening, having honest and open discussions, teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, being positive, intervening to help students, remembering personal events, and being able to enjoy a joke. These teacher behaviours are seen as supportive behaviours that contribute to

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the resilience of adolescents when dealing with adversity, and are also a component of good teacher-student relationships.

Similarly, Suldo et al. (2009) researched adolescents' subjective well being (SWB) and the relation to teacher support in a south-eastern US state. The study was comprised of 401 middle school students who completed self-report measures of SWB and eight focus groups that included 50 students. Through the focus groups, the researchers were able to identify teacher behaviours that convey high levels of social support in the eyes of students. These behaviours included: conveying interest in student wellness, taking action to improve students' moods and emotional states, giving students what they want, being sensitive and responsive to the entire class' understanding of academic material, showing interest in individual student progress, using diverse teaching strategies, providing evaluative feedback on student performance, helping students improve their grades, ensuring a manageable workload, treating students similarly, punishing in a fair manner, and creating an environment in which questions are encouraged (Table 2, p. 75). Suldo et al. further dissected these teacher behaviours to more specific actions that the teachers undertake, and

...clarified that the types of teacher support most related to students' life satisfaction are emotional support (students' perceptions of how often teachers care about them, treat them fairly, and make it okay to ask questions) and instrumental support (the extent to which students perceive teachers make sure they have what they need for school, take time to help them learn to do something well, and spend time with them when they need help). (p.79)

Alder (2002) conducted research with predominantly African American and economically disadvantaged middle school students to examine how caring relationships are created and maintained between urban middle school students and their teachers. She found what students emphasized as forms of caring were teachers' willingness to:

- answer student questions;
- teach to understanding;
- help with academic problems;
- talk to students individually and privately; and
- involve parents in the educative process.

However, Alder also found that this particular group of students had a general agreement that the highest forms of teacher care were displayed through teachers' willingness to be strict, have control over disruptive behaviour, and pressure students into getting work done (p.250). In contrast with Suldo's (2009) study of "...middle-class, primarily Caucasian students in a suburban community, behaviors [*sic*] consistent with this authoritarian style of teaching (i.e., using an aversive voice tone and setting firm expectations and rules) were discussed as conveying *low* support" (p. 80). These findings "...indicate that student perceptions of caring teacher behaviors [*sic*] may differ across sociocultural contexts" (Suldo, 2009, p. 80).

As such, it is important to understand the differing student perspectives on teacher-student relationships across a wide variety of contexts. The multitude of contexts that could be examined may include variables such as age, ability, and social and cultural backgrounds. The literature is limited in terms of gifted students' perceptions of their relationships with their teachers. In 2007, Gentry, Peters, and Mann undertook a qualitative study of 51 secondary students that attended a Career and Technical Education (CTE) centre and examined their perspectives on their CTE experience compared with their traditional high school experience. Specifically, interview responses were examined from 16 students identified as talented and compared to those from general education students who were enrolled in the same CTE centre. It was found that the most frequently coded theme for talented students was effective, caring teachers, while for the general students, effective, caring teachers was the second most coded theme. For the talented students, the major themes that emerged were high levels of respect, a sense of professionalism on the part of the instructors, and an upbeat and positive discourse that all contributed to a positive atmosphere. "These findings underscore[d] the importance of teachers, relevance of material, and autonomy for all students, with special emphasis on teacher quality for talented secondary students" (Gentry et al., 2007, p. 396). These findings were similar to those found by Suk-Un Jin and Moon (2006), who noted that gifted Korean high school science students most strongly desired their teachers to be highly competent and display expertise in their subject matter.

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The literature seems to indicate that students with EBD are less concerned with teacher competence and expertise, and more concerned with having understanding and supportive relationships with teachers. In a review of eight studies regarding the perspectives of students with EBD in Malta, Cefai and Cooper (2010) found that the primary grievance of the students with EBD was a lack of understanding and support from their teachers. The students felt “isolated and victimised by their teachers” (p.193) and described their poor relationships with teachers as “uncaring, autocratic, unfair and rigid” (p. 193). They identified their desire “to be respected, listened to and treated with dignity and understanding...to feel competent and successful...[and to] have a sense of responsibility and autonomy” (p.193), needs commonly expressed by all children and young people (Deci et al., 1991). Sellman’s (2009) study of the perspectives of UK students with EBD on their school’s behaviour policy found that the students believed it was more important to address relationships with teachers than to modify the behaviour policy. Accordingly, the Maltese students with EBD in Cefai and Cooper’s study “warmed up to teachers who showed them care and understanding, listened to their concerns and supported them in their social and learning needs. They were ready to invest in teachers who respected them and believed in them despite their difficulties” (p.193). In fact, Lowenthal (2001) found that even for students with EBD who rejected their teachers, the students still desired to have personal relationships with their instructors.

It is clear that students in different circumstances desire different behaviours from their teachers. More research is needed to explore the nature of teacher-student relationships in varying settings and across different contexts. However, the research shows that students from all over the educational spectrum recognise that the everyday interactions they have with their teachers has a significant impact on their educational experience. “Ironically, many students seem to understand this better than some of their teachers” (Johnson, 2008, p. 395). With a gap existing between the perspectives of the participants in the teacher-student relationship, this review will now explore teachers’ perspectives concerning relationships with their students.

2.2 Teachers' Perspectives on Relationships with Students

While there is emerging research into the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive student-teacher relationships from the perspective of students (Suldo, 2009; Wilkins, 2006), there is a lack of research investigating teachers' evaluation of their own behaviours and how these behaviours are believed to contribute to the development of strong bonds with students. This perspective is important to investigate, as teachers have been shown to hold different views on student-teacher relationships than students, parents, and administrators. In their study of Maori students in New Zealand mainstream classes, Bishop, Berryman and Richardson (2002) investigated the influences on student achievement from the perspective of students, parents, principals and teachers. Teacher-student relationships were regarded as having the greatest influence on Maori educational achievement according to students, parents, and principals. Surprisingly, teachers viewed Maori student achievement as resulting from student attitudes and disposition, their home lives and/or the structure of the school. The teachers in the study did not view the bonds they had formed with students as significantly influencing student achievement and regarded achievement deficit as a problem mostly beyond their control.

Despite a lack of recognition of their positive influence on students, teachers still value the bonds that they form with their students. Research has shown that relationships with students are among the most satisfying facets of the profession (Dinham & Scott, 1997; Shann, 1998), and can contribute to an improved sense of job satisfaction (Goldstein & Lake, 2000). Shann's 1998 study of teacher job satisfaction involving questionnaires and interviews with 92 urban middle school teachers ranked teacher-student relationships as the most important variable in teacher satisfaction.

Closely linked with job satisfaction is teacher morale. According to teachers in a cross-cultural study that included seven nations, the most important factor influencing teacher professional enthusiasm and/or discouragement were the students' responsiveness and enthusiasm (Stenlund, 1995). If students are indeed so crucial an element in maintaining teacher morale, then the relationships they form with teachers

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can play an important role in supporting positive learning environments. Students' positive attitudes toward school have been linked to being liked by teachers (Wentzel, 1994). It can then be assumed that through the development of positive teacher-student relationships, students will display increasingly positive attitudes, which will in turn contribute to higher teacher morale. The reciprocal nature of these relationships indicate their value to maintaining teaching morale, something critical in a profession with an attrition rate of 25-40% within the first five years of starting a career (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Hunt & Carroll, 2003; Ramsey, 2000). Aside from job satisfaction and morale, teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students have been shown to impact upon their job performance. Poor teacher-student relationships have been associated with high teacher stress and low teaching competency (Koomen, Verschueren, & Pianta, 2007). Similarly, links have been shown to exist between the quality of teachers' instruction and their preferences for their students (Perry & Weinstein, 1998; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998).

For teachers of gifted and talented students, developing strong relationships can help to address the essential skills for working with the gifted. Three essential skills for working with gifted students were identified by Van Tassel-Baska, MacFarlane, and Feng (2008) as: a strong knowledge base and effective use of a variety of teaching techniques, strong communication skills, and the ability to understand and address student needs. The presence of strong student-teacher relationships improves communication and is founded on a basis of understanding each other's needs. Further, teachers of gifted students have been found to recognise the importance of having positive relationships with their students. In her study of teacher perceptions and practices regarding gifted adolescent social and emotional development, Greene (2003) found that teachers of gifted students believed it was their responsibility to address both the academic needs and the social/emotional needs of their pupils. "The most frequently mentioned teacher responsibility pertaining to adolescent social and emotional development was building relationships or rapport with students. Teachers described an essential part of their jobs as 'getting to know kids'" (p. 94). Kesner (2005) compared the perceptions of 95 teachers of gifted students with the perceptions of 162 teachers of non-gifted students using the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1991). He found that teachers of gifted students reported the same level of closeness with their students and lower levels of conflict than their counterparts did.

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This suggested that teachers of gifted students had more positive relationships than the other participants. Teachers of gifted students also reported a significantly higher degree of dependency on the part of their students, which supports previous research that gifted students are more profoundly affected by the interactions they have with their teachers compared to non-gifted students (Croft, 2003).

Students with EBD have been described by teachers as “tough-to-teach” (Shores & Wehby, 1999; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008). These students present academic and behavioural challenges that affect the nature of their interactions with teachers (Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008) and often causes peers and teachers to reject them (Kauffman, 2001). The expectations teachers have of students with EBD – positive or negative – combined with their confidence in their ability to teach these students has been found to influence the nature of their interactions with the students (Poulou & Norwich, 2002). Teachers have been found to value behaviours that display study skills, academic achievement, and positive classroom demeanour more than they value behaviours displaying effective interpersonal and problem-solving skills (Kerr & Zigmund, 1986; Walker & Rankin, 1983). Unfortunately, these behaviours are not frequently displayed by students with EBD. Further, compared to their generalist contemporaries, special education teachers have demonstrated differences in the way they view social skills competency. Special education teachers placed greater value on self-control skills than their counterparts did (Lane, Wehby, & Cooley, 2006) which could negatively influence collaboration to meet the needs of students with EBD.

Therefore, students with EBD are faced with expectations from their teachers that are at times contrary to the resulting characteristics of having EBD, do not emphasize support for positive social skill development, and are not consistent. Such a situation can only further inhibit the development of supportive relationships between teachers and students with EBD. (Mihalas, Morse, Allsopp, & McHatton, 2009, p. 115)

It is clear that positive student-teacher relationships are of importance to teachers. Their existence boosts morale, and increases job satisfaction and performance. However, the literature does not address teachers’ perceptions of their own behaviours that contribute to good relationships with their students. Ang (2005) purports that the only validated self-report measure of teachers’ perceptions of these relationships that

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is widely accepted is the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001). However, the STRS is intended for use with early primary school (K-3) students. While other scales and studies measure the quality of student-teacher relationships, few, if any, address the specific behaviours that high school teachers identify as contributing to positive relationships with their students. It is important to understand the teacher behaviours that secondary school teachers believe help develop strong relationships with their students. This may help to better understand why their views may differ from that of students (Wilkins, 2006), elementary teachers (Hargreaves, 2000), and parents (Bishop, Berryman, & Richardson, 2002). Regardless of the differing perspectives on the student-teacher relationship, the literature is clear that these bonds are valued by both students and teachers. This review will now explore the research that evidences the importance of good student-teacher relationships in educational settings.

2.3 The Value of Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

While there may exist a gap in the literature with regards to the specific teacher behaviours that contribute to student-teacher relationships and the differing perspectives on these bonds, there is a wealth of research that notes the importance these connections have with relation to student academic success and social-emotional well-being. In a meta-analysis of 119 studies with 1,450 effects and involving 355,325 students, Cornelius-White (2007) found a plethora of positive correlations between student-teacher relationships and positive student outcomes. “Correlations for participation, critical thinking, satisfaction, math achievement, drop-out prevention, self-esteem, verbal achievement, positive motivation, social connection, IQ, grades, reduction in disruptive behavior [*sic*], attendance, and perceived achievement are all above average” (p. 134). The highest relations for achievement outcomes were for critical/creative thinking ($r = 0.45$), math ($r = 0.36$), verbal ($r = 0.34$), and grades ($r = 0.25$). He further found that students who dislike school do so predominantly because they do not like their teachers.

With regards to academic achievement, Malecki and Demeray (2003) found that teacher emotional support was especially predictive of better academic competence and better social skills when compared to support from parents and peers. Hughes,

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Luo, Kwok, and Loyd (2008) found student-teacher relationships predicted students' academic engagement and ensuing maths and reading skills. Roesler, Eccles, and Sameroff (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of the motivation, achievement, and perceptions of teacher support and expectations for seventh and eighth graders. It was found that perceptions of having supportive teachers were associated with an increase in academic values over the course of the study. It has also been found that student-teacher relationships can diminish negative academic outcomes, such as school failure and dropout for adolescents (Hamre & Pianta, 2005), risks that are significantly higher for students with EBD than for their peers (Bullock & Gable, 2006; Frank, Sitlington, & Carson, 1995; Koyangi & Gaines, 1993; Marder, 1992).

Student beliefs play an important role in their academic achievement, and student-teacher relationships have been shown to have positive effects on student self-belief. Phelan, Davidson, and Cao (1992) conducted research involving self-report measures from 54 high school students. It was found that sensitive, empathetic teachers could impact students' feelings about school and their ability to achieve academically. Similarly, Estrada's (1993) study of teacher support and its effect on student transition to junior high school found that students who indicated greater satisfaction with the support they received from teachers rated themselves as more well-behaved and as having better attitudes towards school.

Emerging neuropsychological research is helping to reveal the science behind the importance of positive adult-child relationships, and the role that teachers can play in helping their students develop emotionally and socially. Childhood trauma can create vulnerability to physical, emotional, and social health problems (Anda et al., 2006), while "Children exposed to consistent, predictable, nurturing, and enriched experiences develop neurobiological capabilities that increase their chance for health, happiness, productivity and creativity" (Perry, 2008, p.41). Neglectful and traumatic childhood experiences "cause abnormal organization [*sic*] and function of important neural systems in the brain, compromising the functional capacities mediated by these systems" (Perry, 2006, p.29). This is of particular importance for students with EBD. Mueser and Taub's (2008) study of 69 adolescents with EBD involved in multiple service systems found that adolescents with EBD displayed high rates of trauma, including: physical abuse (48%), sexual abuse (29%), witness to domestic violence

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(51%), and experiencing the death of a loved one (51%). Accordingly, the adolescents with EBD presented with a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder rate of 28%, exceeding the general population estimates for their age group. Not only were the rates of PTSD higher for youths with EBD, but they were under-diagnosed and associated with more severe problems.

When children are exposed to threatening or traumatic experiences, the neural pathways in the child's brain connect neutral cues with threat, which can activate a fear response that alters emotions and behaviours (Perry, 2006). These neural networks imprint upon the amygdala, which influences thinking, memories, and social interactions with others (Aggleton, 2000). As Perry (2008) puts it, "The brain...is an historical organ" (p. 40).

However, Perry (2006) also notes that "Neurons and neural systems are designed to change in a 'use-dependent' fashion" (p.34), and that "Neural stimulation or lack of stimulation will result in cellular modification; synapses, axons, cell bodies, and dendrites can all be shaped and altered by activity" (p.34). As such, neural systems can be changed through large amounts of focused repetition. This supports the recognition of the human brain as a highly resilient and "plastic" organ (Doidge, 2007) that can change and adapt when given the opportunity to be exposed to different stimuli. Perry indicates that for maltreated children, "The primary therapeutic implication is the need to increase the number and quality of relational interactions and opportunities for the high-risk child" (2006, p. 46) and that "...care of the maltreated child must extend to every influential person the child encounters" (2008, p. 43). Perry identifies teachers as influential people that can help students suffering from trauma by engaging in positive, nurturing interactions on a continuous and repetitive basis. Barfield's (2004) study of 14 children in a therapeutic pre-school setting found that 13 of the 14 students showed significant improvement on overall social/emotional development, emotion regulation, helpfulness, fair assertiveness, impulse modulation, cooperation and empathy using Perry's Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) as compared with the Conscious Discipline (CD) model. Similarly, Dawson (2003) studied the use of the Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) relationship-based model with junior high school students (aged 11 to 15) identified as having EBD. She found that repeated nurturing interventions were necessary for

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individual change to be effective for the students (ie. increased attendance, fewer student crises).

Other studies have shown student-teacher relationships to be instrumental in the social-emotional development of students. In their study of adolescents' subjective well-being (SWB) and its association with schooling experiences, Suldo et al. (2009) found that "...perceived teacher support accounted for 16% of the variance in students' SWB, and that emotional support and instrumental support uniquely predicted SWB" (p. 67). In their analysis of a national survey of 3,358 Norwegian students aged 13 to 15 years, Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland, and Wold (2009) found that teacher support had a predictive value on student's school satisfaction of 0.55, indicating that teacher support had a far greater impact on students' school satisfaction than did classmate support (.14) or parental support (.05). Suldo, Shaffer, and Riley (2008) had previously found that student-teacher relationships in the United States were the element of school climate that was the most strongly related to student's life satisfaction. These results are consistent with the findings of numerous other studies (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Pianta, 1999; Reddy et al., 2003; Rosenfeld et al., 2000).

The positive impact student-teacher relationships have on students' emotional well-being is of particular relevance to gifted students. The personality characteristics of gifted students – sensitivity (Mendaglio, 2003), overexcitability (Piechowski, 1999), intensity (Nevitt, 2001), and drivenness (Lovecky, 1992) – make them particularly vulnerable to dysfunction, social problems, and emotional problems (Pfeiffer & Stocking, 2000), including isolation and uneven development (Nevitt, 2001). Some of the challenges faced by gifted students include denial or doubt of abilities, feelings of obligation to share their gifts with others, conflicting expectations, decreased risk-taking, impatience for ambiguity, impatience for slow resolutions to problems, and premature or foreclosed identity (Bueshcer & Higham, 1990; Frey, 1991). In her study of profoundly gifted children, Gross (2004) found the majority of the students in the study had experienced "extreme difficulty in establishing positive social relationships with age-peers" (p.183). Perhaps the most prominent trait associated with giftedness is perfectionism, which may be displayed by 70% to 90% of gifted students (Ablard & Parker, 1997; Davis & Rimm, 2004; Orange, 1997). Numerous

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maladjustments have been linked to unhealthy perfectionism, including: depression (Hewitt & Dyck, 1986), obsessive compulsive disorder (Rasmussen and Eisen, 1992), anorexia nervosa (Lask & Bryant-Waugh, 1992), panic disorder (Straub, 1987), and suicide (Adkins & Parker, 1996; Callahan, 1993). Compounding these problems, studies of students possessing high intellectual ability have revealed that these students are reluctant to reveal their difficulties to adults even when experiencing high levels of distress (Peterson & Ray, 2006; Peterson & Rischar, 2000). Additionally, positive stereotypes of gifted students may inhibit critical support of students in times of high need (Peterson, 2006).

As such, positive student-teacher relationships can play a crucial role in the social and emotional well-being of gifted and talented students. Relationships with teachers can function as protective factors in adolescence (Burt, Resnick, & Novick, 1998), and can help improve gifted students' resilience to the adversity they face as they move through school. Strong student-teacher relationships have been associated with students' positive peer relations, and decreases in emotional distress, suicidal ideations, substance abuse, violence, and sexual activity (Hughes, Cavell, & Wilson, 2001; Paulson & Everall, 2003; Resnick et al., 1997). In a mixed-methods 11-year longitudinal study involving 121 gifted students and the way they adapted to negative life events, stress and school experiences, Peterson, Duncan, and Canady (2009) found that students identified support from teachers as helping them get through stressful times related to their academics. The literature also identifies showing care and respect for students and developing positive and close relationships with students as essential characteristics for the effective teaching of gifted pupils (Wendel & Heiser, 1989)

Positive relationships with teachers can also help to address the negative characteristics attributed to students with EBD. Students with EBD have been found to have moderate to severe academic deficits, with standardised test scores approaching two standard deviations below the mean (Lane, Carter, Pierson, & Glaeser, 2006). Specifically, students with EBD have been found to struggle with math, reading, and written language, with 58-93% of these students performing below grade level on standardised tests in the varying subject areas (Coutinho, 1986; Greenbaum et al., 1996; Nelson, Babyak, Gonzalez, & Benner, 2003). Positive

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student-teacher relationships have been shown to have above average correlations with math achievement (Cornelius-White, 2007) and have been found to predict the development of math and reading skills (Hughes, Luo, Kwok, and Loyd, 2008).

In terms of social and behavioural skills, compared to their peers, students with EBD have been found to exhibit lower social competence and school adjustment, and have significantly higher levels of behaviour problems (Gresham & MacMillan, 1997; Lane et al., 2006), higher absenteeism, higher levels of negative narrative comments in their files, and have more disciplinary contacts (Lane et al., 2006). Positive student-teacher relationships have been found to have above average correlations with social connection, reduction in disruptive behaviour, and attendance (Cornelius-White, 2007). These relationships have been found to help students with EBD "...find stability in a sometimes disorganised and chaotic life, to believe in themselves and to find meaning in their school experiences" (Cefai & Cooper, 2010, p. 189).

Clearly, the benefits of strong student-teacher relationships are of value to gifted students, students with EBD, and their teachers. The literature shows the extensive benefits that these relationships hold for students in general, exceptional students, and teachers. What the literature fails to adequately address is the behaviours displayed by teachers that help to develop and maintain strong connections with students from diverse contexts. Specifically, there is a lack of research into the behaviours that teachers of secondary gifted students and students with EBD engage in that develop these bonds. There is also a need to address the differing perspectives between teachers and students with regard to the teacher behaviours that are important in developing good relationships. This study explores the nature of exceptional student-teacher relationships by identifying the teacher behaviours that are seen by both students and teachers as contributing to strong, positive connections.

3. Theoretical Framework

Positive student-teacher relationships have been shown to hold value for students and teachers across a wide array of contexts. As this study focused on positive student-teacher relationships for secondary gifted students and secondary students with EBD, assumptions underpinning the classification of what it means to be gifted and what it means to have EBD in Western Australia and in the participating Canadian provinces will be discussed, along with what student-teacher relationships consist of, and what constitutes a positive student-teacher relationship.

3.1 Gifted and Talented Students and Students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada

3.1.1 *Gifted and Talented Students*

Gagné (1991) defines gifted students as possessing and making use of outstanding natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain, to the extent that places the student among the top 10 percent of their age peers. He defines talented students as students that achieve or perform at a level significantly above what might be expected at a given age. The term *gifted* refers to a student's abilities, whereas the term *talented* refers to the realisation of a student's potential through those abilities.

These students are not only unique because of their abilities, but also tend to exhibit social and emotional characteristics that distinguish them from other students. Gross et al. (2005) identified some of the affective characteristics of gifted and talented students as: emotional intensity, unusual ability to empathise, the preference for companionship of older students, strong attachment to a few close friends as opposed to superficial relationships on a larger scale, and a feeling of pressure to moderate achievement for peer acceptance. Moderating achievement for peer acceptance, also called the Forced Choice Dilemma (Gross, 1989), has been identified as a significant factor in the academic underachievement of gifted students, especially for students that belong to social/cultural groups with traditionally poor achievement.

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Gifted students also tend to exhibit characteristics of perfectionism at significantly higher levels than the general population. Ablard and Parker's (1997) study of 127 academically talented children found that gifted students exhibited perfectionist tendencies at a rate of 70%. Of the 127 students, more pupils displayed tendencies of dysfunctional perfectionism (28.7%) than non-perfectionism (27%), while the majority (44.3%) were classified as displaying healthy perfectionism. Davis and Rimm (2004) have indicated that the incidence of perfectionism in gifted students could reach as high as 90%.

Clearly, gifted and talented students represent a unique fragment of the student population. As such, their unique social and emotional characteristics may result in unique relationships with parents, peers, and teachers. However, little research has been done investigating these relationships, particularly between gifted students and their teachers.

3.1.2 Students with Emotional Behavioural Disorders (EBD)

The search for a universally accepted definition of students with emotional behavioural disorders (EBD) has challenged experts for years (Newcomer, 2011). To understand the complexity of this construct, the evolution of the term must be examined.

The earliest attempts to understand and explain the thoughts and behaviours of individuals who displayed abnormal behaviours labelled these individuals as being possessed by spirits (Newcomer, 2011). The Greek physician Hippocrates (ca. 460-377 B.C.) was among the first to define the behaviours as forms of physical illness based on clinical observation. This clinical approach continued in Greek and Roman societies, but was consumed by the re-emergence of the superstitious belief systems of the Middle Ages, and the view of demonic possession prevailed into the 16th century. These beliefs led to frequent punishment and even death for mentally ill individuals, and treatment was left to the clergy.

However, towards the beginning of the Renaissance, views began to shift back towards mental disorders as the cause for maladaptive behaviours. Common practice to deal with individuals with these behaviours involved building asylums to house the

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mentally ill. However, the inhumane treatment of the individuals locked up in the asylums led to a shift back towards the medical model in the 18th century. “In the 19th century, the view of emotional and behavioural disorders (EBDs) as illnesses of the mind became firmly entrenched” (Newcomer, 2011, p.7). This view resulted in the spreading of a “more enlightened approach toward the use of education in the treatment of emotionally troubled persons” (Newcomer, 2011).

An influx of diverse theoretical perspectives and social movements revolutionized the study of individuals with emotional disturbances in the 20th century, as “Attention turned to helping children who engaged in antisocial or criminal behaviour” (Newcomer, 2011, p. 8). This movement included the publication of *Psychopathology and Education of the Brain-Injured Child* (Strauss & Lehtinen, 1947), which “provided the basis for the structured classroom model” (Newcomer, 2011). In the 1960s more structured approaches were put forward as classroom models for working with children with different causes of maladaptive behaviour, including children who were brain-injured (Cruickshank, Bentzen, Raatzburg, & Tannhauser, 1961) and children who were emotionally disturbed (Haring & Phillips, 1963). In 1965, *Conflict in the Classroom* (Long, Morse, & Newman) was published, “...a classic book that presented diverse theoretical views about the identification and education of children with emotional disorders” (Newcomer, 2011). It was during this decade that the term *emotional disturbance* was coined to describe children with maladaptive behaviours, replacing more stigmatizing terms such as *mental illness* and *psycopathology*. Another term, *behaviourally disordered*, also became popular around this time, but there was no universal acceptance because some felt that it ignored the emotional condition of the children it was attempting to define. “In an effort to bring uniform standards to the field, in 1988, the National [US] Mental Health and Special Education Coalitions adopted the term *emotional and behavioural disorders* (EBDs)” (Newcomer, 2011).

The adoption of this term began its widespread use, however, it did not lead to a universal acceptance of a definition of EBDs for a variety of reasons (Newcomer, 2011):

- Expert opinions vary with professional training and philosophical perspective on EBD (e.g. a special education teacher and a psychiatrist may have different perspectives of what defines an EBD);

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- The reasons for developing different definitions may be influenced by different governmental policies in different geographical areas;
- “...the term *emotional and behavioral [sic] disorder* represents an umbrella category for a number of diverse conditions that defy simple definitions” (p. 16); and
- The most basic definition of the term relies on the subjective judgements of those who are interpreting it.

An attempt was made by the National (US) Mental Health and Special Education Coalition to propose a definition constructed by professionals from numerous associations and advocacy groups in the late 1980s (Forness & Knitzer, 1992, p. 13):

- I. The term emotional or behavioral [*sic*] disorder means a disability characterized by behavioral [*sic*] or emotional responses in school programs so different from appropriate age, cultural, or ethnic norms that they adversely affect educational performance, including academic, social, vocational or personal skills, and which:
 - a. is more than a temporary, expected response to stressful events in the environment;
 - b. is consistently exhibited in two different settings, at least one of which is school-related; and
 - c. persists despite individualized interventions within the education program, unless, in the judgement of the team, the child's or youth's history indicates that such interventions would not be effective.
- II. This category may include children or youth with schizophrenic disorders, affective disorders, anxiety disorders, or other sustained disturbances of conduct or adjustment when they adversely affect educational performance in accordance with section I.

Although this definition appears to be comprehensive and includes the perspectives of professionals with a variety of perspectives, it has still not been universally accepted. It is therefore imperative to understand the three

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global perspectives on EBDs: disability, deviance, and alienation (Newcomer, 2011).

The disability perspective “...primarily reflects a medical point of view. It emphasizes the existence of internal pathological conditions that generate aberrant behaviors [*sic*]” (Newcomer, 2011, p. 18). This perspective focuses on causal conditions that may be neurological or organic and therefore diagnoses and treatment is conducted primarily by medical personnel, including psychiatrists and clinical psychologists. Treatment may include drug treatment and psychotherapy to control the symptoms of the disorder (Newcomer, 2011).

The deviance perspective posits that EBDs “...are determined by the extent to which an individual’s behavior [*sic*] deviates from the norm” (Newcomer, 2011, p. 20). From this perspective, “An EBD is identified when behavior [*sic*] falls outside a range of socially acceptable normal behavior [*sic*]. Generally, this happens when deviant behaviors [*sic*] occur (a) with excessive frequency, (b) with great consistency, and (c) in unusual abundance” (Newcomer, 2011, p. 22). Because social norms are often different in different locations, an EBD may be identified for an individual in one community (or school), but not in another. As this perspective focuses on inappropriate behaviour:

...treatments of identified individuals emphasize teaching socially appropriate behavior, including more acceptable responses to typical interactions that occur in daily living. Therefore, treatment is not the sole purview of the psychiatric or medical community but can be conducted by a variety of individuals who typically interact with the individual, including parents and teachers. (Newcomer, 2011, p. 22)

The alienation perspective tends to take a more positive approach to understanding EBDs, with respect to human nature. According to this perspective, people are inherently motivated to behave in a socially responsible manner and that EBDs develop when individuals feel frustration over being excluded or alienated from the community in which they participate. Feelings of loneliness and futility cause individuals to rebel; they reject the social norms of the society that has rejected them. This perspective, therefore, does not regard individuals as diseased or deviant, but rather focuses on “...recognizing the uniqueness and dignity of every individual and

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acknowledging the value of their perceptions. Treatment is undertaken by professionals who adhere to a humanistic point of view” (Newcomer, 2011, p. 23).

In summary:

The deviance point of view attempts to delineate *how* an individual becomes identified as emotionally disturbed. It depicts the labeling of rule breakers that operates in a particular society...The disability perspective attempts to explain *what types* of emotional disorders exist and *what causes them*. It provides culture-free criteria for the diagnosis of pathological conditions...The alienation perspective explores *why* individuals become emotionally disturbed. It is a global examination of cultural malaise. (Newcomer, 2011, p. 24)

This study adopted the alienation perspective on EBDs, as it explored the nature of student-teacher relationships and focused on behaviours that promoted warm, welcoming environments that enabled students to develop a sense of belonging. Further, because of the cross-cultural component of the study, the alienation perspective was most appropriate as, “Regarding the issue of cultural relativity, the problems affecting the individual transcend specific cultures because most dominant societies share basic inhumane values” (Newcomer, 2011, p. 23). Geographical locations can influence the definition of EBDs if the deviance perspective is adopted, therefore an examination of the participating school districts’ identification of students with behavioural challenges, and the nomenclature associated with those identification processes, are addressed in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

Although there is no universally accepted definition of students with EBD, it is important to conceptualize what types of behaviours and characteristics these students display that lead to their identification as having EBD. It is generally accepted that these students “display behaviour problems—either internalizing or externalizing—that are severe, chronic, pervasive, and negatively impact on his or her ability to learn and function in a classroom setting” (Whitley, Lupart, & Beran, 2009, p.15). These students tend to display excessively high rates of inappropriate behaviour – frequently including non-compliance (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Walker, 1995) – and low rates of positive behaviour (Walker, Hops, & Greenwood, 1993; Walker, Shinn, O’Neill, & Ramsey, 1987). Students with EBD also often experience academic difficulties that are related to their behaviour problems (Dishion, Patterson,

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Stoolmiller, & Skinner, 1991; Kupersmidt & Coie, 1990; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Lloyd, Hallahan, Kauffman, & Keller, 1998), and have difficulty relating to peers and adults (Walker, 1995; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995).

The inability of students with EBD to connect with peers and adults often leads to social isolation. These students have their voices heard the least, receive the least amount of empowerment, and are the least liked group of students (Baker, 2005; Cooper, 2006; Lewis & Burman, 2008), and are the most likely to receive punishment and exclusionary practices (Cooper, 2001). As a result, students with EBD have reported lower levels of satisfaction and affiliation with their teachers compared to their peers (Murray & Greenberg, 2001), and have reported feelings of victimisation by teachers and peers (Cefai & Cooper, 2010).

Clearly, students with EBD are in need of positive interpersonal relationships, particularly with teachers. The benefits of these relationships may help to address the many difficulties that these students experience. It is important to understand the nature of these relationships, and the behaviours that contribute to the development and maintenance of positive connections.

3.1.3 Gifted Secondary Students and Secondary Students with EBD in Western Australia

The Department of Education and Training for Western Australia (DOE) classifies students as 'gifted' based on Gagné's (1985) definitions for giftedness and talent. Gagné (2003) notes that it is important to observe that giftedness and talent are not synonymous, but that they refer to two different stages in a highly able student's transition from high potential (gifted) to high performance (talent). While traditional thought had placed the incidence of giftedness at less than 5% of the student population, the acceptance of giftedness occurring throughout a wide range of fields (academic, arts, physically gifted) has led DOE to recognise that up to 15% of its student population will be identified for gifted provision (DOE, n.d.c).

The purpose of identifying students as gifted is to provide appropriate learning experiences for those students (Richert, 1991). In Western Australia, both selective schools and selective programs exist to provide opportunity for gifted students to

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develop their abilities. The selective programs exist within traditional schools and fall into one of three categories: academic, arts, or languages. Similarly, the selective schools focus on either academics or the arts. In the last three years selection has largely been carried out by the Gifted and Talented (GATE) Branch of the Department of Education which uses testing, audition, written application and interview for selection of students for gifted programs. The Academic Selective Entrance Test is administered by GATE, which includes individual assessments in the areas of mathematics, language, writing and abstract reasoning (DOE, n.d.c). Depending on the program being applied to, selection is based upon the results of the Academic Selective Entrance Test, interviews, workshops, school reports, and “talent and aptitude”. The Academic Selective Entrance Test is coordinated by DOE for all program applicants and is available to the top 5% of Western Australian students (DOE, 2009). GATE selection testing is carried out in Year 6, prior to entry into the programs in Year 8. Students wishing to enter a program in Year 8 are required to sit the Selective Entrance Test while they are in Year 6. Students entering Years 9, 10, and 11 are required to write the Selective Entrance Test in the Year level prior to the Year level for which the student is applying (e.g., A student wishing to apply to a Year 10 academic program would have to write the Selective Entrance Test in Year 9). For academic programs, selection is based on Selective Entrance Test Score/Index for Humanities, Mathematics and Science. Students with the highest scores are offered placement through the GATE Branch until all positions are filled (DOE, 2009). There is a general assumption made that Western Australia has moved away from stereotypical definitions that ignore gifted children who have not been able to translate their high potential into achievement (Gross et al., 2005). However, the current selection process is largely performance based, which identifies successful and motivated students who are already achieving at a high level and can be classified as both gifted and talented.

For students with EBD in Western Australia, the Department of Education has established the Challenging Behaviour Program, which is funded by Focus Area Four of the Behaviour Management and Discipline (BM&D) strategy (DOE, n.d.a). The program “...provides resources to district education offices to implement programs and strategies to assist schools to address issues related to student behaviour” (DOE, n.d.a). Eight Secondary Behaviour Centres (SBCs) (four metropolitan, four country)

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have been established as part of the Challenging Behaviour program, and are designed to “provide specialist support to assist government secondary and district high schools to manage and engage students with severely challenging behaviours” (DOE, n.d.a). The students targeted for SBCs are secondary students at government schools that present “...with violent and disruptive behaviours which are considered to be severe due to the intensity, frequency or duration of the behaviour” (DOE, n.d.a) and “whose behaviour persists despite significant school intervention” (DOE, n.d.a). A regional consultative committee oversees the development and operation of each centre. Each region develops referral and admission processes according to their particular needs. SBCs largely employ a philosophical approach that attempts to engage students relationally (Smith, 2009), and operate under shared principles of practice that include restorative practices and beliefs, and responding to student needs to achieve educational outcomes. Students are typically enrolled between one and three terms, throughout which the SBCs collaborate with other organisations (ie. students’ original school, new schools, work placement programs, TAFE) to transition the students back into mainstream environments.

Secondary schools in Western Australia may also have programs designed to meet the needs of students with EBD enrolled at their school. These programs are run within the secondary school in accordance with the Behaviour Management in Schools Policy (DOE, n.d.g.). The policy statement reads:

The principal is responsible for the creation and maintenance of a safe and positive learning environment and the development of processes for the effective management of student behaviour. The principal must use approaches which: are preventative in nature; promote pro-social behaviour, student wellbeing and the development of self discipline; focus on early intervention; and outline procedures for the management of ongoing or serious misbehaviour. (DOE, n.d.g.)

These programs are commonly run by the Student Services department of each school, and are comprised of a number of different staff in order to meet the needs of students who are identified as requiring support. Program staff may include an Assistant Principal, Student Services Co-ordinator, School Psychologists, Youth Workers, and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers.

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The provision of these specialist programs designed specifically to address the needs of these particular students, with their own funding and administration, signifies recognition by the Department of Education of Western Australia of the exceptional nature of gifted students and students with EBD, and the necessity to address the needs of these students. The findings of this study will help these specialist programs to address the needs of their students and staff, and better reach the outcomes desired for both groups of students.

3.1.4 Gifted Secondary Students and Secondary Students with EBD in Canada

Schools from three different Canadian provinces (Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia) participated in this study. The participating schools with gifted programs were located in Ontario, while the alternate schools containing students with EBD were located in Nova Scotia and British Columbia. Assumptions underpinning the classification of what it means to be gifted in Ontario and what it means to have EBD in British Columbia and Nova Scotia will now be discussed.

3.1.4.1 Gifted Secondary Students in Ontario

The Ontario Ministry of Education [OMOE] defines giftedness as “An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated” (Ontario Ministry of Education [OMOE], 2001, p. A20). Similarly to Western Australia, the OMOE recognizes giftedness as an exceptionality and mandates that school boards within the province are responsible for providing special education programs and services for students with special education needs (OMOE, 2001). While identification, placement and review procedures are regulated by the Ministry (OMOE, 2006), gifted identification procedures and program options vary in the different school boards across the province (Gray & Favaro, 2009). All school boards identify gifted students through an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). “Upon receiving a written request from a student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the principal of the school must refer the student to an IPRC. The IPRC will decide whether the student is an exceptional pupil and, if so, what type of educational placement is appropriate” (OMOE, 2006, para.1). The IPRCs of the school boards participating in this study consider several factors in determining whether to identify

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students as gifted. School District 1 considered five factors: (1) a Teacher Nomination Checklist, (2) Intellectual ability, as determined by obtaining aptitude scores in the ‘Very Superior’ range as assessed using a psychoeducational assessment, or scores at or above the 97th percentile using the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (Revised) in the verbal, quantitative, or composite index, (3) academic achievement, (4) adaptive behaviour-learning skills, (5) privately obtained psychoeducational assessment results (Gray & Favaro, 2009). School District 2 considered a combination of factors that included: students’ strengths/needs using Ontario School Records (OSR) history; informal tests; a score of 120 or more on the Otis Lennon School Ability Test and a score of 130+ on the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test; in addition to an overall IQ score of 130 or above (98th percentile) on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (4th Revision) (Halton District School Board [HDSB], 2011).

Once a student has been identified as gifted, the Ministry of Education requires that the student must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which is developed by the special education team within each school and is used to describe the student’s learning strengths, needs, and goals, and to monitor the student’s progress (OMOE, n.d.). At the point of identification, the IPRC determines whether the student is in need of enhancement beyond the regular classroom program, characterized by any combination of the following:

- readiness for instruction of advanced curriculum;
- need for peer group of similar ability;
- demonstration of advanced learning in some areas of the curriculum;
- commitment to tasks of appropriate skill level and interest;
- consistent positive response to situations requiring critical thinking; and
- evidence of creative thought (Peel District School Board [PDSB], 2001, p.41).

If the IPRC determines that the student requires enhancement beyond the regular classroom program, the student may be placed in the gifted program that operates within their school board. The programs operating in the school boards participating in this study were entitled the Regional Secondary Enhanced Learning Program and Resource Support – Gifted Secondary Placement. In the Regional Secondary Enhanced Learning Program “Courses offered...usually include Mathematics, English,

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Science and History/Geography for grades 9 through 12, or other subjects depending on student/staff interest. Great care is taken to balance the academic, social-emotional, and motivational components of the students' program" (PDSB, 2001, p.41). In the Resource Support – Gifted Secondary Placement program, "Secondary students in grades 9 and 10 are timetabled together into the same class for the core academic subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Geography and History. Students in grades 11 and 12 are timetabled together into the same University level courses as timetables permit" (HDSB, 2011, p. 52). The programs are implemented within various traditional schools, and can often consist of classes that are fully contained gifted classes, with a recommended maximum class size of 25. When fully contained gifted classes cannot be created, gifted students are integrated into classes with highly able and high achieving students from the mainstream. "The Ontario curriculum in each of the clustered classes will be differentiated in breadth, depth and pace from the curriculum being offered in the regular class" (HDSB, 2011, p.52).

The students and teachers participating in this study were all enrolled / taught in one of the gifted programs described above. The programs were designed to address the needs of its exceptional students, including social-emotional needs. The findings of this study can be used to inform teachers of the behaviours that students desire to help develop positive relationships, which helps to address their social-emotional needs. This can help to address the concerns of teachers of gifted students, who have reported a lack of training and a lack of awareness of the major issues regarding the social and emotional development of gifted adolescents (Greene, 2003).

3.1.4.2 Secondary Students with EBD in British Columbia

The province of British Columbia identifies 11 categories that qualify for special education funding under the Special Education Policy (British Columbia Ministry of Education [BCMOE], 2011). 'Students with Behavioural Needs or Mental Illness' is listed as one of those categories. The Special Education Policy defines students with behavioural needs as:

...students whose behaviours reflect dysfunctional interactions between the student and one or more elements of the environment, including the classroom, school, family, peers and community. This is commonly referred to as behaviour disorders. Behaviour

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disorders vary in their severity and effect on learning, interpersonal relations and personal adjustment. (BCMOE, 2011, p.55)

Students with behavioural needs are further delineated into two categories: students requiring Moderate Behaviour Support and students requiring Intensive Behaviour Intervention. Students requiring Moderate Behaviour Support demonstrate:

- behaviours such as aggression (of a physical, emotional or sexual nature) and/or hyperactivity; and
- behaviours related to social problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, child abuse or neglect (BCMOE, 2011, p.55).

Students must also meet the following criteria in order to be identified in the category of Moderate Behaviour Support:

- the frequency or severity of the behaviours or negative internalized states have a very disruptive effect on the classroom learning environment, social relations or personal adjustment; and
- they demonstrate the above behaviour(s) or conditions over an extended period of time, in more than one setting and with more than one person (teachers, peers); and
- they have not responded to support provided through normal school discipline and classroom management strategies (BCMOE, 2011, p.55).

Students identified as requiring Intensive Behaviour Intervention are:
...those most in need of intensive interventions. They are expected to be less than one percent (1%) of the student population province-wide. These students should have access to co-ordinated school/community interventions, which are based on inter-service/agency assessment processes that are required to manage, educate, and maintain the students in school and in their community. (BCMOE, 2011, p.56)

Students who require Intensive Behaviour Intervention must exhibit “...antisocial, extremely disruptive behaviour in most environments (for example, classroom, school, family, and the community); and behaviours that are consistent/persistent over time” (BCMOE, 2011, p.56). In order to receive special education funding, these behaviour disorders must be:

- serious enough to be known to school and school district personnel and other community agencies and to warrant intensive interventions by other community agencies/service providers beyond the school; and

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- a serious risk to the student or others, and/or with behaviours or conditions that significantly interfere with the student's academic progress and that of other students; and
- beyond the normal capacity of the school to educate, provided "normal capacity" is seen to include the typical special education support/interventions such as school-based counselling, moderate behaviour supports, the use of alternate settings, and other means in the school environment (BCMOE, 2011, p.56).

The process of identifying and assessing these students begins with teachers identifying problems and attempting to use alternate strategies in the classroom. If their attempts to manage behaviour or support the student are unsuccessful, they may seek assistance from a school-based team, which may access district support services for a formal assessment, which should:

- analyze the student's functional behaviours in various settings and with different people who regularly are a part of her/his environment (functional behaviour assessment);
- integrate information from the different aspects of a student's life;
- focus on strengths as well as needs;
- rule out or address other conditions which may be precipitating or contributing to the behaviour (e.g., hearing loss, learning disabilities, side-effects of medication);
- clarify the characteristics of the behaviour disorder or mental illness;
- address the possibility of other medical or health impairments;
- contribute to the process of planning and evaluating the student's educational program; and
- The findings of the assessment should be used to plan support, interventions, and services needed by the student (BCMOE, 2001, p. 57).

Once a student has been identified as requiring behaviour supports, the Ministry requires that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) be developed for the student, which describes:

- current behavioural and learning strengths and needs;
- the goals for the student's program referenced to measurable objectives;
- the behavioural strategies used to achieve the goals and measures for tracking student achievement of the goals;
- if applicable, specification of the components of the curriculum that will be adapted and/or modified;
- the resources needed to support the student;
- the names of staff responsible (school, community agencies) for implementing the plan;

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- the role of the parents in supporting the plan;
- means of evaluating the efficacy of supports/interventions and a timeline for evaluation;
- decisions regarding where the plan will be implemented; and
- plans for transitions (BCMOE, 2011, p.58).

These intervention programs are meant to be implemented in the settings in which the behaviours occur, however “...integrated approaches should not place the student, his/her peers, or those providing services in an ‘at-risk’ position” (BCMOE, 2011, p.58). The Ministry recognizes that “Some of these students may require more specialized services, including part or full-time placement in specialized learning environments” (BCMOE, 2011, p.58) and allows for placement in another setting when there is clear evidence that their current environment cannot meet their social or educational needs, and that such a placement “...is the only option after considering [the] educational needs [of the student] or the educational needs of others” (BCMOE, 2011, p.3).

Alternate schools are one such specialized learning environment where students with EBD often are often placed. In British Columbia, it has been found that while 28% of the province’s most vulnerable youth attend mainstream schools, 34% attend alternative programs (Smith et al., 2007b). The BCMOE policy on alternate education programs states:

Alternate education school programs...focus on the educational, social and emotional issues for those students whose needs are not being met in a traditional school program. An alternate education program provides its support through differentiated instruction, program delivery and enhanced counselling services based on student need. (BCMOE, n.d.)

Regarding the rationale for having alternate education programs, the ministry states:

Students who attend alternate education school programs are most often the most vulnerable population in the school system. Alternate education school programs have disproportionate numbers of children and youth in care, aboriginal students, children and youth living in poverty or the street, gifted children who have difficulty in social situations, children and youth involved in drugs, alcohol and the sex trade and youth with mental health concerns. Alternate education programs offer an opportunity for these vulnerable and at-risk students to experience success. (BCMOE, n.d.)

In order to receive funding, alternate programs must: (1) have an intake process to facilitate referrals, (2) have a learning plan (ie. IEP or Student Learning Plan developed by school) for each student, (3) have an exit strategy to help students transition back to the regular school system, graduation, work, post-secondary training and education, or to continuing education, and (4) have evidence of additional services required by the students (ie. youth care workers, drug and alcohol counsellors, etc.) (BCMOE, n.d.). Alternate education programs are administered and structured by the 60 individual school districts in the province, and vary in their delivery from district to district. According to a comprehensive review of alternate education programs in British Columbia, alternative education programs “...may be delivered from one central location, or from a range of locations. They may have strict or flexible attendance requirements, and they may offer teacher led classes, self paced online learning or a combination of the two” (Smith et al., 2007a, p.60). One of the key findings of the review was that:

There is a diverse range of alternative education programs and administrative structures operating across the province that are meeting the needs of the vast majority of at-risk and high-risk youth who attend them, in a variety of innovative and responsive ways. (Smith et al., 2007a, p.9)

The alternate program that participated in this study consisted of students who were all identified as having moderate or severe behaviour disorders, and who each had a corresponding IEP. This program proved to be a valuable data source, as it shared characteristics with other alternate programs in the province, including:

At-risk and high-risk youth attending alternative education programs reported high levels of school connectedness, had positive relationships with teachers and support staff, liked school considerably more, and skipped school considerably less, compared to their previous education experience. (Smith et al., 2007a, p.9)

3.1.4.3 Secondary Students with EBD in Nova Scotia

Similarly to Western Australia and British Columbia, the Canadian province of Nova Scotia recognises students with EBD as exceptional. According to the Special Education Policy of Nova Scotia, students with EBD qualify to receive special education funding “to supplement the cost of programming and provision of services

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to students whose special needs are such that they require supports in addition to those provided by a classroom teacher” (NSDOE, 2008, p. 10). Students that qualify for special education funding have an Individual Program Plan (IPP) developed “...in consideration of the student’s strengths and challenges. The outcomes in the IPP form the foundation for the evaluation of student progress” (NSDOE, 2008, p.6).

Once an IPP is developed, different programming options are available. Students with EBD who have an IPP may have access to counsellors, resource teachers, and have modified curriculum to meet their needs within their school. If these students cannot function in mainstream schools, alternate education centres are available to attempt to meet students’ needs. There are at least five alternate education centres in the province, which are created by regional school boards. The school boards are responsible for providing credits designated as either Public School Program (PSP) credits or Individual Program Plan (IPP) credits in the public school system (including alternate schools).

Much like Western Australia, the existence of these policies and programs in Nova Scotia signifies recognition of students with EBD as exceptional. Further, Policy 2.1 of the Nova Scotia Special Education Policy states that “Each school board is required to provide appropriate programming for all students with special needs and must use allocated resources for this purpose” (NSDOE, 2008, p. 23). Nova Scotia has estimated the prevalence of students with EBD as 1% of the student population (Dworet & Maich, 2007), however, a review of Canadian school programs for students with EBD found that Nova Scotia, like other provinces in Canada, does not require the inclusion of special education in general teacher certification (Dworet & Maich, 2007). The review found that it is “...generally unclear what is expected of teachers and what approaches they should be using to meet the demands of students with E/BD in their classrooms” (p. 41). The results of this study may be used to fulfil the recommendation that “...greater opportunity should exist for teachers working with students with E/BD to have a thorough background in how to effectively intervene with this specific student population” (p.41).

Overall, this study’s findings can help schools in all participating locations to meet their requirement to address the needs of their exceptional students by identifying

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behaviours that can be employed to improve teacher-student relationships. The results of this study will be valuable to the education systems of Nova Scotia, Ontario, British Columbia and Western Australia, given the similar cultural contexts between the locations, and the recognition of the necessity to meet the needs of these exceptional students by the respective education authorities.

3.2 Student-Teacher Relationships

Interpersonal relationships are dyadic systems that are comprised of several components and are influenced by both internal and external factors (Davis, 2006; Pianta, 1999). The interactions between two people occurring across numerous situations and over time form patterns. These patterns signal the existence of a relationship between the two individuals (Hinde, 1987), where individual codes are employed to regulate the relationship (Sameroff, 1989). In student-teacher relationships, the codes are enacted by both the teacher and the student and affect the quality of the relationship. Teacher codes are comprised of the teacher's feelings and beliefs about their behaviours with children, motivation styles, and their goals of interaction with the children (Pianta, 1997). Students bring their own codes to the relationship, which can contain variables that include their disposition and their feelings about adults based on previous experiences. These interactions are described less by what is being done (ie. correcting, punishing, questioning), but more by *how* it is being done in relation to the other relationship participant (Pianta, 1999). Hence, student-teacher relationships can be described by concepts such as reciprocity, sensitivity, coordination, and synchrony – constructs that are all important to the quality of the relationship (Howes & Hamilton, 1992a, 1992b; Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennet, 1997; Sameroff, 1989).

As student-teacher relationships are dyadic systems, they have several components (Pianta, 1999). First, the student-teacher relationship contains each member's representation of the relationship. Representations are comprised of the features of the individuals involved – biological characteristics, personality factors, and developmental history – that contribute to the quality of the relationship (Bowlby, 1969). Davis (2006) developed a framework for understanding relationship quality

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between middle school students and their teachers. Her framework identified two internal ‘presses’ (factors influencing individual behaviours and motivation with regards to a relationship) in the student-teacher relationship: context of the student and context of the teacher. These contexts can be regarded as the internal influences that construct the representations for each member of the relationship. The context of the teacher is influenced by three factors: resources for providing instructional support (includes perceptions of self and perceptions of others and instructional design), resources for providing affective support (includes classroom climate and self-other perceptions), and construction of teaching identity (includes personal identity and boundary decisions) (p. 202). The context of the student is influenced by two factors: interpersonal and academic resources (includes relationship history, social competence, and academic motivation), and the construction of student identity (includes norms/consequences and commitment) (p. 202).

The second component of student-teacher relationships is that they contain feedback processes whereby the individuals exchange information through behavioural interactions, language and communication, and perception of self and others (Pianta, 1999). In teacher-student relationships, teachers perform numerous functions to attend to student needs, which form many of the experiences that construct the relationship.

Finally, student-teacher relationships contain asymmetries. The nature of the relationship involves a discrepancy in the amount of responsibility for interaction and quality, resulting from the differences in roles and maturity. As such, teachers, as adults, have a greater impact on determining the quality of the relationship (Pianta, 1999; Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). This is especially true for the student-teacher relationship with children at the earliest stages of education (K-3). As students mature, the asymmetry becomes less, but teachers still have a larger amount of control over the quality of the relationship.

Davis (2006) also found external (to the dyad) influences that impacted on the quality of student-teacher relationships, which were the peer context and the interpersonal culture of the school/classroom. Peer context is influenced by alternative relationships in the classroom, peer perception of the teacher, and peer relationships

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with the teacher. The interpersonal culture of the school/classroom is influenced by norms about interpersonal relationships (adult-adult, adult-child, child-child) and resources for interpersonal relationships (time, scheduling, number of relationships) (p. 202).

The model depicted in Figure 1 illustrates some of the processes and inputs that are involved in a relationship between a student and a teacher. The model is based upon models of the teacher-student (adult-child) relationship developed by Pianta (1999, p. 72) and Davis (2006, p. 202). In this model, the teacher and student exist within the dyad, with the teacher being depicted as larger due to their larger influence on the quality of the relationship. External to the dyad are peer influences and the influence of the interpersonal culture of the school/class. The teacher has three internal influences which represent the context of the teacher, while the student has two internal influences representing the context of the student. Between the teacher and the student, and within the dyad, are the information exchange processes which include the interactive behaviours between the teacher and student that this study attempted to identify.

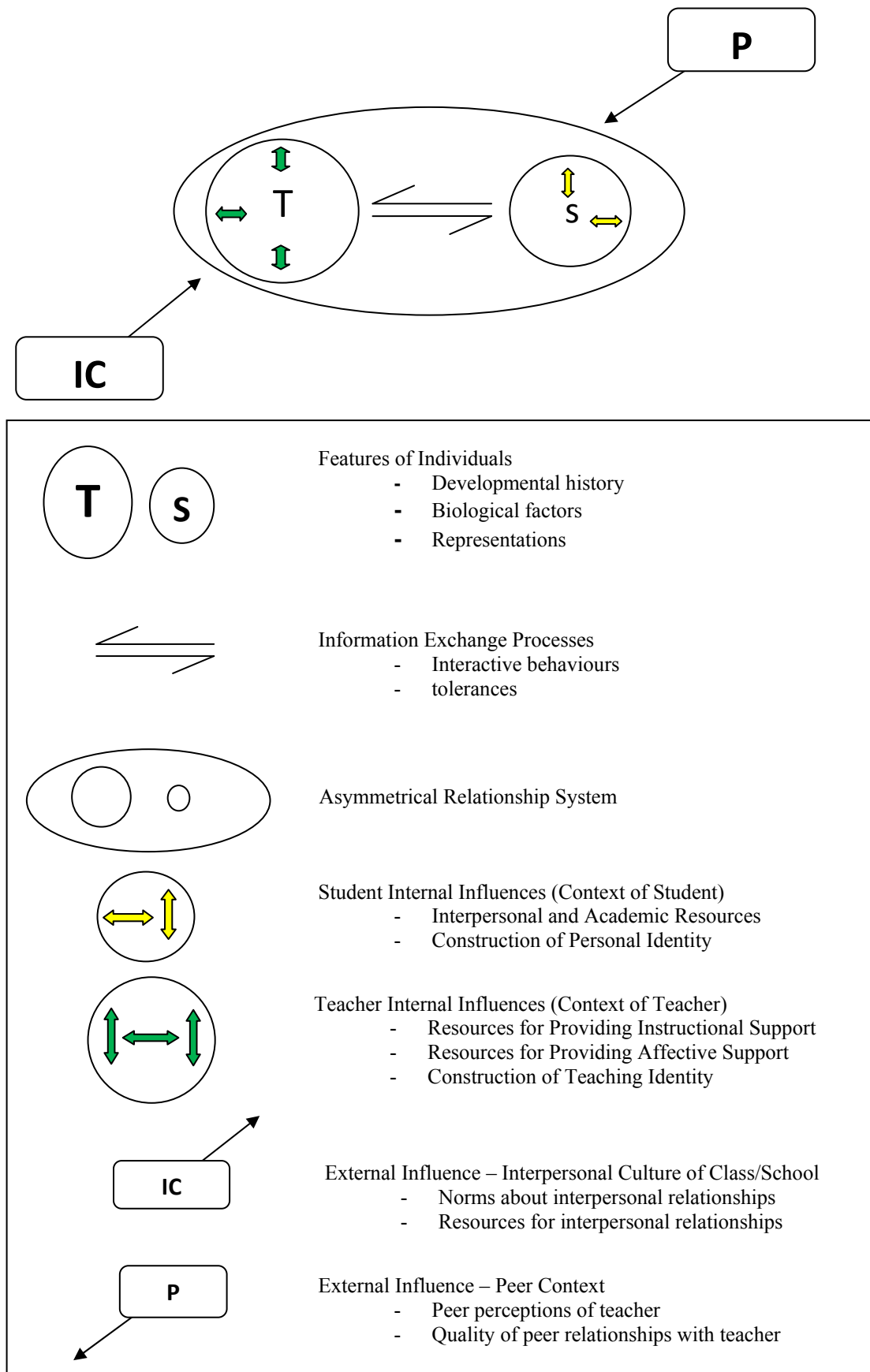


Figure 1 - Model of the Student-Teacher Relationship System

3.3 Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

Positive student-teacher relationships have been defined as occurring when students feel that their teachers value, respect, and support them (Doll et al., 2004). This occurs when the relationships are warm, responsive, engaged, contain high demands and expectations, and provide the class with structure and clear limits (Pianta, 1999). Conveyed and perceived social support is essential for healthy relationships, with four distinct types of support identified as being appropriate for addressing various situations and needs – emotional, instrumental, appraisal, and informational (Tardy, 1985). Emotional support includes perceptions of love, trust, empathy and care. Instrumental support includes providing tangible assistance in the forms of one's time, skills, or services. Appraisal support includes providing evaluative, critical feedback on behaviours. Informational support involves providing guidance, advice and information to aid in problem-solving. All four forms of social support fall within a teacher's duty of care, and are therefore essential in developing positive relationships with students.

Pianta (1994) identified six types of student-teacher relationships by measuring teachers' responses on the Student Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta, 1991) and scoring them according to the five dimensions that underlie teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students (Pianta & Steinberg, 1991). The five recognised dimensions were: conflict/anger, warmth/closeness, open communication, dependency, and troubled feelings (items include "This child does not accept my help when s/he needs it" and "I often think about this child when not at work"). Based on the five dimensions, the six groups identified (characteristics of the relationship in parentheses) were: positively involved (warmth, communication), average-functional (midrange scores on all scales), dependent (excessive reliance), dysfunctional (low involvement, anger, annoyance), angry (high conflict), and uninvolved (low warmth, low communication, low anger). These six groups were then redistributed to two broad groups: generally positive relationships (positively involved, average-functional) and generally difficult relationships (dependent, dysfunctional, angry, uninvolved) (Pianta, 1994).

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Classical person-centred education and learner-centred models are notably similar with respect to their student-teacher relational variables (Cornelius-White, 2007). Student-teacher relationships have been shown to have effect sizes within the zone of desired effects ($d = 0.4$ and above) on six variables emphasized by the classical approach and the learner-centred psychological principles outlined by the American Psychological Association (1997). According to Hattie (2009), the six relational variables that had effect sizes within the zone of desired effects were: non-directivity, empathy, warmth, encouragement of higher order thinking, encouraging learning, and adapting to differences. As emphasized by two different holistic education models and having been shown to be positively responsive to teacher-student relationships, these relational variables can be regarded as components of positive student-teacher relationships.

Wilkins (2006) examined secondary student and teacher perspectives on the components of good relationships. Secondary students identified teacher conduct that contributed to good relationships as: demonstrating caring and concern, offering help, providing academic support, interacting positively, being respectful and fair, making learning enjoyable, and treating students as adults (p. 123). Conversely, teachers identified student activities that contributed to good relationships as: demonstrating engagement and interest in school work, being respectful, and demonstrating maturity and positive personality traits (p. 126). The disparity in the number of contributing activities by teachers as compared to students reinforces the notion that these dyadic relationship systems contain asymmetry that places a disproportionate amount of responsibility on the teacher for the quality of the relationship.

The model depicted in Figure 2 illustrates the variables and components that combine to form positive student-teacher relationships. The model emphasizes the variables identified in the research (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Wilkins, 2006) as necessary for positive relationships, and underpins the asymmetry inherent in the student-teacher dyad, as there are more teacher regulated variables than student regulated variables (Wilkins, 2006). The variables represent broad constructs that are enacted through interactive behaviours that this study attempted to identify.

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The model depicted in Figure 3 combines Figures 1 and 2 to illustrate the components required in the information exchange process of the student-teacher relationship for the relationship to be positive. The feedback processes identified by Pianta (1999) as the second component of student-teacher relationships are represented in this model by the variables identified by Cornelius-White (2007), Hattie (2009), and Wilkins (2006) as essential for positive student-teacher relationships. The model also takes into account the influence of internal and external factors on the relationship system identified by Pianta (1999). The teacher and student regulated variables are identified by the arrows, which display whether the variable is regulated by the student, teacher, or both. The variables in this figure are composed of the interactive behaviours identified in the research (Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2009; Wilkins, 2006) that make up the information exchange processes in a positive relationship.

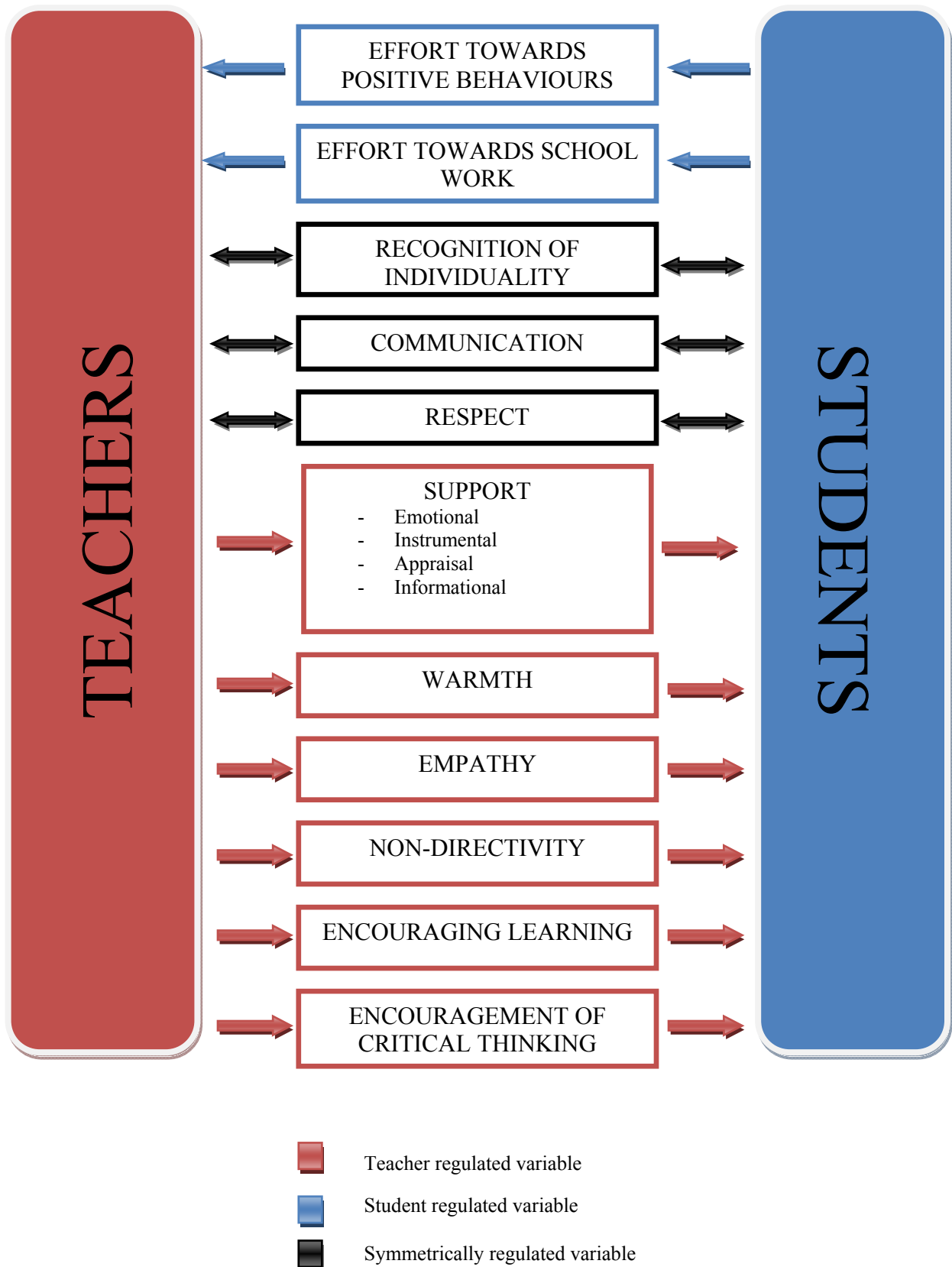


Figure 2 - Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

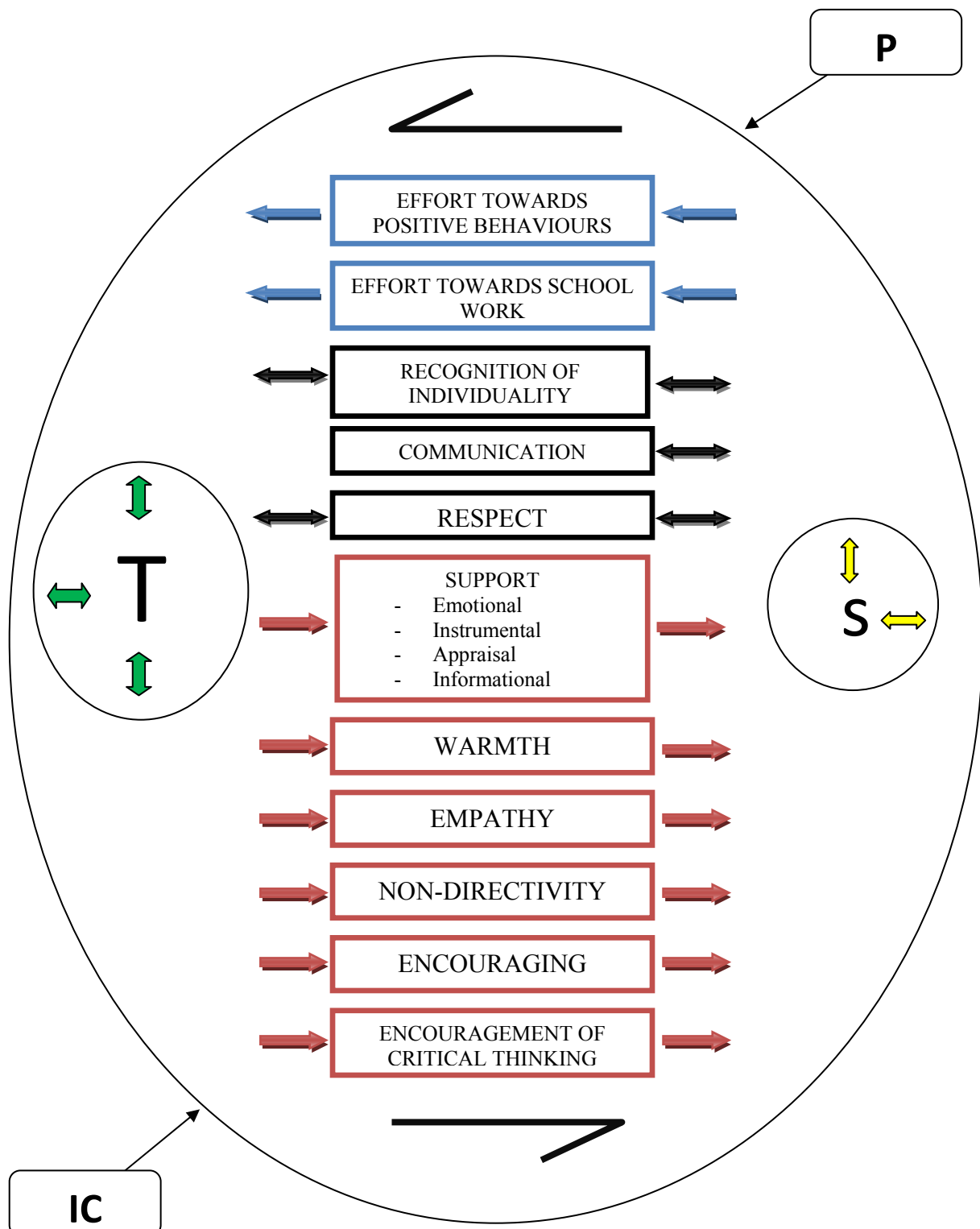


Figure 3 - Positive Student-Teacher Relationship Systems

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This theoretical framework has established a clear definition of how gifted and talented students and students with EBD are identified in Western Australia and the participating Canadian provinces. It has also identified the variables that play a part in the development of the student-teacher relationship, as well as the components necessary for those relationships to be positive ones. With an established framework for understanding the classification of students in Western Australia and Canada, the nature of student-teacher relationships, and what constitutes positive relationships between teachers and their students, the methodology of this study will now be examined.

4. Methods

The teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with secondary gifted students and secondary students with EBD were examined using a mixed-methods approach. The study was conducted in Western Australian and Canadian secondary schools that offer academic programs to students who are identified as gifted and talented, as well as in behaviour and alternative programs for students with EBD in the different countries.

The mixed-methods approach involved combining qualitative and quantitative research to gather and analyse data and to generate meaning, deep understanding, and a high quality of data interpretation (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The quantitative data was collected via surveys distributed to the participants, while the qualitative data was collected through interviews and focus groups. The participating teachers' and students' perceptions and feelings about student-teacher relationships were also explored.

4.1 Process

Before engaging in the data collection process, ethics clearance was obtained from the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee, as well as the Department of Education and Training for Western Australia and the school boards at the participating Canadian locations. Once ethics clearance was obtained, consent forms were distributed to teachers currently employed at selected schools that offer gifted programs and behaviour programs in Western Australia and in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario. Consent was obtained for teacher participation on the Student-Teacher Relationships Survey – Teacher Version (STRSTV), as well as in interviews. Consent forms were also sent home to parents/guardians of identified gifted pupils, and parents/guardians of students with EBD at all participating schools. Student consent forms were attached to the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version (STRSSV) in order to gain student consent for participation on the survey and in focus groups. Consent was secured from all participants.

The process of collecting data began by issuing the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version (STRSSV) to Year 9 and 10 students currently enrolled in gifted programs in Western Australia and Ontario. Concurrently, the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version (STRSTV) was issued to teachers who taught in the same gifted programs in Western Australia, and teachers who taught in gifted programs in a neighbouring school district in Ontario, due to low teacher participation in the school district containing student participants. Students who completed the survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group to discuss their views on their relationships with teachers for 30-60 minutes. Six students from Western Australia and 5 students from Ontario who indicated their willingness to participate were selected at random, contacted, and organised to meet for participation in the focus groups. Students in Western Australian schools were also asked to identify the three teachers at their school with whom they had the best relationships. The teachers who received the most nominations and indicated a willingness to participate in individual interviews were contacted, and interviews with five teachers took place. In Ontario, low teacher participation rates in the school district containing student participants meant that students could not nominate teachers to be interviewed. As such, co-ordinators of gifted programs in a neighbouring school district were contacted for interviews, as their roles allowed them to develop strong relationships with gifted students, both as classroom teachers and outside of the classroom. Two interviews with gifted teachers from Ontario were organised and conducted.

Data collection for students with EBD was organised in a similar fashion. Data collection began by issuing the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version (STRSSV) to secondary students identified within their high schools as students with emotional/behavioural difficulties, and students currently enrolled in behaviour centres in Western Australia or alternate programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Concurrently, the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version (STRSTV) was issued to teachers who taught in the same behaviour/alternate programs and behaviour centres. Students who completed the survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group to discuss their views on their relationships with teachers for 30-60 minutes. Twelve students from Western

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Australia, four students from British Columbia, and five students from Nova Scotia who indicated their willingness to participate were selected at random, contacted, and organised to meet for participation in the focus groups. Due to the small student population and low student-to-teacher ratios at the participating behaviour centres and alternate programs, as well as the student-centred relational approach of all the participating programs, teachers at the participating programs had established numerous close, positive relationships with their students. Teachers who indicated a willingness to participate in interviews on their surveys were contacted directly by the researcher to seek their participation in individual interviews. Interviews were conducted with two teachers from senior behaviour centres in Western Australia, two teachers from secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia, two teachers from alternate programs in British Columbia, and three teachers from alternate programs in Nova Scotia.

Anonymity for all interviews was obtained by using pseudonyms for both school names and participant names. Interviews were digitally recorded and stored on the researcher's personal computer in a password-protected folder. Consent forms and all survey data was stored in a locked file cabinet at Edith Cowan University for data from Western Australia, and stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's residence for data from Canada. All data is retained for a period of at least five years after the completion of the research and publication of any papers. Figure 4 illustrates the data gathering process.

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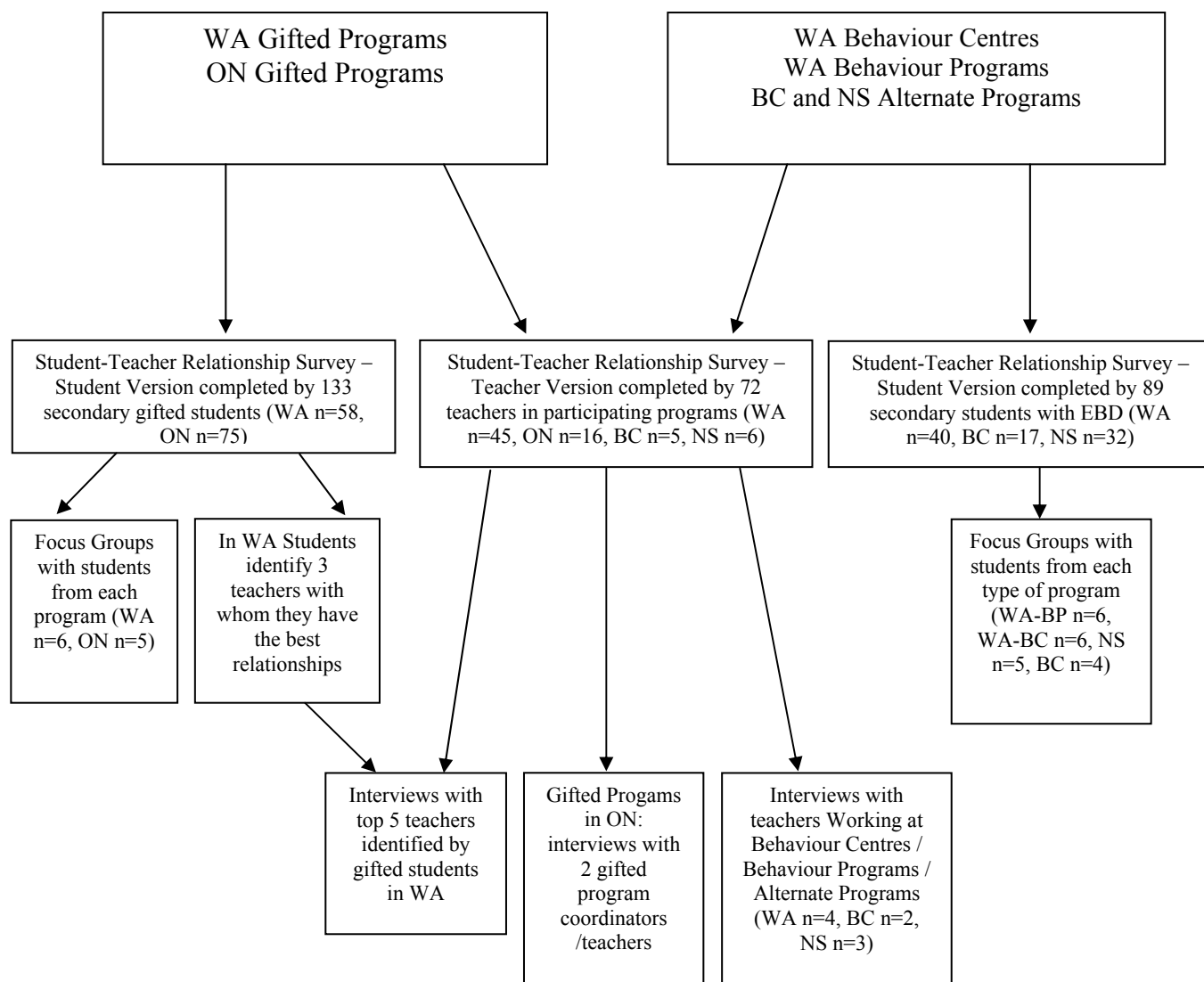


Figure 4 - Data Collection Process

4.2 Participating Schools

There were 18 schools that participated in this study, including six in Western Australia and 12 in Canada. Each school had either a behaviour program or gifted program operating to meet the needs of its exceptional students, and in one case, the school contained both types of programs. A demographic description summary of the participating schools is given below.

4.2.1 Schools with Gifted Programs in Western Australia

Two schools with gifted programs participated in this study were both public independent schools with divergent demographics. One school is a large metropolitan

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high school in the Perth area with a culturally diverse student population, located in an upper-middle class socio-economic area. It has won a prestigious national award for its outstanding academic achievement and strong pastoral care emphasis and continues to be recognised as one of Australia's top schools. The school provides students with opportunities to excel in areas of special interest aptitude through Gifted and Talented, specialist, and extension courses. Gifted and Talented students are grouped together for English, Mathematics, Science, Society and Environment and their choice of language studies. Students may also apply for selection into specialist programs for Classical Music and Volleyball.

The other school in WA, is one of Perth's oldest high schools. The school is situated in a lower socio-economic area and is considered as 'hard to staff' school. Catering for approximately 600 students, 20 percent of which are Indigenous, this school has a diverse student population ranging from Gifted and Talented Education academic programs to programs for students who need higher levels of support to engage in learning. The Academic Talent Programs are offered in both Mathematics/Science and Humanities and students attending the school may be selected for one or both of these, which offer an enriched challenging course.

4.2.2 Schools with Gifted Programs in Ontario

Canadian gifted students participating in this study were enrolled in gifted programs at four different schools in School District 1, a metropolitan, English-Language public school board that is one of the largest school boards in the country. Canadian teachers of gifted students participating in this study taught in gifted programs at four different schools in School District 2, a metropolitan English-Language public school board in the same geographical area as School District 1. The schools in each district were very similar in their demographic make-up and the gifted programs that were offered. A description of the schools in each district is outlined below.

Schools in School District 1

The participating schools in School district 1 were very similar in structure and demographic detail. All schools were large, metropolitan secondary school located in middle to upper-middle socio-economic areas in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). All schools had a diverse and multi-cultural student population ranging from 1,000 to

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1,500 students. The schools' gifted programs offered enhanced courses at every year level in each of the core areas: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science. Leadership opportunities outside the classroom were frequently offered to students in conjunction with universities and other organisations. Students in the gifted programs may be enrolled in wholly contained gifted classes or in mixed classes with students in the academic stream where enrolment is not high enough for a wholly contained class.

Schools in School District 2

The participating schools in School district 2 were very similar in structure and demographic detail to each other, as well as the participating schools in School District 1. All participating schools in School District 2 were large, metropolitan secondary school located in middle to upper-middle socio-economic areas in the GTA. All schools had a diverse and multi-cultural student population ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 students. The schools' gifted programs offer enhanced courses at every year level in each of the core areas: English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science. Leadership opportunities outside the classroom are frequently offered to students in conjunction with universities and other organisations. Students in the gifted program may be enrolled in wholly contained gifted classes or in mixed classes with highly-able students recommended for gifted placement based on teacher recommendations and prior achievement where enrolment is not high enough for a wholly contained class.

4.2.3 Schools with Behaviour Programs in Western Australia

Senior Behaviour Centres

Both participating Senior Behaviour Centres in WA were situated in low socio-economic suburbs of Perth and the most socially disadvantaged education districts in the metropolitan area. Students come from many different suburbs to these schools for students from Years 8 through 12 to complete studies that will enable access to technical or tertiary studies. Both centres have small populations consisting no more than 30 students who no longer attend mainstream high schools. Programs are typically staffed by up to three full time teachers, youth workers and a psychologist. Students are mostly referred to the programs from Student Services teams in high schools – including two high schools that participated in this study (Confederation

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SHS and Eagleview SHS) - who identify young people who are at risk of not completing the minimum 10 years of schooling. Indeed, programs are considered the 'last chance' at education for most students who enrol and some stay for up to three years to complete an equivalent of one year of study. Many of the referred students have a history of not attending school regularly and are significantly below their peers in academic achievement. Significant emotional and behavioural disorders are common with at least half of the current cohort having a formal diagnosis of a mental illness. Students who attend these programs have often been excluded from mainstream high school. Students are also referred by the Department of Child Protection and Juvenile Justice and many are fostered, work part time or live independently. Students in the programs complete basic courses in English and Maths and work on a combination of basic literacy, numeracy, life skills and vocational education. All students who enrol in the programs have individual learning plans and a youth worker and psychologist meet each week with students to support with emotional and behavioural issues. The explicit goal of the programs is to increase academic skills and engage students in an educative program that leads to technical training, tertiary studies or employment. All students were offered the opportunity to participate in the research and approximately half volunteered.

Eagleview Senior High School

Situated in one of Perth's lowest socio-economic suburbs, Eagleview Senior High School is a small high school with a population of approximately 450 students. Approximately 40% of students are indigenous and up to 60% of all the students attending the School are 'at educational risk'. Eagleview SHS is considered a 'hard to staff school' meaning that it is hard to retain staff because of the behavioural and learning challenges exhibited by school population. The School offers a combination of academic and vocational programs of study. The Student Services team consists of an assistant principal dedicated to students at educational risk, student service manager, two youth workers, a psychologist and four Aboriginal and Islander education officers. The Student Services Team at Eagleview SHS liaises regularly with local police, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Child Protection.

Students invited to participate in this study were selected by the Student Services manager. While consent was given for 15 students to participate some individuals

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were consistently absent when the survey was given and others were involved in juvenile justice meetings or out of school suspension and could not take part. Staff at Eagleview SHS report that violence towards other students is a significant issue amongst the student population and a particular issue for this selected group. Of the selected students who took part in the research, all have been referred to the school psychologist for mental health issues including self harming and attempted suicide.

With a dedicated Student Services Team, students at educational risk at Eagleview SHS are supported to attend academic and vocational classes by a team of education assistants who go to classes with students ostensibly to assist with literacy and numeracy, but also offer emotional and behavioural support. Students who are expelled from Eagleview are directed to Tobin Barnes Senior Behaviour Centre, a participating school in this study.

Confederation Senior High School

Confederation SHS is one of Perth's oldest high schools and is also a public independent school. Students who are expelled or leave Confederation are directed to Tobin Barnes SBC, also a participating school in this study, as their last chance to receive an education. Confederation is also considered a 'hard to staff' school. Catering for approximately 600 students, 20 percent of which are Indigenous, Tobin Barnes Senior High School has a diverse student population ranging from Gifted and Talented Education academic programs to programs for students who need higher levels of support to engage in learning, such as, senior school Certificate programs, Remedial Literacy programs for Year 11 and 12 students and the Year 10 Aboriginal School Based Training Program. These engagement programs were a direct response to the increase in the school leaving age and meeting community needs.

Approximately 30 percent of the student population are considered to be at educational risk and a dedicated program co-ordinator and assistant principal oversee student well being, in particular managing student behaviour. A psychologist, nurse, two youth workers, five Aboriginal and Islander education officers and eight education assistants are also part of the Student Services Team. The students invited to take part in this research were selected by the student services manager in consultation with the school psychologist. All students selected have a history of non

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attendance, disengagement, academic underperformance and emotional and behavioural difficulties. While not all students have incurred in-school or out of school suspensions approximately half of the group had at least three suspensions in the first half of the school year in which the data was collected. Other students have Department of Child Protection and Juvenile Justice case managers and some have diagnoses of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Anxiety disorders and Bi-Polar. All selected students have individual behaviour and learning plans which are reviewed regularly by the Student Services Team.

Kagera Senior High School

Kagera SHS is one of Perth's largest metropolitan high schools is also a public independent school. While offering a wide range of specialist academic extension programs, KSHS has been consistently recognised as an inclusive school with a diverse population of students in terms of culture and abilities. KSHS has a population of approximately 1800 students, 10% of which are considered to be at 'educational risk'. A total of 15 staff members including a nurse, psychologist and youth worker, 10 teachers who are also year co-ordinators and phase of schooling co-ordinators, and two full time student services co-ordinators have time allocated to specifically support these students. Prior to involvement in this study, student services co-ordinators conducted a survey of all staff and identified over 200 students from Years 8 – 12 who were 'at risk'. While 'at risk' criteria included students identified as academic underachievers, most of this group demonstrated low levels of engagement, were frequently absent, exhibited emotional and behavioural difficulties and some were under the care of Government Child Protection and Juvenile Justice Departments. While considered a middle class area, some of Kagera's feeder primary schools draw from a diverse population that includes high density government housing in lower socio-economic areas.

The students selected to participate in this study were identified by staff in the initial survey undertaken by the school then verified by Student Services staff. All students had been referred to and attend sessions with the school psychologist and have individual behaviour/learning plans. Some of the selected students have formal diagnoses of Bi-Polar, Anxiety and Depression, with two students being hospitalised for self harming and attempted suicide. While some of the selected students have

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accrued in school suspension for short periods for repetitious low levels behaviours, most have averaged three suspensions per year with one student accruing ten ‘out of school suspensions’.

Students who participated in this survey attend academic classes at Kagera SHS but are withdrawn from class for weekly meetings with Student Services staff who liaise with students’ teachers, youth workers, psychologists, parents and in some cases other government agencies.

4.2.4 Schools with Behaviour Programs in Canada

McLean Alternate Education Centre

The McLean Centre is a secondary alternate program located in the Cariboo region of Central British Columbia. The centre is situated in a small town (population approx. 10, 000 city, 22,000 metro area) with a middle to low socio-economic classification. Two First Nation Reservations are located in the area and local schools provide service to students from the reservations. Many students attending McLean are of aboriginal ancestry, as evidenced by the employment of a full-time First Nations youth care worker. Most of the students attending McLean come from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Referrals to the program come from the senior and junior secondary schools in town. Demand from the program is high, with approximately 50 students actively enrolled in the program from Years 8 to 12, and another 50 on a waiting list. In order to be enrolled in the program, students must have either a moderate or severe behaviour designation and have an IEP. The centre’s staff consists of one principal, five teachers, a counsellor, and three youth care workers, including a First Nations youth care worker. Many of the referred students have a history of not attending school regularly and are significantly below their peers in academic achievement. Significant emotional and behavioural disorders are common, including anxiety, depression, addictions, and experiences of abuse. A significant number of students are fostered and under the care of the Ministry of Children and Families.

Students attending the centre complete academic programs in order to work towards their high school diploma. Students may transition back to traditional school system if

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the traditional schools agree to have them return, or they may graduate directly from the centre when all academic requirements have been met. The centre is relationally based, with the school philosophy based upon the Circle of Courage model (Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Bockern, 2002) grounded in positive psychology and restorative justice.

Haversham Education Centre, Manly Education Centre, and McMaster Education Centre

The three participating alternate education programs in Nova Scotia all operate under the same school district. As such, the schools have identical mission statements and goals, and are operated in similar fashions. Haversham is located in small town (population approx. 5 000) in an middle-working class agricultural area; McMaster is located in a small town of similar size, but in a more rural, middle-working class setting; and Manly is located in a very small town (population approx. 1 000) in a rural, middle-working class area. The mission of all three locations is to provide educational opportunities for students that are unable to achieve success in the traditional school environment by addressing their academic, social and emotional needs in a more individualized, flexible, and non-threatening learning environment. Each centre is staffed similarly, and consists of one principal/teacher, two regular teachers, a student support worker, and has access to a school psychologist. Students must apply to attend, and must include teacher reference forms and a school data form in their application. Students can get applications from their current/last school, the school district, or the alternate program that they are applying to. Each of the programs has an enrolment of approximately 20 students, and must be at least in Year 10 to be enrolled (aged from 15 to 18). Many of the students have a history of not attending school regularly and are below their peer levels of academic achievement. Significant emotional and behavioural disorders are common, including anxiety, depression, addictions, and experiences of abuse. All the students attending are considered ‘at-risk’ due to their previous academic records and variety of social and emotional difficulties.

The programs focus on academic achievement and experiential learning to meet the needs of its students. As well as offering regular academic programming, the programs offer additional personal growth and learning opportunities including:

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service learning and community service projects, group and individual counselling, social and personal skill development, and career preparation and exploration. The centres operate under a student-centred, relational based philosophy to create a safe, comfortable environment for students.

4.3 Participants

There were four main groups of participants in this study: staff who taught in the programs for identified gifted students; staff who taught at the behaviour centres, behaviour programs, or alternative programs for students with EBD; identified secondary gifted students enrolled in gifted programs in Western Australia and Ontario; and secondary students with EBD enrolled in behaviour/alternate programs in Western Australia, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia.

4.3.1 Staff Teaching in Participating Gifted Programs

Staff members teaching gifted students in Western Australian DOE recognised gifted programs were given the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version (STRSTV). Only teachers who were nominated by students on the STRSSV and who indicated a willingness to be interviewed were interviewed regarding their perspectives on student-teacher relationships, in order to gain insight from teachers who had experienced success in developing positive relationships with their students.

In Ontario, staff members teaching in recognised gifted programs were given the STRSTV. In order to gain insight from teachers of gifted students who had an established track record of developing positive relationships, gifted program coordinators were contacted for interviews. In their role as gifted coordinators, these teachers taught in fully contained gifted classrooms, and at the same time acted as a liaison, coordinator, and counsellor for students in the gifted programs. They therefore had experienced positive relationships with their students within the classroom, and often beyond.

4.3.2 Staff Teaching at Behaviour Centres, Behaviour Programs, or Alternate Programs

All teachers at Western Australian behaviour centres and secondary school behaviour programs were given the STRSTV. These programs contained low student to teacher

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ratios and were student-centred, relational based models that allowed teachers and students to work closely together and establish positive individual relationships. All teachers were offered the opportunity to participate in interviews, and those who indicated their willingness were selected at random and interviewed.

All teachers at the participating alternate programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia were given the STRSTV. Similar to the behaviour centres and programs in Western Australia, these alternate programs contained low student to teacher ratios and were student-centred, relational based models that allowed teachers and students to work closely together and establish positive individual relationships. All teachers were offered the opportunity to participate in interviews, and those who indicated their willingness were selected at random and interviewed.

4.3.3 Gifted Secondary Students

The third group of participants were Year 9 and 10 students who were identified as gifted by the GATE Branch of the DOE in Western Australia or by the IPRC of their school district in Ontario. All students were enrolled in a gifted program recognised by their respective school board.

4.3.4 Secondary Students with EBD

The fourth group of participants were Year 9 through 12 students who were enrolled in a secondary behaviour centre or secondary school behaviour program in Western Australia or an alternate program in British Columbia or Nova Scotia to address their behavioural, social, and emotional needs.

4.4 Sample

Approximately 90 teachers of gifted students were invited to participate by taking the STRSTV. Teachers at Western Australian gifted programs completed and returned 33 surveys, and teachers at Ontario gifted programs completed and returned 16 surveys, to make up a sample size of 49. Teachers in the West Australian gifted programs who were nominated by their students were contacted for interviews, with five interviews taking place. Four gifted coordinators in Ontario gifted programs were contacted for interviews and two interviews were conducted.

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Approximately 30 teachers of secondary students with EBD were invited to participate by taking the STRSTV. Teachers at Western Australian secondary behaviour centres completed and returned 5 surveys, teachers at secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia completed and returned 7 surveys, teachers at British Columbia alternate programs completed and returned 5 surveys, and teachers at Nova Scotia alternate programs completed and returned 6 surveys, to make up a sample size of 23. Teachers who indicated a willingness to participate in interviews were contacted and interviews were conducted with four teachers from Western Australia, two teachers from British Columbia, and three teachers from Nova Scotia.

The participating gifted students were selected from Years 9 and 10 in each program. Principals were reluctant to allow senior students (Years 11-12) to participate due to high academic demands and stresses related to their nearing completion of secondary school. Students from Western Australian gifted programs completed and returned 58 surveys, and students from Ontario gifted programs completed and returned 75 surveys, to make up a sample size of 133. Students were selected at random for focus groups based on their indicated willingness to participate, with six students taking part in Western Australia, and five taking part in Ontario.

The participating students with EBD were selected from senior behaviour centres and secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia and alternate programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia. Students from all Year levels (9-12) participated. Students from Western Australian behaviour centres completed and returned 14 surveys, students from secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia completed and returned 26 surveys, students from British Columbian alternate programs completed and returned 17 surveys, and students from Nova Scotia alternate programs completed and returned 32 surveys, to make up a sample size of 89. Students were selected at random for focus groups based on their individual willingness to participate, with six students taking part in from senior behaviour centres in Western Australia, six taking part from secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia, four taking part in British Columbia, and 5 taking part in Nova Scotia.

4.5 Instruments

There were two instruments that were used to collect data: the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version (see Appendix I) and the Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version (see Appendix J). As there is no large-scale validated instrument for measuring student-teacher relationships in secondary schools, items were compiled from Malecki, Demaray, and Elliot's (2000) Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS), Wilkins' (2006) Student-Teacher Relationship Survey: Student Version (Appendix M), and from the teacher behaviours that convey high levels of support identified in Suldo et al.'s 2009 study (Table 2, p. 75).

4.5.1 Survey Items

There were 70 items on each survey. Items were scored on a six point Likert scale format (6 = very strongly agree to 1 = very strongly disagree). These items represented the same teacher behaviours, but in some cases were worded differently to reflect the different perspectives of the participants regarding the same behaviour. For example, item four on the STRSSV is listed as "Talk with me about my goals and interests" while on the STRSTV it is listed as "Talk with students about their goals and interests". Open-ended questions were included at the end of each survey in order to probe for further teacher behaviours that may not have been listed within the other 70 items.

Wilkins' (2006) model was used as a baseline for the developing the items. Wilkins' original 55 survey items were compiled from several different measures¹. The behaviours identified in Suldo et al.'s (2009) study were used to supplement and expand upon the items used by Wilkins. Items from Wilkins' survey that were described in greater detail by Suldo et al. were replaced by the more detailed description. Nine behaviours from Suldo et al.'s study were also included to expand

¹ Measures were: NELS:88 Drop-Out Survey, The Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, Me and My Teacher Relationship Inventory, Leary's Interpersonal Adjective Checklist, The People in My Life, Student Social Support Scale, Hong Kong Classroom Environment Scale, and the BASC-2 (cited in Wilkins, 2006, p. 44)

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the list of possible teacher behaviours. Suldo et al.'s study included the 12-item teacher support subscale from the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS) developed by Malecki, Demaray, and Elliot (2000) as a measure. Six items that were not included in the behaviours identified by Suldo et al. were taken directly from the CASSS teacher support subscale. Overall, six items came from the CASSS teacher support subscale (p. 2), 35 items came from Suldo et al.'s study (p. 75), and 29 items came from Wilkins' study (Appendix M).

4.5.2 Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's alpha was calculated as a test of reliability on student and teacher versions of the survey. Table 1 displays the Cronbach's Alpha Scores for the four different categories of participants.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Scores for Participants

Participant Group	Cronbach's Alpha Score
Teachers of Gifted Secondary Students	0.98
Teachers of Secondary Students with EBD	0.94
Gifted Secondary Students	0.96
Secondary Students with EBD	0.96

The student surveys had a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.96 for each group, indicating high reliability. The teacher surveys also had high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.98 for teachers of gifted students and 0.94 for teachers of students with EBD. These figures compare favourably with those from Wilkins' (2006), Suldo et al. (2009), and Malecki and Demaray (2000), which all had reliability coefficients ranging from .83 to .93.

The items on the surveys are items that have been used in, or extrapolated from, peer reviewed studies on teacher behaviour related to relationships with students. The survey items are clearly identified teacher behaviours and are scored by the two participants (students and teachers) in the student-teacher relationship, thus ensuring face validity. As all items on both surveys are teacher behaviours, content validity was also ensured. With regards to construct validity, the teacher support subscale of the CASSS (2000) has been found to generate moderate correlations with teacher

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scales from the Social Support Appraisal Scale ($r = .55$) and the Social Support Scale for Children ($r = .48$) (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). As such the STRSSV and STRSTV qualify as valid instruments in that they measure what they purport to measure: student and teacher perceptions of the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships.

4.6 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers in order to verify and validate the findings of the surveys. The interviews centred on several questions and included probing questions in order to triangulate data from the surveys, as well as uncover new data. Survey data was analysed prior to conducting the interviews so that participants could be asked to provide reflections on findings from the survey. The triangulation of data served to ensure dependability (Merriam, 1998) and establish convergence, as the different methods agreed (Mathison, 1988). In order to gain insight into the perspective of 'expert' relationship-builders, different methods were used to identify teachers who had experienced success in developing positive relationships with their students. For gifted teachers in Western Australia, only teachers nominated by the students as having the best relationships were interviewed, while in Ontario, gifted program coordinators were selected for interviews due to their roles as classroom teachers, liaisons, and counsellors for gifted students that allowed them to establish close relationships with their pupils. Teachers working in the secondary school behaviour programs and at the senior behaviour centres in Western Australia and the teachers at the alternate programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia all worked in similar environments that were conducive to positive student-teacher relationships, as all participating programs were student-centred and relationally based, with low student to teacher ratios. Teachers of students with EBD who were interviewed were mentioned by their students in focus groups as examples of teachers with whom they had a good relationship.

All participants were informed that their responses would be kept anonymous, given a time frame for the interview, and were informed of the overall purpose and focus of the interview. The interviews ensured that information made sense to the participants and the researcher in order to uncover meaning from the participants' lives.

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Participants were asked to draw upon their personal experiences to answer questions and give specific examples of behaviours that they had witnessed in promoting positive relationships with them. The use of personal anecdotes and experiences helped to ensure that the data accurately described reality and thus increased internal validity (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). The interviews were semi-structured, using probing questions in a conversational manner to focus on, and illuminate, a predetermined subject (Patton, 2002).

Teachers were interviewed at their school for between 15 to 40 minutes at a time mutually convenient to staff, school administrators and the interviewer. Teachers at the gifted programs in Western Australia were informed that they had been identified by students as being a teacher who has positive relationships with their pupils. Participants were asked to reflect on their own behaviours and how those behaviours contributed to positive relationships with their students. Teachers were invited to describe what they did to develop good relationships with their pupils and why they felt that these activities were important. Other probing questions were asked to allow discussion and expansion upon different issues, and to help extrapolate meaning from teachers' lives and experiences.

4.7 Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted with students in order to verify and validate the findings of the surveys conducted. The focus groups consisted of four to six students from each gifted/behaviour program and were centred on several questions that included probing questions in order to triangulate data from the surveys, as well as uncover new data. Survey data was analysed prior to conducting the focus groups so that participants could be asked to provide reflections on findings from the survey. The triangulation of data ensured dependability (Merriam, 1998) and established convergence, as the different methods agreed (Mathison, 1988). All participants were informed that their responses would be kept anonymous, given a time frame for the focus group discussion, and were informed of the overall purpose of the focus group. The focus groups were composed of students of similar educational experiences (ie. members of a gifted program, or members of a behaviour program) and who share certain characteristics (eg. age, interests), as recommended by Krueger and Casey

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(2009). The focus groups enabled students to participate in open discussions with peers with whom they are familiar with, to allow for more open and honest discussion to take place, as “Focus groups work when participants feel comfortable, respected and free to give their opinion without being judged” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p.4).

Students participated in the focus group discussion for approximately 45 minutes at their school in a distraction-free setting at a time mutually convenient to students, school administrators and the researcher. Data obtained from the student surveys was used to guide questioning. Participants were asked to describe good relationships, and what teachers do to help build positive relationships. Students were also asked to reflect on their own experiences and to compare how some teachers are better at developing relationships with them as compared to others. Participants were invited to discuss the teacher behaviours that address their academic needs and personal/emotional needs, and how those behaviours contributed to positive relationships. Questions were straightforward and worded simply to ensure comprehensibility. Probing questions were asked to allow students to expand on certain topics in order to gain an understanding of the perspectives they brought from their personal experiences.

4.8 Data Collection and Analysis

4.8.1 Surveys

The student and teacher surveys were given to students and teachers to complete at school and were collected at a later date. Responses to items, as well as demographic data included in the surveys, were entered into the SPSS Statistics v20 (IBM, 2011) software program for statistical analysis.

Mean scores and standard deviations of the survey items were calculated using SPSS. High scores indicated which behaviours participants considered the most important for positive relationships. This data was used to identify the behaviours most strongly endorsed by students and teachers. The mean scores of the different items were used to compare the perspectives of students and teachers, and also to rank the items in order of importance to the development of positive relationships, according to each group.

The survey items were organised into the four categories of support identified by Tardy (1985) and House (1981). Items 1-28 reflected emotional support, items 29-50 represented instrumental support, items 51-58 were classified as informational support, and items 59-70 reflected appraisal support (Suldo et al., 2009, p. 74; Malecki & Demaray, 2000). The items taken from the teacher support subscale of the CASSS (2000) were categorised into the same support type as they were categorised in the CASSS. The items from Suldo et al.'s (2009) study were categorised according to the support type assigned by the authors. Items from Wilkins' (2006) study are classified according to the category of best fit, using Tardy (1985) and House's (1981) definitions. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to check for reliability for each support type category on both student and teacher surveys for each participant group. All support type categories for both student surveys and teacher surveys were found to have excellent reliability, with the exception of Appraisal support for teachers of students with EBD, which was found to have an acceptable level of reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). The scores are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Scores for Support Type Categories

Support Type	Teachers of Gifted Students	Teachers of Students with EBD	Gifted Students	Students with EBD
Emotional support	0.93	0.81	0.88	0.92
Instrumental support	0.96	0.95	0.89	0.88
Informational support	0.90	0.85	0.83	0.83
Appraisal support	0.85	0.74	0.85	0.82

Mean scores and demographic data were used to identify which type of support was considered most important to teachers and to students, and to analyse for differences between Western Australia and Canada, students and teachers, and gifted students and students with EBD.

Participant answers to the open ended survey question regarding additional teacher behaviours that contribute to positive student-teacher relationships were coded and categorised according to support type (emotional, instructional, informational, appraisal).

4.8.2 Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews were used as a qualitative method to gain an understanding of participants' experiences relating to student-teacher relationships. Students participated in focus group discussions and teachers were interviewed at school during the school day. Interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed to provide a record. The interview transcripts were coded and categorised according to support type (emotional, instructional, informational, appraisal). A coding system suggested by Bogden and Biklen (1998) was used to establish codes. The transcripts were read in entirety in chronological order. Upon a second reading, behaviours mentioned in the interviews and focus group discussions were written in the transcript margin before being placed within one of the support categories. Focused coding was used to subdivide the categories if necessary. The transcripts were given to colleagues in the field for verification of emerging codes, as well identification of any new codes. One colleague who had experience teaching students with EBD in Canada at alternate school assisted, and one colleague who had experience teaching students in a gifted program in Australia also volunteered to lend their expertise. Neither colleague was a participant in the study. Each colleague was given the transcripts of the interviews with participants from the subgroup within their area of expertise. They were asked to follow the coding system suggested by Bogden and Biklen (1998). Once the transcripts were coded, a telephone conversation was arranged with the researcher to compare the codes identified by each colleague. Codes that were identified by one party but not the other were discussed until a consensus was reached on whether to include the code. The codes that emerged were compared with behaviours identified in the respective surveys to triangulate data and ensure trustworthiness (Merriam, 1998) and establish convergence (Mathison, 1988). These codes were then used to establish themes for each sub-group. A complete list of possible themes was suggested by the colleague, followed by the researcher. This exercise was performed separately with each colleague, and pertained to their area of expertise. A consensus was formed as to which themes would be included and which themes would be modified, combined, or dropped. The codes were also used to compare themes that emerged in Canada and in Western Australia, themes that emerged between teachers and students, and themes that emerged between gifted students and students with EBD.

5. Results

A definition of positive student-teacher relationships was based upon the theoretical framework conceptual models for this study. Participants reinforced the conceptual model for positive student-teacher relationships (Figure 3) by contributing their perspectives on the teacher behaviours they felt were important in developing relationships between teachers and gifted secondary students/secondary students with EBD. Students emphasised that teacher behaviours that were academically supportive needed to be balanced with emotionally supportive behaviours, while teachers reiterated the view that emotionally and academically supportive behaviours were both essential to developing positive relationships. As interview and focus group transcripts were analysed, it became apparent that gifted students put more emphasis on academic support than did their teachers, with students emphasising the importance of boundaries within the emotional support category. For students with EBD, the interviews and focus groups revealed that while academic support was important for developing positive relationships, emotional support was seen as the key for developing positive relationships with these students.

With this understanding, the teacher behaviours and support types that contributed to positive student-teacher relationships will be presented in the following order:

1. Overview of the methods used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2
2. Results relevant to Research Question 1(a)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of gifted student survey items
 - b. Responses to open-ended gifted student survey question
 - c. Discussion of gifted student focus group themes with respect to teacher behaviours
 - d. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
3. Results relevant to Research Question 1(b)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of gifted teacher survey items
 - b. Responses to open-ended gifted teacher survey question
 - c. Discussion of gifted teacher interview themes with respect to teacher behaviours
 - d. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia

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- e. Analysis of differences between gifted students and their teachers
- 4. Results relevant to Research Question 2(a)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of students with EBD survey items
 - b. Responses to open-ended students with EBD survey question
 - c. Discussion of students with EBD focus group themes with respect to teacher behaviours
 - d. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
- 5. Results relevant to Research Question 2(b)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of EBD teacher survey items
 - b. Responses to open-ended EBD teacher survey question
 - c. Discussion of EBD teacher interview themes with respect to teacher behaviours
 - d. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
 - e. Analysis of differences between students with EBD and their teachers
- 6. Overview of methods used to answer Research Questions 3 and 4
- 7. Results relevant to Research Question 3(a)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of gifted student support type categories
 - b. Presentation of top 15 gifted student survey items with respect to support type
 - c. Responses to open-ended gifted student survey question with respect to support type categories
 - d. Discussion of gifted student focus group themes with respect to support type categories
 - e. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
- 8. Results relevant to Research Question 3(b)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of gifted teacher support type categories
 - b. Presentation of top 15 gifted teacher survey items with respect to support type

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- c. Responses to open-ended gifted teacher survey question with respect to support type categories
 - d. Discussion of gifted teacher interview themes with respect to support type categories
 - e. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
 - f. Analysis of differences between gifted students and their teachers
- 9. Results relevant to Research Question 4(a)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of students with EBD support type categories
 - b. Presentation of top 15 students with EBD survey items with respect to support type
 - c. Responses to open-ended students with EBD survey question with respect to support type categories
 - d. Discussion of students with EBD focus group themes with respect to support type categories
 - e. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
- 10. Results relevant to Research Question 4(b)
 - a. Presentation of mean scores of EBD teacher support type categories
 - b. Presentation of top 15 EBD teacher survey items with respect to support type
 - c. Responses to open-ended EBD teacher survey question with respect to support type categories
 - d. Discussion of EBD teacher interview themes with respect to support type categories
 - e. Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia
 - f. Analysis of differences between students with EBD and their teachers
- 11. Results relevant to comparisons between exceptionality groups
 - a. Analysis of differences between gifted students and students with EBD
 - b. Analysis of differences between teachers of gifted students and teachers of students with EBD

12. Answers to the Research Questions

- a. Answers to Research Question 1(a)
- b. Answers to Research Question 1(b)
- c. Answers to Research Question 2(a)
- d. Answers to Research Question 2(b)
- e. Answers to Research Question 3(a)
- f. Answers to Research Question 3(b)
- g. Answers to Research Question 4(a)
- h. Answers to Research Question 4(b)

5.1 Overview of Methods Used to Answer Research Questions 1 and 2

1. *What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students in Western Australia and Canada?*
 - a. *What are the teacher behaviours according to gifted secondary students?*
 - b. *What are the teacher behaviours according to teachers of gifted secondary students?*
2. *What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada?*
 - a. *What are the teacher behaviours according to secondary students with EBD?*
 - b. *What are the teacher behaviours according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?*

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey consisted of 70 items representing teacher behaviours. The items were identical on both student and teacher versions, with minor grammatical adjustments (ie. Student version: ‘Treat me with respect’, Teacher version: ‘Treat students with respect’). Students and teachers rated these items on a 6-point scale (very strongly agree to very strongly disagree) to indicate the extent to

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which they felt each behaviour contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Data obtained from these surveys were analysed through descriptive statistics using the SPSS v20 (IBM, 2010) software package.

After completing the closed-ended survey items, students and teachers were asked to list any teacher behaviours that they felt were important for having positive student-teacher relationships. Responses were coded and arranged by themes.

Two student focus groups consisting of six Year 10 gifted students from Western Australia, and five Year 10 gifted students from Canada were conducted. Interviews were also conducted with five teachers from Western Australia nominated by gifted students as being teachers with whom they had positive relationships with, and two gifted program coordinators from Canada. For students with EBD, four focus groups were conducted, consisting of 12 students with EBD from Western Australia, four students with EBD from British Columbia, and five students with EBD from Nova Scotia. Interviews were conducted with 4 teachers from senior behaviour centres and secondary behaviour programs in Western Australia, 2 teachers from alternate programs in British Columbia, and 3 teachers from alternate programs in Nova Scotia. The focus groups and the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Open-coding was used to identify themes that emerged from the interviews and from the focus groups.

The data were analysed for differences between participants in Western Australia and Canada using mean scores and ANOVA and MANOVA tests to check for significant differences in survey responses. The 15 behaviours with the highest mean scores were identified and placed into a group (named 'Top 15') to analyse the 20% (approximate) most important behaviours for each group of participants in each location. Open ended survey responses, focus group themes, and interview themes were also compared to analyse for differences between the two locations. These same measures were also analysed to compare the perspectives of students and their teachers. Findings from the analysis of survey data, focus groups, and interviews are discussed in the following sections.

5.2 Results Relevant to Research Question 1(a)

1. a) *What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students in Western Australia and Canada according to gifted secondary students?*

Student Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version was completed by 58 gifted students in two different Gifted and Talented programs in Western Australian schools and by 75 gifted students in 4 different gifted programs in Ontario, Canada. The survey had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .96. Mean scores and standard deviations of survey items were calculated and are presented in Table 3 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating high levels of agreement.

Table 3

Mean Scores of Gifted Student Survey Items

Item	Number of respondents	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	133	3.00	6.00	5.62	0.68
Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	133	3.00	6.00	5.55	0.74
Treat me with respect	133	4.00	6.00	5.29	0.81
Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	133	3.00	6.00	5.29	0.89
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	133	4.00	6.00	5.29	0.74
Be able to take a joke	133	2.00	6.00	5.26	0.94
Allow students to get help from other students	133	1.00	6.00	5.23	0.96
Explain things I don't understand	133	3.00	6.00	5.23	0.80
Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests	133	3.00	6.00	5.20	0.83
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead	133	3.00	6.00	5.20	0.84

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students to answers)					
Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	133	3.00	6.00	5.19	0.83
Be friendly to me	133	4.00	6.00	5.16	0.83
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	133	3.00	6.00	5.14	0.84
Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)	133	1.00	6.00	5.14	0.94
Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	132	3.00	6.00	5.12	0.86
Be willing to explain things again	132	3.00	6.00	5.08	0.91
Give me a chance to explain myself	132	4.00	6.00	5.08	0.80
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	132	1.00	6.00	5.07	1.21
Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)	133	2.00	6.00	5.06	1.02
Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	133	2.00	6.00	5.05	0.97
Be considerate	133	2.00	6.00	5.05	0.86
Tell me nicely when I make mistakes	133	2.00	6.00	5.03	0.98
Listen if I have something to say	133	1.00	6.00	5.01	0.89
Show me how to do things	132	2.00	6.00	4.98	0.93
Trust me	132	3.00	6.00	4.98	0.87
Give equal attention and praise among students	133	1.00	6.00	4.96	1.05
Help me solve problems by giving me information	133	3.00	6.00	4.95	0.93
Encourage me to do my best work	132	1.00	6.00	4.94	0.99
Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)	133	1.00	6.00	4.92	1.03
Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)	133	1.00	6.00	4.90	0.99
Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	133	1.00	6.00	4.89	1.07
Provide feedback and encouragement	133	1.00	6.00	4.89	0.93
Enforce rules fairly	132	2.00	6.00	4.89	0.84
Help me catch up on work I miss	133	2.00	6.00	4.86	1.01
Let me talk about things if I don't	132	1.00	6.00	4.83	0.97

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agree with them.					
Be patient with me	132	3.00	6.00	4.80	0.91
Take time to help me learn to do something better.	132	3.00	6.00	4.77	0.91
Be strict if necessary.	133	1.00	6.00	4.74	1.13
Respect my feelings	132	3.00	6.00	4.74	0.86
Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident	133	1.00	6.00	4.74	1.07
In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	133	3.00	6.00	4.71	0.91
Be concerned if I have not understood	133	2.00	6.00	4.68	0.97
Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)	133	1.00	6.00	4.68	1.17
Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)	133	1.00	6.00	4.66	1.12
Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)	133	1.00	6.00	4.65	1.24
Be fond of everyone	132	1.00	6.00	4.52	1.13
Encourage me to participate in activities	133	1.00	6.00	4.51	1.15
Try to ease my personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce my academic stress, help me problem solve personal situations)	132	2.00	6.00	4.49	1.14
Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions	133	1.00	6.00	4.43	1.04
Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning	133	1.00	6.00	4.42	1.07
Let me decide some things in class	131	2.00	6.00	4.41	0.89
Help me when I get in trouble by providing guidance	130	1.00	6.00	4.40	1.09
Spend time with me when I need help	131	2.00	6.00	4.39	0.92
Talk with me about my goals and interests	133	2.00	6.00	4.38	1.01
Know when I am bored	133	1.00	6.00	4.38	1.30
Make me feel important	133	2.00	6.00	4.38	1.02
Listen if I'm upset or have a problem	133	1.00	6.00	4.36	1.05
Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style	132	1.00	6.00	4.34	1.10
Be proud of me	132	1.00	6.00	4.33	1.14
Communicate my achievement to me and/or my parents (e.g. provide	132	1.00	6.00	4.32	1.13

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compliments/praise)					
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	132	1.00	6.00	4.31	1.16
Be someone I can count on when I have a problem	132	1.00	6.00	4.22	1.10
Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)	133	1.00	6.00	4.20	1.47
Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (e.g., my moods, relationships, and health)	133	1.00	6.00	4.18	0.96
Sympathize with me	132	1.00	6.00	4.11	0.97
Communicate interest in my personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know me)	132	1.00	6.00	3.99	0.92
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	133	1.00	6.00	3.87	1.16
Talk to me outside of the classroom	133	1.00	6.00	3.86	1.04
Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	133	1.00	6.00	3.83	1.18
Make sure I have what I need for school	132	1.00	6.00	3.80	1.14

Items with the highest mean scores (top 15) were balanced between personal and academic support. The top fifteen items are listed below in order of highest mean score:

1. Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests
2. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
3. Treat me with respect
4. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
5. Have a pleasant or humorous nature
6. Be able to take a joke
7. Allow students to get help from other students
8. Explain things I don't understand
9. Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests

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10. Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)
11. Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed
12. Be friendly to me
13. Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments
14. Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)
15. Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me

Students indicated that they wanted their teachers to:

- treat them with respect;
- be friendly;
- have a sense of humour;
- help them prepare for academic success by giving them appropriate time;
- allow multiple avenues for receiving help with their work; and
- ensure that they received support when they did not understand.

A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined that the top ranked behaviour (Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests) had a statistically significantly higher mean score than every other behaviour ($F = 1663.83$; $DF = 1, 131$; $P = 0.00$), with the exception of the second ranked behaviour ('Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.', $P = 1.00$). Among the top 15 behaviours, the top ranked behaviour had a statistically significantly higher score than behaviours ranked 3-15, while the second ranked behaviour had a statistically significantly higher mean score than behaviours ranked 8-15. There were no other statistically significant differences amongst the top 15 behaviours. This indicated that gifted students felt that the top ranked behaviour was clearly the most important behaviour teachers could employ to develop positive relationships with them, followed closely by the second ranked behaviour. Among the most important behaviours there were two identifiable tiers: the top two ranked behaviours comprised the top tier (significantly important behaviours), and the following 13 behaviours comprised the second tier (important behaviours). There was no statistically significant difference found between the mean scores of the behaviours ranked 3-15, indicating gifted students felt that these behaviours were important for developing relationships with them, but were relatively interchangeable.

Open-Ended Responses to Student Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, students were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar student responses were grouped together and categorised according to the behaviours being described by students. The categories were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Relating to/Understanding students

There were 20 comments about relating to students or making an effort to understand them or their perspectives. Comments included: “be able to relate to different types of students,” “a smile and a friendly greeting,” “keep in mind all students cannot perform at same level,” “be cheerful and talk to students about personal interests,” and “understand when a student is not coping.”

2. Have a supportive and engaging class

There were 17 comments about having supportive classrooms that engage students. Comments included: “have passion in teaching,” “encourage in-class debate to evolve and involve student interest,” “give homework that students enjoy,” and “do a range of activities – both group and individual.”

3. Treating students with fairness

There were 11 comments about teachers treating students with fairness. Comments included: “no ignoring specific students,” “don’t show favouritism,” “only punish the individual student for misconduct, not whole class,” and “no favouritism or ignoring certain students.”

4. Viewing issues from the student perspective

There were eight comments about teachers viewing issues from the students’ perspective. Comments included: “listen to class at certain points,” “allow students to create own versions of assigned work,” “ask for our opinion in class and schedule matters” and “teachers should listen to students’ feedback to see how well they teach.”

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5. Respecting boundaries

There were six comments about respecting boundaries when dealing with students. Comments included: “don’t get too personal with students,” “keep relationship formal- discussing plans for the weekend is crossing the line for me” and “no touching.”

6. Restraint from anger

There were six comments about teachers avoiding getting angry. Comments included: “don’t yell, or students will stop coming out of spite,” “don’t release anger on students” and “don’t get angry at students who correct you.”

7. Assign an appropriate workload

There were six comments about assigning an appropriate amount of work. Comments included: “understand that theirs isn’t the only class I have,” “don’t overwhelm students with homework,” and “don’t hound students for work.”

8. Using voice to engage

There were five comments about the way in which teachers use their voice. Comments included: “have an engaging voice,” “have an interesting voice – easier to learn and like,” and “only yell when needed.”

9. Ensuring open communication

There were four comments about teachers allowing for communication to take place. Comments included: “communication is a necessity,” “have clear expectations, especially on tests” and “give contacts to ask questions out of school.”

10. Use of humour through personal anecdotes

There were three comments about teachers using humour through personal anecdotes. Comments included: “when trying to help a student, do it in a humorous way relating problem to teacher’s experience” and “humour and personal stories.”

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11. Creating a quiet work environment

There were three comments regarding the need to have a quiet classroom environment. Comments included: “create a quiet environment” and “rearrange seating plan if noise is too much.”

12. Relating subject matter to the real world

There were two comments about relating subject matter to the real world. Comments included: “don’t give a ‘make work’ projects; give projects with real world applications” and “encourage students to take initiative by relating subject matter to real life.”

Student Focus Groups

There were two focus groups conducted with gifted secondary students. In Western Australia six Year 10 students (four female, two male) from the same Gifted and Talented class participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately one hour. In Ontario, Canada, five Year 10 students (2 female, 3 male) from the same class in the Enrichment program participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 45 minutes. A brief demographic description of the participants follows.

Table 4

Demographic Description of Gifted Student Focus Group Participants

Location	Student	Gender	Age	Cultural Background
Western Australia	Jen	Female	15	Caucasian
	Kim	Female	15	Asian-Australian
	Harry	Male	15	Indian-Australian
	Mary	Female	14	Asian-Australian
	Kylie	Female	15	Caucasian
	Connor	Male	15	Asian-Australian
Ontario	Jerry	Male	15	Asian-Canadian
	Adam	Male	15	Caucasian
	Mundeep	Female	15	Indian-Canadian
	Mona	Female	15	Caucasian
	John	Male	15	Caucasian

Students were asked to reflect on what it means to have a good relationship with their teacher, and what teacher behaviours contributed to positive relationships with students. Students were asked to identify specific teacher behaviours and explain how those behaviours contributed to positive relationships. Several themes emerged from the focus group and are discussed below.

Promote Academic Success

Students indicated that in order to have positive relationships with teachers, teachers needed to engage in behaviours that supported student academic success. Students gave examples of these behaviours, which are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Promote Academic Success

- Allow students to work at their own pace and give appropriate time for assignments
- Allow students to talk in class and help each other
- Have fun activities in class, but keep students on task
- Show passion and enthusiasm for the subject
- Allow for collaborative work
- Be willing to extend students beyond curriculum by promoting extra-curricular activities and using external resources (journals, books, websites, etc.)
- Avoid giving repetitive work
- Remind students of work that is due, but don't hound students for work
- Be available to help students catch up on work and prepare for exams
- Teach to level of students
- Be knowledgeable about the subject

Students indicated when classes are engaging and they felt that they had multiple avenues to learn, it strengthened the relationship with their teachers. In discussing one of her favourite teachers, Dr. Garnett, Jen said:

Yeah cos Dr. Garnett, he's always like coming back from his weekend or something or the next day saying 'You know I was thinking about this class' and there's always excursions or something or professionals coming to talk to us and I think that really makes the

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subject more interesting and the teacher a lot more nicer because you know that they're going that little bit extra to help the class and that.

When asked why it was important for teachers to support her academically in order to have a good relationship, Mundeep said:

Because then it shows that they care about your learning, as opposed to handing you a textbook and saying 'Here, do this'. That kind of sends the message that they don't really care and that propels you to think 'Oh, well if they don't care, then I shouldn't care either'. So if they care, then you're more compelled to care about what you're doing too. You try and show them respect in return for doing their work, you do your work.

Having a passion for teaching also helped students feel more connected with their teachers, as Kim explained:

Kim I don't think the subject matter – the subject doesn't really matter to me, it's how passionate the teacher is about teaching...the thing about the passion is that I'm interested – I want to hear more and even if I didn't like the subject, I'd listen in anyway.

Being Approachable

Students identified a number of teacher behaviours that allowed them to feel confident in approaching their teachers for help and to feel comfortable in their classroom.

Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Make Teachers Approachable

- Say "Hi" to me
- Knows my name
- Smiles
- Acts happy to see me
- Will discuss common personal interests, doesn't only talk about the subject
- Welcomes the class everyday
- Let students know you will help them and they can ask questions
- Does not yell or get angry
- Does not make fun of students for making mistakes

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These behaviours showed that students appreciated a warm, amicable demeanour in their teachers. Students indicated an appreciation for feeling welcome in class when discussing their science class with one of their favourite teachers:

- Mary I think the first thing that he said when we walked into his classroom was like ‘Hello, and welcome’ and how he says that every day-
- Jen And he says that every single day –
- Mary And ‘Good afternoon’ or ‘Good morning’, but it’s just something he does, but it just seems so warm and friendly – he’s such a good teacher.
- Researcher Okay, good. So the combination of he’s warm, he’s friendly...
- Kim He’s always happy, he’s like – he never gets angry – I don’t think I’ve ever seen him yell at anyone before.

Avoiding anger was seen by students as essential to having a good relationship. Adam stated:

...[I]f they’re writing on the board and they make a mistake, and you point it out, and they get mad at you for pointing it out, they should at least check it to see if maybe they did make a mistake because no one’s perfect or anything. Just by doing that, they make you feel inferior to them – like the almighty teacher and they cannot go wrong.

Students also felt that it was important for their teachers to avoid teasing students for asking questions or getting wrong answers in order to feel comfortable in class.

Mundeep said, “I think that they should be approachable, so you’re not scared to ask them questions and you’re not thinking they’re going to make fun of you or they’re going to say something mean.” Mona agreed, saying “Yeah, definitely the teacher should not be making fun of you because that makes me scared to ask questions.”

Being Fair and Treating Students Equally

The students also identified behaviours that made them feel that they were being treated equally and fairly. Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that promote Fairness and Equality

- Gives the same amount of attention to each student

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- Consistency in marking for all students
- Listens to everyone's questions
- Listens to differing opinions
- Gives all students equal opportunities to participate
- Same consequences for misbehaviour (no extra leeway for certain students)

Students indicated that they appreciated when teachers made it obvious that all students were treated equally. Mundeep stated that it was important for teachers to allow for all students to participate equally:

[I]f they only pick one person to answer a question, and there's other people with their hands up, but they always pick the same person - it's just kind of like, just give the other people an opportunity to show their skills and show they have these learning skills with participation and to speak a lot and convey what they're thinking.

Being consistent in the assessment of work was also seen as important for ensuring fairness, as Adam pointed out:

...[W]ith work when it's handed in late, you'll have someone who hands in their project on the day it's due, and then another student, who the teacher favours, obviously, like two weeks later, no deductions or anything and they get a higher mark than the person that handed it on time, which is exactly the same quality of work.

Listening to students and being consistent in their treatment was also mentioned as being important:

Kylie Well he always listens to everyone's questions. He gives the same amount of attention to each student.

Jen Yeah, like what Kylie says, and when students are misbehaving or something and teachers give them more leeway than others because they like them or something, then that's a bit annoying.

Acknowledging Individuality of Students and Teachers

Teacher behaviours that acknowledged students as individuals were identified by students as being important to developing positive relationships. However, students also indicated that it was important for teachers to establish their own identity to break down the student-teacher barrier. Behaviours that helped establish student and/or teacher individuality are identified below.

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Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Acknowledge Student and/or Teacher

Individual Identity

- Give same amount of attention to every student
- Allow students to work at their ability level
- Get to know student interests in the subject and encourage students based upon interests
- Ask individual students how they are going with subject matter
- Be passionate and enthusiastic about the subject (eg. change tone of voice)
- Discuss common interests with students
- Use of personal stories
- Display a sense of humour, including anecdotes

Students indicated that they appreciated their teachers taking a professional interest in them as individuals, as noted by Kim:

He's also really interested in me – like he always asks you 'How are you going' and... If you really like astronomy, he'll go find a book about astronomy and let you read it and he always does all these things for you.

Being aware of student abilities and allowing students to work at their ability level was viewed as showing understanding for the needs of individual students, as Mundeep explained:

I think giving more open ended things and being open to tweaks and kind of a different take on the assignment, I think it's better, especially for enhanced students. It goes back to you knowing that they understand you and what you want to do...

For establishing teacher identity, students gave examples of behaviours that created a sense of interest in the teacher as a person, rather than just a teacher:

Mary Our English teacher in Year 8 was – she was enthusiastic – she used tone of voice a lot and she was always really loud and like, she was a really good teacher. Whereas last year my maths teacher, she was the most boring person I've ever met in my life.

Researcher So if someone's boring – if you have a boring teacher – do you find it hard to have a decent relationship with them?

Mary Yeah, because you don't see them as a person, you see them as a machine in front of the classroom that just –

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- Kim A vacuum cleaner [laughter]
- Kylie And you can't really develop a relationship if you don't want to listen to someone, so yeah.

Students felt that the use of personal stories helped to create an identity for their teachers, which improved the relationship. Mundeep said:

I think with personal stories, again it's like kind of not seeing them as much as this all-powerful teacher, but kind of seeing it as a person too and that kind of – you know, you're a person, they're a person – so it has that kind of quality where you know more about them so you can see where they're coming from in their lives and why they might do certain things and that kind of helps you understand how to treat them better.

Having a Sense of Humour

Students indicated that behaviours that revealed a sense of humour helped them to connect with their teachers. Examples of these behaviours are listed below:

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Display a Sense of Humour

- Tells jokes
- Able to laugh at jokes
- Able to laugh at self
- Have banter in class – joking back and forth with students
- Smile
- Only use sarcasm with classes/students who understand it is sarcasm
- Don't make fun of students for asking questions or getting answers wrong

Students indicated that having a sense of humour helped increase their comfort level in the classroom and with the teacher personally, as well as being able to see their teachers as people. As Connor noted, "It's not the fact to know that you can make more jokes, it's to know that he's comfortable with you when you make jokes." Mary elaborated: "I think [a sense of humour] is really important, because being able to talk as people to your teacher, I think that helps develop a relationship definitely". Adam added "If they use humour then you know that they're actually enjoying teaching you, as opposed to just doing it because it's their job and they have to do it."

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Positive Feedback

Students indicated that positive feedback helped them to have positive relationships with their teachers. Examples of behaviours that show positive feedback are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Display Positive Feedback

- Always includes positivity in feedback, even if student did poorly
- Doesn't get angry when you make a mistake
- Doesn't yell
- Be polite when giving feedback
- Show students how to improve
- Tells class as a group you like them
- Encourage students to pursue their interests

In discussing one of her favourite teachers, Kim indicated that she appreciated hearing something positive even when she did not perform as well as she had wanted to:

Kim [H]e always says - even if your fifty percent - he'll always say that you did a good job and yeah...

Researcher So he's very positive?

Kim Yeah, he never says anything bad.

Students stressed the importance of showing them how to improve or correct their mistakes when giving feedback. Mundeep explained that doing so expressed caring on the part of her teachers:

I think it goes back to the caring. Like they care about how you're doing, as opposed to just throwing something at you and then you finish it and you get it back marked and there's nothing exchanged between the teacher and you.

Showing Respect for Students

Students indicated that being treated with respect was essential for having positive relationships with their teachers. Behaviours that displayed non-directivity were identified as being as important to showing respect for students. These behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Show Respect for Students

- Treat students the same way teachers want to be treated
- Trust students to do their work without constantly redirecting them
- Allow students to talk to each other in class and help each other
- Give open-ended assignments that allow students to decide how to express their learning
- When a student notices a teacher error, allow for discussion regarding the error
- Know and use student names

When discussing how one of his favourite teachers shows respect for his students, Harry stated:

Yeah, like he respects us. He kinda trusts us to do our work and so he's not that strict on us either. That kinda helps, like, some other teachers are really strict and you're not really – you don't really like them and it doesn't really help.

Mundeep felt that allowing students freedom to choose how to complete assignments reflected the teacher's respect for student perspectives and capabilities:

I think giving more open ended things and being open to tweaks and kind of a different take on the assignment, I think it's better, especially for enhanced students. It goes back to you knowing that they understand you and what you want to do, and it goes back to seeing they respect you and they know your opinions and ideas and they know that you'll do better if you're able to do this...

Respecting Boundaries

Students indicated that respecting boundaries was important for having positive relationships with teachers. Students referred to 'crossing the line' and 'getting too involved', but had difficulty identifying specific behaviours that would define these broad terms. The two behaviours identified are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Respect Students' Boundaries

- Do not ask too many personal questions
- Do not be 'overly nice' or try too hard
- Be willing to listen to students without prying into their personal lives

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Students indicated that it was fine for teachers to offer help and ask about their interests (eg. sports teams, what students did on weekend), but there was a line that they wanted respected.

Researcher So it's like if they can help you out, then it's okay?

Kylie Yeah, once in a while.

Researcher But if it starts happening too much...

Jen Yeah

Mary It would get a bit suspicious

Jen Yeah, like your thing about the weekend, like if they ask that on a Monday or something, that's fine, but when they keep asking you all the – like, I reckon if they kept asking you the whole entire time and kept asking you all these questions you'd get a bit creeped out.

Researcher Yeah, like 'What are you guys doing tonight?'

Jen Yeah, like that.

Assigning an appropriate workload

Students indicated that teachers should assign work that is appropriate for them, in terms of the amount given, time given to complete the work, and the difficulty of the work. Behaviours that displayed assigning appropriate workloads are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Ensure an Appropriate Workload

- Do not give too much/too little time to complete assignments
- Give class time to work on homework
- Give work according to students' abilities

When asked whether she had better relationships with teachers who gave her more time to complete assignments, Mona stated that more time wasn't always better: "Not necessarily, because sometimes I have teachers who give me like three weeks to do, like a sheet, and I'll be like 'Okay...' But sometimes it makes me think they're dumb." Mundeep reiterated the point by saying:

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I think it depends on what the work is, like how much time they give... Like last year, we had a huge assignment and we got a week and a half to do it, or something ridiculous like that, and I think she eventually took off like two parts of it, but it baffled me. Like, why would someone give so much work and then such a small amount of time to complete it? But then the same thing goes like with what Mona said with a small, little sheet and then they give a ridiculous amount of time. It just seems like you're wasting everyone's time; you're wasting an opportunity to learn if you're just spending so much time on a small thing. You're just wasting time that we could be learning new stuff.

According to students, time wasn't the only factor that affected the appropriateness of their workload. John indicated that the amount of work assigned was less important than the type of work he was given: "...one thing about enhanced students is they should not think like 'Oh they're enhanced, we should just give them so much work compared to anybody else.' They should just give us different work compared to other people."

Analysis of differences between Canada and Western Australia

Figure 5 describes the top behaviours identified by gifted students in the different locations.

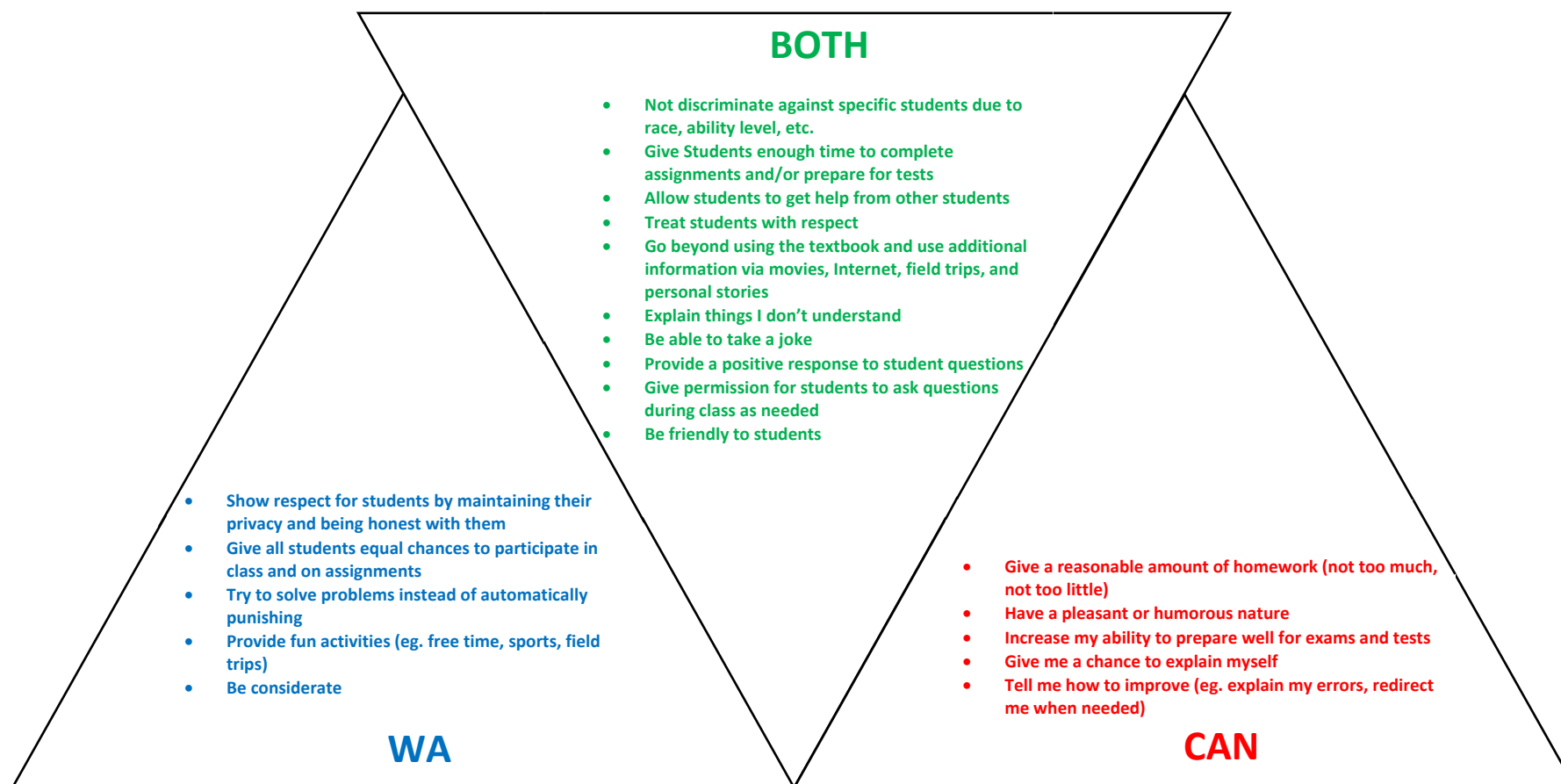


Figure 5 - Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Gifted Students in WA and CAN (Survey Items)

An examination of the highest 15 ranked behaviours for each location revealed that 10 behaviours made the top 15 for both locations, indicating that students in both locations held similar views. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between gifted students in both locations ($F = 234.48$; $DF = 41$; $P = 0.00$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. Of the 70 teacher behaviours scored by gifted students, only nine were found to have statistically significant differences (Table 5). Only one of these nine behaviours was ranked in the top 15 by students in both locations ('Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests'), but still received an overall ranking of 'strongly agree' by both groups. This indicated that gifted students in both locations were in agreement upon the most important teacher behaviours that contributed to positive relationships with their teachers.

Table 5

Teacher Behaviours Scored Significantly Different by Gifted Students in Different Locations

Behaviour	WA Gifted Student Mean	CAN Gifted Student Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	5.10	5.43	-0.32	0.01
Talk with me about my goals and interests	4.64	4.19	0.45	0.03
Be patient with me	5.11	4.56	0.55	0.00
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	4.33	3.52	0.81	0.00
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	4.64	4.05	0.58	0.01

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Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	4.58	5.44	-0.86	.000*
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	5.45	5.76	-0.31	.021*
Help me solve problems by giving me information	5.17	4.79	0.39	0.04
Help me when I get in trouble by providing guidance	4.77	4.11	0.66	0.00

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

Of the 91 comments responding to the open-ended survey question, 76 were identified in categories which contained comments from gifted students in both locations.

Canadian students made 14 comments that were organised into four categories which contained comments only from Canadian gifted students: 'Use of humour through personal anecdotes', 'Creating a quiet work environment', and 'Relating subject matter to the real world'. This implied that Canadian gifted students put greater emphasis on these four themes than their West Australian peers. One category, 'Respecting boundaries', contained five comments from West Australian students and only one comment from Canadian students, indicating that respecting student boundaries was more important to Australian students than their Canadian counterparts. While each group put slight emphasis on different teacher behaviours, gifted students in both locations found general agreement on the most important teacher behaviours.

The focus groups with gifted students revealed that overall, Canadian and West Australian gifted students held similar views regarding the teacher behaviours most important for developing positive relationships. For Canadian students, there was more emphasis on assigning an appropriate workload, and teachers allowing students to have more input in directing their learning. West Australian students put a larger emphasis on respecting students' boundaries by not intruding into their personal lives. Despite these differences, both groups discussed similar themes as important, however, the groups in the different locations discussed their more emphasised themes at greater length and in greater detail. The differences between the two groups

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were negligible, indicating that the gifted students in both locations agreed upon which behaviours were most important in developing positive relationships with their teachers.

5.3 Results Relevant to Research Question 1(b)

1. *b) What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students in Western Australia and Canada according to teachers of gifted secondary students?*

Teacher Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version was completed by 49 teachers working in the Gifted and Talented programs at two different secondary schools in Western Australia, and in the Enrichment programs at four different secondary schools in Ontario, Canada. The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .98. Mean scores and standard deviations of survey items were calculated and are presented in Table 6 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating high agreement.

Table 6

Mean Scores of Teachers of Gifted Students Survey Items

Item	Number of respondents	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	49	4.00	6.00	5.73	0.53
Treat students with respect	49	4.00	6.00	5.73	0.49
Be patient with them	49	5.00	6.00	5.63	0.49
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	49	4.00	6.00	5.59	0.61
Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	49	4.00	6.00	5.59	0.64
Encourage them to do their best work	49	4.00	6.00	5.59	0.64

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Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	49	4.00	6.00	5.55	0.61
Listen if they have something to say	49	4.00	6.00	5.51	0.54
Provide feedback and encouragement	48	4.00	6.00	5.50	0.58
Be willing to explain things again	49	4.00	6.00	5.49	0.68
Be considerate	49	4.00	6.00	5.49	0.62
Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them	49	3.00	6.00	5.47	0.74
Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)	49	4.00	6.00	5.43	0.68
Respect students' feelings	49	4.00	6.00	5.39	0.67
Explain things students don't understand	49	4.00	6.00	5.39	0.70
Be proud of students	48	3.00	6.00	5.35	0.79
Be strict if necessary	49	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.72
Listen if they are upset or have a problem	49	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.63
Be concerned if students have not understood	49	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.69
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	49	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.72
Encourage them to participate in activities	49	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.69
Tell students how to improve (e.g. explain their errors, redirect them when needed)	49	4.00	6.00	5.33	0.63
Talk with them about their goals and interests	49	4.00	6.00	5.31	0.65
Be able to take a joke	48	4.00	6.00	5.29	0.77
Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	49	4.00	6.00	5.29	0.76
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)	49	4.00	6.00	5.29	0.74
Allow students to get help from other students	49	4.00	6.00	5.27	0.70
Make them feel important	48	3.00	6.00	5.25	0.79
Give students a chance to explain themselves	49	4.00	6.00	5.22	0.62

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Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	49	4.00	6.00	5.22	0.69
Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)	49	3.00	6.00	5.22	0.85
Increase students' ability to prepare well for exams and tests	49	4.00	6.00	5.22	0.65
Enforce rules fairly	49	4.00	6.00	5.22	0.74
Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)	49	4.00	6.00	5.22	0.80
Show students how to do things	49	4.00	6.00	5.20	0.71
In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	49	4.00	6.00	5.18	0.63
Be friendly to them	49	4.00	6.00	5.18	0.75
Help students solve problems by giving them information	49	3.00	6.00	5.18	0.78
Know when students are bored	48	4.00	6.00	5.15	0.80
Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)	49	3.00	6.00	5.14	0.82
Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	48	4.00	6.00	5.13	0.76
Talk to them outside of the classroom	49	3.00	6.00	5.12	0.83
Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions	49	4.00	6.00	5.12	0.73
Spend time with students when they need help	49	3.00	6.00	5.12	0.75
Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)	49	4.00	6.00	5.08	0.84
Help students when they get in trouble by providing guidance	47	4.00	6.00	5.06	0.84
Be someone students can count on when they have a problem	48	3.00	6.00	5.04	0.92
Take time to help students learn to do something better.	49	4.00	6.00	5.04	0.79
Try to ease students' personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce their academic stress, help them problem solve personal situations)	48	3.00	6.00	5.02	0.81
Tell them nicely when they make mistakes	49	4.00	6.00	5.00	0.71

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Sympathize with them	49	3.00	6.00	5.00	0.79
Give equal attention and praise among students	49	3.00	6.00	5.00	0.94
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	49	3.00	6.00	4.98	0.80
Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)	49	3.00	6.00	4.98	0.83
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	49	3.00	6.00	4.96	0.91
Let students talk about things if they don't agree with me	49	4.00	6.00	4.94	0.88
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	49	3.00	6.00	4.92	0.89
Trust them	49	4.00	6.00	4.88	0.81
Help students catch up on work they miss	49	4.00	6.00	4.86	0.74
Let students decide some things in class	48	3.00	6.00	4.85	0.82
Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning	48	3.00	6.00	4.83	0.83
Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style	49	3.00	6.00	4.57	0.94
Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	48	2.00	6.00	4.54	0.97
Be fond of all students	49	2.00	6.00	4.53	1.04
Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)	49	3.00	6.00	4.41	0.89
Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	47	3.00	6.00	4.40	0.90
Make sure students have what they need for school	45	1.00	6.00	4.40	1.07
Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident	44	1.00	6.00	4.14	1.25
Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)	49	1.00	6.00	3.76	1.22

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Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)	48	1.00	6.00	3.38	1.42
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Items with the highest mean scores (top 15) were predominantly focused on personal support, and are listed below:

1. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
2. Treat students with respect
3. Be patient with them
4. Have a pleasant or humorous nature
5. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
6. Encourage them to do their best work
7. Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed
8. Listen if they have something to say
9. Provide feedback and encouragement
10. Be willing to explain things again
11. Be considerate
12. Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them
13. Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)
14. Respect students' feelings
15. Explain things students don't understand

Teachers indicated that they should:

- treat students respectfully;
- be patient and willing to listen to students;
- be willing to answer students' questions; and
- give students feedback and encouragement.

A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined that the only statistically significant difference within the top 15 behaviours occurred between the top two ranked behaviours (T-1. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.; T-1. Treat students with respect) and the 14th

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(T) ranked behaviour, “Respect students’ feelings” ($F = 9786.89$; $DF = 1, 47$; $P = 0.02$ and $P = 0.04$, respectively). This indicated that there were no identifiable tiers within the top 15 that might identify behaviours as being seen as significantly more important compared to other behaviours, and suggested that the top 15 behaviours identified by teachers could all be categorized as important (all mean scores were above 5.0, average ranking ‘strongly agree’), but there were no behaviours that stood out as being extraordinarily more important than others.

Open-Ended Responses to Teacher Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, teachers were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar teacher responses were grouped together and categorised according to the behaviours being described by teachers. The categories were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Be flexible in curriculum and assignments to meet the needs and interests of individual students

There were 14 comments about challenging students according to their ability. Comments included: “differentiate the curriculum to the needs of each student,” “provide work according to ability and then stretch their capabilities,” “allow choice for assignments,” “open ended, challenging questions and trying to solve problems in their own way,” “be a facilitator so students may extend themselves” and “let students use talents to make their own discoveries.”

2. Be Professional

There were 10 comments about maintaining a professional approach with students. Comments included: “Show enthusiasm/passion for what you teach,” “be an expert in your subject area,” “be honest, you are not their buddy” and “provide expert/professional learning component (artist in residency) or workshops/talks/presentation.”

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3. Have a Positive Demeanour/Sense of Humour

There were nine comments indicating teachers should have a positive demeanour and/or sense of humour. Comments included: “tolerance towards ‘teenage behaviours’,” “laugh at yourself with them,” and “sense of humour is important.”

4. Be Approachable

There were seven comments about teachers making themselves approachable to students. Comments included: “have an open door policy,” “make yourself available for students to ask questions,” “avoid embarrassing students” and “being friendly and welcoming is essential.”

5. Be consistent

There were six comments indicating teachers should be consistent when dealing with students. Comments included: “provide structured, predictable environment so students feel safe - physical and psychological,” “real consequences for actions” and “set and maintain consistent boundaries.”

6. Have an Individual Relationship with Students

There were five comments about having a personal relationship with students, where both teacher and student individuality is acknowledged. Comments included: “let them see you as a person,” “listen to the interests and needs of the student” and “concern that extends beyond the classroom.”

7. Respect and Trust Students

There were three comments with regards to respecting and trusting students. Comments included “work at gaining their respect and trust slowly, do not assume it will be forthcoming automatically,” “be prepared to trust students to the point where the teacher may have to intervene” and “be honest with them.”

8. Involve Parents

There were two comments indicating parental involvement is important in developing positive relationships with students. Comments included: “relationship with parents is essential” and “encourage parents to come to interview evenings.”

Teacher Interviews

Five teachers working in gifted programs at two Western Australian secondary schools, and two gifted program coordinators/classroom teachers from Ontario participated in individual interviews which lasted between 15 and 40 minutes. All teachers from Western Australia were nominated by multiple students as teachers with whom students had a positive relationship, while the gifted program coordinators from Ontario interacted with gifted students in many roles beyond classroom teaching, which allowed them to develop strong, positive relationships with their students. As a result, all teachers interviewed had been successful in developing positive relationships with gifted students. A brief demographic description of the participants follows.

Table 7

Demographic Description of Teachers of Gifted Students Interview Participants

Location	Teacher	Gender	Age Range	Years Experience Range	Main Subject Area Taught
WA	Ms. Campbell	Female	26-35	1-5	English
	Mrs. Joncas	Female	36-45	16-20	English
	Mr. Armstrong	Male	≥ 55	31 or more	LOTE
	Dr. Garnett	Male	≥ 55	31 or more	Science
	Ms. Clack	Female	26-35	10-15	English
ON	Ms. Sterling	Female	46-55	21-30	Maths
	Mrs. Perry	Female	46-55	21-30	LOTE

Teachers were asked to reflect on what it means to have a good relationship with their students, and what behaviours they employed that contributed to positive relationships with students. Teachers were asked to identify their own specific behaviours and explain how those behaviours contributed to positive relationships. Several themes emerged from the interviews and will be discussed below.

Being Approachable

Teachers identified several behaviours that allowed them to appear approachable to students. Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

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Examples of Behaviours that Help Teachers Appear Approachable

- Listen to what students have to say
- Greet students at the door
- Smile
- Leave office/classroom door open
- Say hi to students outside of class (ie. at recess, lunch, in the hall, when on duty)
- Be polite to students (eg. 'Please, have a seat')
- Verbally state to come for extra help after class
- Have a safe classroom environment (eg. no putdowns)
- Use proximity, sit at eye level with students (ie. do not stand over them)
- Allow for students to contact you via email when you are not physically available
- Make eye contact with students to show interest in what they are saying
- Do not allow distractions (ie. answer phone, email) while talking to students
- Get to know students that are not currently in your class
- Tell students you are on their side/want them to be successful
- Discuss common interests
- Encourage asking questions

Teachers defined being approachable as being warm, welcoming, and polite with students. Teachers also emphasised letting students know they could come for extra help when needed and encouraging questions. Dr. Garnett, a science teacher who received 27 out of a possible 32 nominations from students as a teacher with whom they had a positive relationship with, stressed that being approachable helped to break down barriers to developing relationships:

I establish productive relationships with students through mutual interests – through sport, whether it's soccer or squash, or any sport – I find out what students play and I ask them about the sport that they play...or in fact anything they're interested in, I will be interested in too, and I find that they then begin to realise there's no teacher – or there isn't much of a student-teacher barrier...to the extent now they see me more as a friend...

The importance of ensuring students that teachers are on their side to break down barriers was echoed by Mr. Armstrong, a language teacher:

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I often say to kids ‘We are here, we’re a team for the year. I’m the teacher, you are the students. I can’t work without your cooperation and vice versa.’ And try to sell the whole classroom discipline and structure as a team thing. I must say that...works quite well. That kids have some sort of – they feel that ‘Yeah, he’s not just the teacher, he’s actually one of us, in the same room’ and in the end that’s what you have to do...

Mrs. Perry stated that it was important to appear inviting:

I talk to them in the halls, I’m always smiling when I see them, I say ‘Good morning’, and afternoon, I stop and say ‘Hey, I just got some information about something, why don’t you come and see me?’ So it’s always an invitational approach.

Support Students in Academic Extension

Teachers indicated that they did not treat gifted students particularly differently when it came to personal interactions, but that gifted students appreciated academic extension and feedback at a higher level than mainstream students. Examples of behaviours that help support students in academic extension are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Support Students in Academic Extension

- Do not talk too much
- Allow for interaction with peers
- Do not hassle students about completing their work
- Incorporate student interests into material being taught
- Extension beyond curriculum (eg. excursions to universities, guest speakers, discuss real-life issues not included in curriculum)
- Increase pace and depth of learning
- Allow students freedom to decide how to complete assignments and proceed with learning
- Ensure students are not penalized (ie. marked harder) when extending beyond the curriculum
- Be flexible in deadlines according to the needs of individual students
- Give prompt feedback
- Give specific feedback
- Be confident and well versed in subject matter

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- Be passionate about subject matter
- Share own learning with students

Teachers indicated that due to their high ability, gifted students appreciate a class that incorporates their interests and goes beyond the text. Dr. Garnett stated:

So the students are treated in the same way as any other class but because of the obvious high ability of the students, the interest, we go well beyond the syllabus...I find that those students are, for Year 10, incredibly aware on a global basis or a universal basis - exploring these issues is something that they really appreciate and that's another big dimension of education.

Mrs. Perry agreed, explaining that academic extension was essential for working with gifted students:

In a classroom situation when you're teaching gifted students, you have to increase the pace of the learning, the breadth and the depth. You have to because they need that. It's not a nicety; it's required... [Y]ou can spend half, or less than half the time doing it with the gifted students because they're processing speed is faster and because they want to get on with doing something meaningful.

Teachers also described how gifted students preferred to be left alone to complete their work and interact with their peers once they receive the information they need. Teachers mentioned trying not to talk too much and refraining from hassling students about their work as important. Ms. Clack, an English teacher, indicated that firm structure is not as essential with gifted students as it is with mainstream classes, saying "These guys like to be left alone, to get on with it."

Teachers also described how it was important for teachers to allow students to have some control over their learning. Mrs. Perry, an English teacher and gifted coordinator said:

Don't let the system dictate what is okay in terms of accomplishment because they can usually accomplish more than the system expects and you have to let them do that. You have to set them free to do those things. So my behaviour has to be open enough to say 'What would you like to do? How can we adjust things to meet your needs?' ...teachers need to be flexible.

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Teachers also indicated that gifted students will become disengaged if the teacher does not have a genuine interest and firm knowledge base in their subject. Mrs. Joncas, an English teacher and the Gifted and Talented Coordinator at one school, stated, “[I]f you don’t know the subject, they’re going to think you’re a fool”. This was confirmed by Dr. Garnett:

I can’t know everything, but I believe that students need – they like to feel safe, they like to feel comfortable – and the teacher you know what he or she is doing. And the students can be disenamored, disenchanted in a class where the teacher doesn’t know stuff.

Acknowledging Students as Individuals

Teachers indicated that establishing individual identity – for both the teacher and the students – was important for developing positive relationships. In regards to student individual identity, teachers identified several behaviours that showed students the teacher was taking a personal interest in them. Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Acknowledge Students’ Individual Identity

- Get to know student names as soon as possible and use them
- Discuss student interests/hobbies
- Show that teachers notice little details about students (eg. ‘New haircut?’, ‘You changed your fingernail colour’, ‘I like your new shoes’)
- Give individualised feedback
- Sit with students one-on-one
- Circulate classroom, try to make contact with as many students as possible

Teachers emphasised that being aware of students’ interests and noticing the little details about students helped the students realise that the teacher was taking an interest in them. Ms. Campbell stated:

...trying to engage with them personally in kind of a humorous way often really works well. So coming in and showing that I’m happy to be here – stuff like greeting them at the door when they come in, noticing if someone’s got new shoes or hair or something like that, you can actually comment on and see that they notice that you notice them, that sort of thing.

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Ms. Stirling described getting to know students on a personal level as soon as possible:

So, I like to get to know them, so they make a card for me on the first day; a little bit about themselves, like their experiences, and then I can use that either in lessons, or I can just talk to them. So, you know - 'How did your hockey game go?', 'Are you going to the swim meet?' – and you kind of ask them questions about that so it's outside of just being the teacher and the subject area.

Creating an Individual Identity for the Teacher

When asked whether the gender of the teacher, or the subject matter being taught made a difference in their ability to develop positive relationships with students, the participating teachers indicated that the individual personality of the teacher was more important than either gender or subject matter. Teachers identified several behaviours that contributed to creating their own identity, which they felt helped students to see them as individual people, rather than just teachers. Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Help Create Individual Teacher Identity

- Be passionate about subject
- Talk about your interests
- Use anecdotes for humour
- Be yourself (ie. do not try to be a disciplinarian if you are not comfortable doing so)
- Use anecdotes including family and pets
- Share personal pictures and anecdotes appropriate to curriculum (e.g. picture of teacher at the pyramids in Egypt in Society and Environment)
- Share your own learning
- Have a sense of humour (e.g. tell jokes, wear funny ties, have funny props to use in class)

Teachers indicated that sharing information about their experiences and lives through anecdotes and pictures allowed students to see them as individuals who have their own lives outside of school. Mr. Armstrong explained how the use of anecdotes helped to break down barriers with students:

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Often they think that teachers...always know better, and they can do things better, and they are the experts. And if you tell them that ‘When I was 13 or 14 I had to repeat Year 9 because I failed maths, English...’ and kids think ‘Oh, they’re human’ – you’ve got a human side to you...I think that does help to break down that divide between teacher and student.

Teachers indicated that a large part of creating teacher individual identity was through having a sense of humour, which will be elaborated upon in the following section.

Having a Sense of Humour

All teachers indicated that having a sense of humour was important for developing positive relationships with students. Having a sense of humour was viewed as contributing to the establishment of individual teacher identity. Teachers identified several behaviours that indicated a sense of humour, and are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Indicate a Sense of Humour

- Use of funny anecdotes
- Telling jokes
- Self-deprecation (willingness to poke fun at self)
- Smile
- Able to laugh at student jokes
- Able to laugh at self
- Use of puns and wordplay as clues
- Use of funny props in class
- Put cartoons related to subject matter on tests/assignments
- Wearing humorous ties
- Have a banter with students (ie. have a go, but be sensitive not to put down or embarrass students)
- Allow students to discuss things they find funny (as long as it is appropriate)

Teachers indicated that having a sense of humour helped students to have fun in class and feel more relaxed in class, which contributed to breaking down barriers to relationships. When discussing the use of puns in class, Dr. Garnett stated:

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[T]he students love it, and the wordplay they remember, and the puns that are used are often used in terms of clues... So yeah, humour to me is absolutely essential, because again it's a barrier breaker. It introduces fun, so that students find that the time in the lesson, it goes very, very quickly because they're having fun...

Teachers also indicated that being able to poke fun at themselves or laugh at themselves was important, as long as it was appropriate, because it showed that students felt comfortable with them. Mrs. Joncas elaborated:

I don't mock myself too much, they'll do enough of it for me. If I make a mistake I'll go 'Oh Jeez', and I will – I'll make fun of myself. I'm the fall girl, and I don't mind if they mock me, it's the same thing because whatever they're doing, it means I'm getting through to them.

Further, teachers described how they needed to be patient and not take exception to the unique sense of humour displayed by gifted students, but rather go along with it. Mrs. Perry explained:

Most of them have a dry sense of humour and a very quick wit, so if you have one, they respect that. And of course, humour is one of the highest forms of intelligence, so a lot of them are very wickedly humorous... And a lot of staff won't necessarily get their humour because it's a little bit twisted... So teaching staff that they're trying to be funny, they're not trying to be difficult, is important.

Giving Students Feedback

Teachers indicated that giving students prompt, honest, individual feedback was essential to developing positive relationships with gifted students. They emphasised feedback that was balanced between focusing on the strengths of the student, as well as showing students how to improve. Several behaviours were described and are listed below.

Behaviours for Giving Students Feedback

- Acknowledge effort
- Acknowledge achievement
- Give honest feedback
- Give prompt feedback
- Give specific feedback
- Give ongoing feedback

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- Include positivity, but also tell students how to improve
- Elicit student solutions to problems
- Let students know it is okay to struggle
- Be gentle/kind in correcting mistakes (do it in a nice way)
- Speak privately/quietly with students when re-directing
- Use journals to allow private communication (including teacher and student feedback) on individual basis
- Do not admonish students

Teachers indicated that gifted students were particularly keen to receive feedback, even anxious about it, and that feedback needed to be given frequently and in a sensitive way. When asked how important feedback was, Ms. Clack explained: “If I don’t give it, they actively seek it, so I can’t not give it to them.”

Ms. Campbell supported the idea that gifted students in particular need consistent, on-going feedback:

[I]f I haven’t done something that I said I was going to do, whether it be marking things on time, that sort of thing, they know that I haven’t done it and they’ll pick up on it and they feel a lot more sort of indignant about those sort of things than, say some of my other classes... Whereas in other classes, that sort of feeling of them being tense about getting the work back isn’t really there.

Dr. Garnett also emphasised the importance of continuous feedback, but also stressed that it should be geared to individual students and should always include positivity:

Researcher And is it important for you to give them feedback, in order for the relationship to –

Garnett It certainly is. And all the time... The feedback that I give individual students is for that individual student, not for everybody else.

Researcher And do you, in general, try to always include a little bit of positivity?

Garnett Always. I don’t think I’ve ever admonished a student, ever. Even in the east end of London, where I started teaching and where it wasn’t so positive. ‘Now look, we’ve had this relationship, we seem to be going – Why’d you do that? What happened?’ rather than say anything much more overtly aggressive.

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Mrs. Perry explained that positivity should be included because gifted students often had high anxiety about making mistakes, but feedback needed honest and had to help students improve to be worthwhile:

...you don't generally go 'That's not good'. You say 'That could have been better, let's see how we can do that.' So yeah, there's always a little bit of positive, but you're not going to sugar coat it either by saying something was great when it wasn't...[It's] Pleasant, proactive, aiming for improvement...So it's always about moving forward and turning them forward because they tend to get stuck in things that are negative. Even if it's one tiny little speck of black on a white canvas, that speck of black is all they see.

Respecting Boundaries

Teachers indicated that respecting student boundaries was important in developing positive relationships with students. Examples of behaviours that respect student boundaries are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Respect Student Boundaries

- Do not ask about boyfriend/girlfriend relationships
- Do not ask about friendship breakups
- Let them reveal private information when they are comfortable (Be there to listen, but do not pry)
- Maintain student privacy
- Let students know that what you are doing is with their best interest at heart
- Be aware of which students can take jokes/sarcasm
- Be sensitive to cultural/religious issues

Teachers emphasised the importance of not asking about or getting involved in the personal relationships of their students, but that they should be there to listen if students offer personal information. Ms. Campbell emphasised the importance of being willing to receive information if offered, but not prying by asking too many questions:

Researcher What do you feel is 'too involved'?

Campbell Asking about things like breakups, and when friendship groups break up, that sort of stuff, I avoid that because quite often there will be tears, people wanting to go sit outside and have chats, and I'll allow that to a point, but I don't necessarily think it's my job to say 'Oh,

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what's going on?', 'What's happening at home?', 'Have you been dumped? Are you having a fight with your girlfriend?' or whatever it is, I think that's probably going too far..I really just want to know about their interests and their hobbies and that sort of thing.

Teachers also explained that it was important for students to understand that they are teachers, not friends, but that they still want the best for the students. Despite this boundary, teachers stated that they could still be friendly with students. Mrs. Perry explained:

I think when you start teaching, you want to be friends with your students, you want them to like you and that's a normal response. When you've been teaching for a while you realise, really, it's about respecting what I say and understanding that I have their best interests at heart. But I absolutely am not their friend, and they know that. It doesn't mean I don't like them. It doesn't mean they don't like me. It just means we're not friends...

Involving Parents and Other Staff

Teachers indicated that involving parents and other staff was important for developing positive relationships with their students. Examples of behaviours that involve parents and other staff are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Involve Parents and other Staff

- Keep parents informed of their results, both positive and negative (via email, phone call, letter home)
- Talk to other staff to discuss student progress, interests
- Talk to parents to get information about students (eg. situation, interests)

Teachers indicated that communication with parents helped them understand students better and kept parents informed of how their child was progressing. Ms. Campbell gave an example:

I guess keeping in touch with their parents in a positive way, as well as when things aren't going as they should. So sending home notes to say 'You know, this hasn't been done or whatever', but also sending home letters of commendation, making sure that they – that they're encouraged or it's acknowledged when they actually are doing the right thing, whether it be academically or in their behaviour as well.

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Mrs. Perry felt that in order to properly support students, teachers should work collaboratively to meet the needs of the student:

And the relationship with the student is important, but the relationship with the entire team of people working with the student is also important...not only do you have the relationships with all of the gifted students, but you also have the relationships with the teachers who are working with those students...

Analysis of Differences between Teachers of Gifted Students in Canada and Australia

An examination of the highest 15 ranked behaviours for each location revealed that 9 behaviours made the top 15 for both locations, indicating that teachers of gifted students in both locations had high levels of agreement upon the behaviours that were most important for developing positive relationships with their students. Figure 6 describes the top behaviours identified by teachers of gifted students in the different locations.

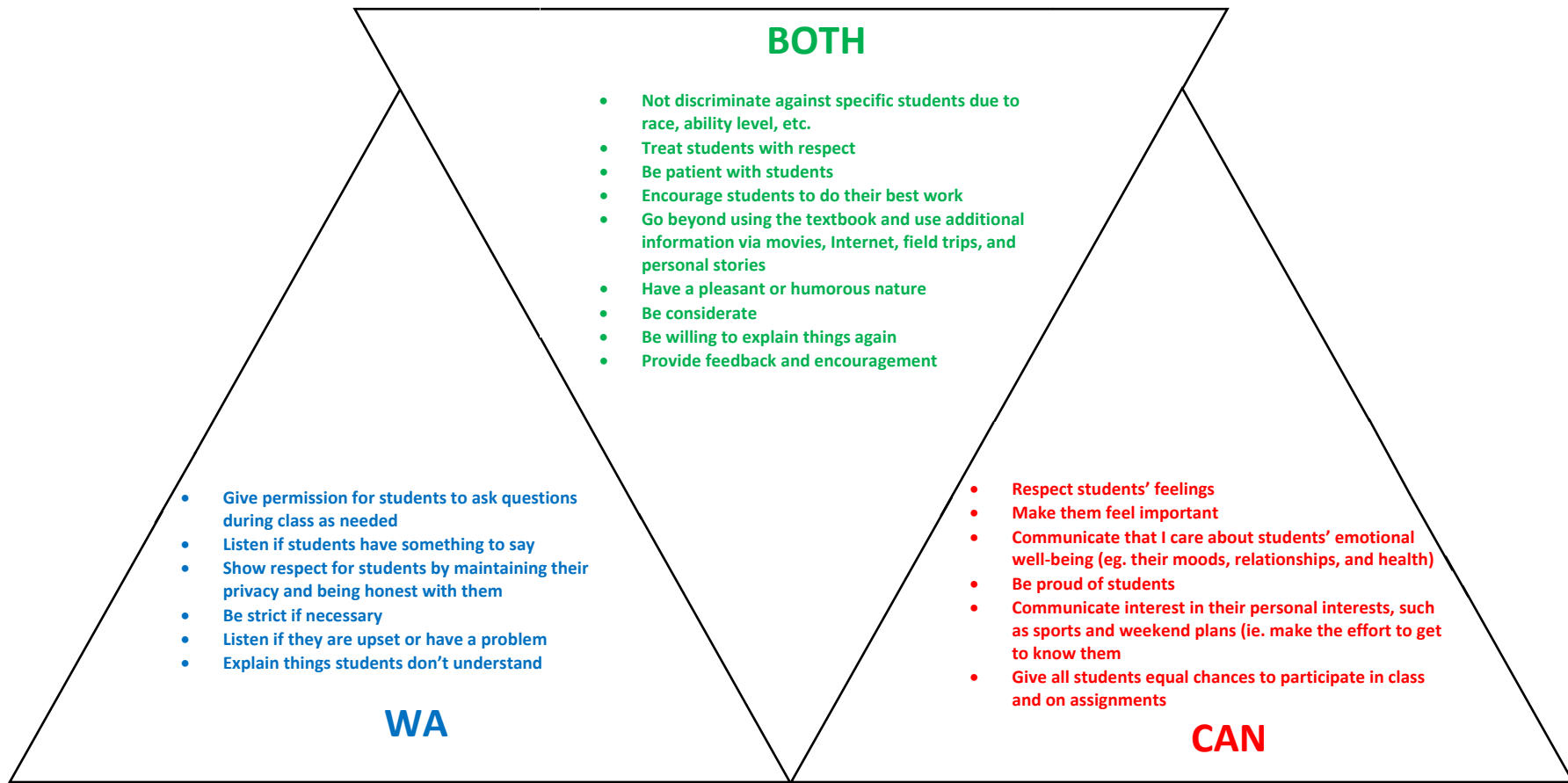


Figure 6 - Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Teachers of Gifted Students in WA and CAN (Survey Items)

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A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between teachers of gifted students in both locations ($F = 1426.27$; $DF = 34$; $P = 0.75$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. Of the 70 behaviours scored by teachers of gifted students, only three were found to have statistically significant differences between the two locations (Table 8). None of the three behaviours were ranked in the top 15 by teachers in either location, indicating that there was high agreement between teachers in both locations regarding the most important teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with students.

Table 8

Teacher Behaviours Scored Significantly Different by Teachers of Gifted Students in Different Locations

Behaviour	WA Teacher Mean	CAN Teacher Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.
Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style	4.33	5.06	-0.73	0.00
Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions	4.97	5.44	-0.47	0.03
Use creative teaching strategies (eg. group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)	5.00	5.44	-0.44	0.03

Of the 55 comments responding to the open-ended survey question, 48 were identified in categories which contained comments from teachers in both locations. West Australian teachers made 7 comments that were organised into two categories which contained comments only from West Australian teachers: 'Have a personal relationship' and 'Parental involvement'. Two other categories were similarly dominated by West Australian teachers, with only one comment in each category coming from Canadian teachers. 'Be Approachable' had six comments from teachers in WA and one from teachers in Canada, and 'Have a positive demeanour/sense of humour' had 8 comments from teachers in WA and one from teachers in Canada.

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These categories containing comments solely, or predominantly, from West Australian teachers indicates that teachers from WA put a greater emphasis on having personal relationships with their students, involving parents, being approachable, and having a positive demeanour and/or sense of humour, compared to their Canadian counterparts. The remaining four categories had relative balance between comments from teachers in WA and teachers from Canada, indicating that teachers of gifted students agreed on the importance of being flexible in curriculum and assignments to meet the needs and interest of students, being professional, being consistent, and respecting and trusting students. Analysis of the comments responding to the open-ended survey question suggested that while Canadian and West Australian teachers of gifted students generally agreed upon behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with their students, West Australian teachers felt there was a broader spectrum of these behaviours than their Canadian peers did.

The interviews with teachers of gifted students revealed that Canadian and West Australian teachers held similar views regarding the teacher behaviours most important for developing positive relationships with their students. All themes identified from teacher interviews were mentioned by, and discussed with, teachers from both locations. Teachers in both locations discussed the importance of:

- being approachable;
- supporting students in academic extension;
- acknowledging students as individuals;
- creating an individual identity for the teacher;
- having a sense of humour;
- giving students feedback;
- respecting boundaries; and
- involving parents and other staff.

Analysis of Differences between Gifted Students and their teachers

Figure 7 describes the top 15 ranked survey items according to gifted students and their teachers, and the agreement on certain behaviours by both groups. It was found that both gifted students and teachers highly regarded teacher behaviours that showed

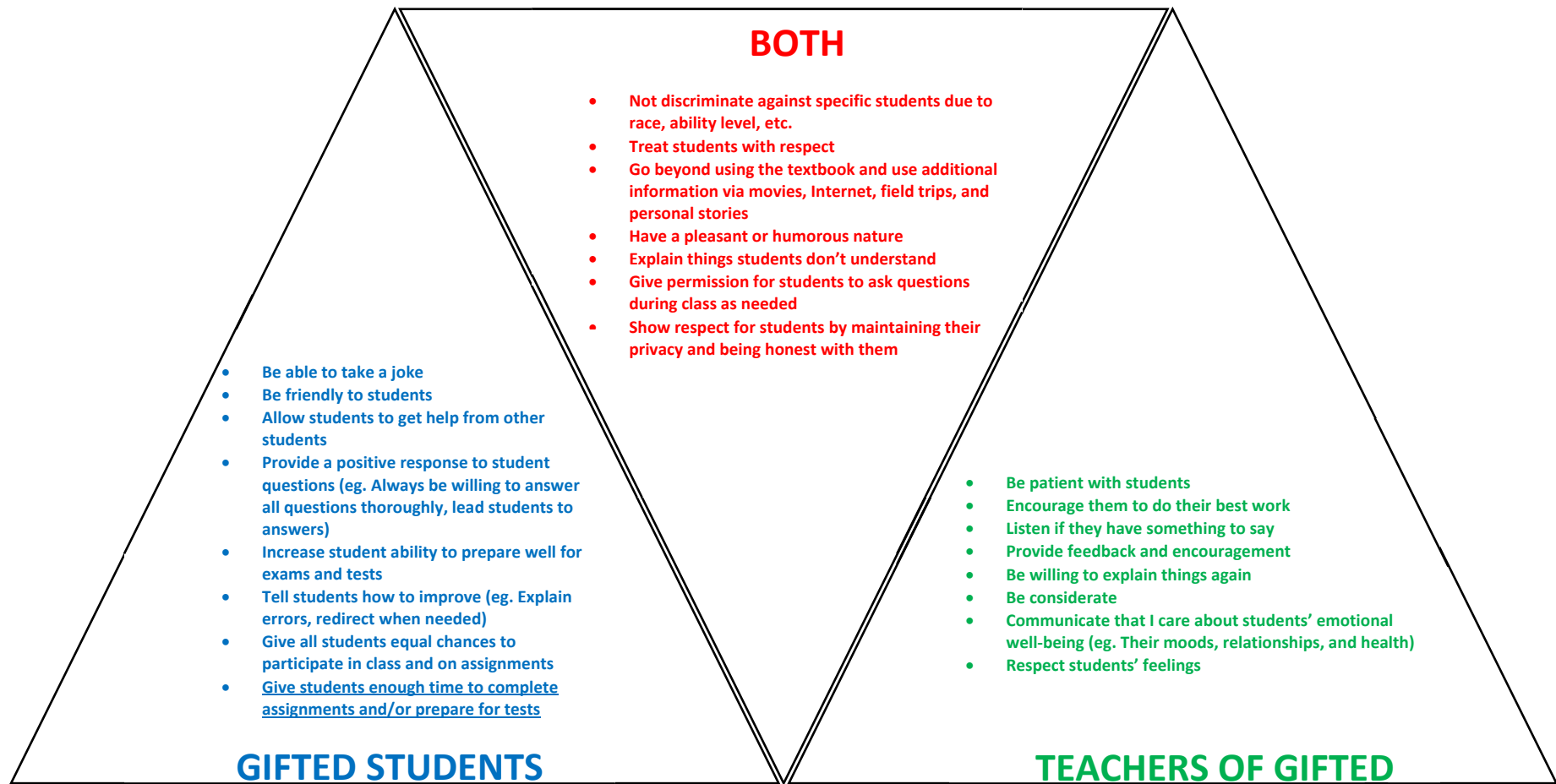


Figure 7 - *Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Gifted Students and Teachers of Gifted Students (Survey Items)*

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respect for students by treating them with fairness, allowed for positive and cordial interactions between teachers and students, supported student understanding of material, and extended students beyond the textbook. It was also found that students put a greater emphasis on teacher behaviours that supported them academically, and behaviours that contributed to teachers being seen as friendly and easy going.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between gifted students and their teachers ($F = 243.92$; $DF = 77$; $P = 0.00$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The analyses indicated that gifted students and their teachers agreed (ie. had no statistically significant difference) on behaviours that:

- helped students' understanding of material;
- extended them beyond the curriculum;
- supported student learning by allowing for flexibility in class;
- prepared students for exams and tests;
- gave positive and constructive feedback;
- treated students fairly; and
- promoted friendly, cordial interactions and a sense of humour (Appendix K).

The average mean score for these behaviours was $\bar{x} = 5.08$, giving them an average overall rank of 'strongly agree', and indicated that the behaviours agreed upon by gifted students and their teachers were viewed as important for developing positive relationships by both groups.

However, the analysis revealed that teachers had statistically significant higher scores for behaviours that involved personal support and concern for student emotional well-being (Appendix H). Behaviours showing empathy, concern for student emotion, and interaction on a personal level had the largest mean differences, indicating that teachers put a larger emphasis on emotional support than students did. Students were found to have statistically significant higher mean scores for behaviours that involved allowing students more time and opportunities to complete work, having fun activities in class, applying discipline fairly, and rewarding students

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for performance (Appendix I). This included the students' highest ranking item (Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests), which was found to have a statistically significant higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 5.62$) than every other behaviour on the student surveys, with the exception of 'Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc'. Despite being the most significantly important behaviour according to students, it was ranked 29th by teachers. This further supported the notion that students put a greater emphasis on the importance of behaviours that support them academically, compared to their teachers.

Figure 8 displays teacher behaviours that were mentioned in teacher interviews and the gifted student focus groups. Both students and teachers agreed upon specific behaviours that allowed students to feel that their academic needs would be met, behaviours that allowed students to explore beyond the curriculum, and behaviours that displayed a warm, easy going nature for teachers. Teachers emphasised the importance of behaviours that displayed their availability and approachability, allowed pleasant, polite interactions, and provided students with appropriate feedback. Students emphasised behaviours that allowed for flexibility, supported their learning, allowed them to feel comfortable in class, and respected their boundaries.

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TEACHERS OF GIFTED STUDENTS	BOTH	GIFTED STUDENTS
Show that teachers notice little details about students (eg. ‘New haircut?’, ‘You changed your fingernail colour’, ‘I like your new shoes’)	Circulate classroom, try to make contact with as many students as possible	Be available to help students catch up on work and prepare for exams
Let students reveal private information when they are comfortable (Be there to listen, but do not pry)	Discuss common personal interests, don’t always talk about subject	Same consequences for misbehaviour (no extra leeway for certain students)
Be yourself (ie. do not try to be a disciplinarian if you are not comfortable doing so)	Extend students beyond curriculum (extra-curricular, journals, books, internet, excursions, guest-speakers)	Have fun activities in class, but keep students on task
Use proximity, sit at eye level with students (ie. do not stand over them)	Let students know you will help them	Teach to level of students
Don’t allow distractions while talking individually/privately to students (ie. don’t answer phones, check email) – give them full attention (make eye contact with students to show interest in what they are saying)	Let students know they can ask questions	Give all students the opportunity to participate
Use of anecdotes or pictures (for humour, to relate to subject matter, to reveal a bit about self)	Say hi to students (at recess, lunch, on duty)	Act happy to see me
Allow students to discuss things they find funny (as long as it is appropriate)	Tell jokes	Ask individual students how they are going with subject matter
Keep parents informed of their results, both positive and negative (via email, phone call, letter home)	Smile	Treat students the same way teachers want to be treated
Talk to parents to get information about students (eg. situation, interests)	Be able to laugh at jokes	Tells class as a group you like them
Be polite to students (eg. ‘Please, have a seat’)	Be able to laugh at self	Encourage students to pursue their interests
Have a safe classroom environment (eg. no putdowns)	Have banter in class – joking back and forth with students	Do not be ‘overly nice’ or try too hard
Get to know students that are not currently in your class	Listen to everyone’s questions, ideas, opinions	Allow students to work at their own pace or give more time for assignments
Tell students you are on their side/want them to be successful	Welcome the class every day	Avoid making fun of students

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Do not talk too much	Know and use student names	Avoid giving repetitive work
Give ongoing, prompt, specific feedback	Be passionate and enthusiastic about subject	
Share own learning with students	Incorporate student interests into material being taught	
Give individualised feedback	Allow students to talk to each other in class and help each other	
Sit with students one-on-one	Trust students to do their work without constantly redirecting them	
Acknowledge effort	Be knowledgeable about the subject	
Be gentle/kind in correcting mistakes (do it in a nice way)	Always include positivity in feedback	
Be sensitive to cultural/religious issues	Don't admonish students, yell, or get angry	
Use of puns and wordplay as clues	Do not ask too many personal questions (eg. don't ask about boyfriend/girlfriend or friendship situations)	
Use of funny props in class, wear funny ties, put cartoons that relate to subject on tests/walls	Be aware of which students can take jokes/sarcasm	
Maintain student privacy	Allow student choice for how to complete assignments	
Leave classroom/office door open to show availability	Allow students to direct their learning	
Let students know it is okay to make mistakes/struggle		
Allow students to explore beyond curriculum without penalising them via their marks		
Have students journal to give/receive private feedback		

Figure 8 - Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Gifted Students and Teachers of Gifted Students(Interview/Focus Group Items)

5.4 Results Relevant to Research Question 2(a)

- 2 a) *What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada according to secondary students with EBD?*

Student Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version was completed by 40 secondary students with EBD in behaviour programs and behaviour centres in Western Australian and by 49 secondary students in alternate education programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, Canada. The survey had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .96. Mean scores and standard deviations of survey items were calculated and are presented in Table 9 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating high agreement.

Table 9

Mean Scores of Students with EBD Survey Items

Item	Number of respondents	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	89	1.00	6.00	5.40	0.95
Treat me with respect	89	4.00	6.00	5.33	0.79
Tell me nicely when I make mistakes	89	4.00	6.00	5.27	0.84
Be able to take a joke	89	3.00	6.00	5.26	0.95
Listen if I have something to say	88	3.00	6.00	5.20	0.82
Be willing to explain things again	89	3.00	6.00	5.19	0.85
Give me a chance to explain myself	89	4.00	6.00	5.19	0.78
Explain things I don't understand	89	4.00	6.00	5.18	0.81
Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	89	3.00	6.00	5.13	0.93
Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	89	3.00	6.00	5.13	0.86
Give equal attention and praise among students	89	3.00	6.00	5.13	0.92
Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	88	2.00	6.00	5.10	0.90

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Be patient with me	89	3.00	6.00	5.08	0.84
Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	89	3.00	6.00	5.06	0.83
Respect my feelings	89	3.00	6.00	5.06	0.93
Enforce rules fairly	89	2.00	6.00	5.02	1.00
Take time to help me learn to do something better.	89	3.00	6.00	5.00	0.87
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	89	1.00	6.00	5.00	0.98
In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	89	1.00	6.00	4.99	0.99
Encourage me to do my best work	89	3.00	6.00	4.99	0.86
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)	88	3.00	6.00	4.97	0.92
Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)	89	1.00	6.00	4.96	0.90
Be friendly to me	89	4.00	6.00	4.94	0.86
Trust me	89	3.00	6.00	4.94	0.88
Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests	89	3.00	6.00	4.94	0.86
Show me how to do things	89	2.00	6.00	4.94	0.84
Help me catch up on work I miss	89	3.00	6.00	4.92	0.83
Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)	89	2.00	6.00	4.91	0.97
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	89	2.00	6.00	4.91	0.86
Provide feedback and encouragement	89	2.00	6.00	4.91	0.87
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	89	3.00	6.00	4.90	0.78
Help me solve problems by giving me information	89	3.00	6.00	4.87	0.83
Let me talk about things if I don't agree with them.	89	3.00	6.00	4.87	0.86
Be proud of me	89	3.00	6.00	4.85	0.92
Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)	89	3.00	6.00	4.82	0.81
Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	89	3.00	6.00	4.82	0.87
Help me when I get in trouble by providing guidance	89	3.00	6.00	4.80	0.86
Be concerned if I have not understood	89	1.00	6.00	4.79	1.08

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Encourage me to participate in activities	89	1.00	6.00	4.76	1.06
Be considerate	89	3.00	6.00	4.76	0.83
Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident	89	1.00	6.00	4.75	1.11
Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)	89	1.00	6.00	4.66	1.03
Listen if I'm upset or have a problem	89	1.00	6.00	4.64	0.99
Allow students to get help from other students	89	1.00	6.00	4.63	1.10
Try to ease my personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce my academic stress, help me problem solve personal situations)	89	2.00	6.00	4.62	1.03
Be fond of everyone	89	2.00	6.00	4.60	0.89
Spend time with me when I need help	89	1.00	6.00	4.60	1.05
Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (e.g., my moods, relationships, and health)	89	1.00	6.00	4.58	1.02
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	89	1.00	6.00	4.58	1.11
Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)	89	1.00	6.00	4.58	1.03
Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning	89	3.00	6.00	4.57	0.90
Talk with me about my goals and interests	88	2.00	6.00	4.55	1.09
Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions	89	1.00	6.00	4.52	1.06
Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)	89	1.00	6.00	4.51	1.07
Make me feel important	89	2.00	6.00	4.51	0.95
Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)	89	2.00	6.00	4.49	0.97
Know when I am bored	89	1.00	6.00	4.37	1.38
Communicate interest in my personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to	89	2.00	6.00	4.30	0.86

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know me)					
Communicate my achievement to me and/or my parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	89	1.00	6.00	4.29	1.42
Be someone I can count on when I have a problem	88	1.00	6.00	4.27	1.26
Be strict if necessary	89	1.00	6.00	4.26	1.21
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	89	1.00	6.00	4.24	1.09
Let me decide some things in class	89	2.00	6.00	4.19	1.02
Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)	89	1.00	6.00	4.18	1.31
Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style	89	1.00	6.00	4.17	1.00
Make sure I have what I need for school	89	1.00	6.00	4.13	1.15
Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	89	1.00	6.00	4.08	1.01
Sympathize with me	89	1.00	6.00	4.01	1.16
Talk to me outside of the classroom	89	1.00	6.00	3.89	1.06
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	88	1.00	6.00	3.83	1.36

Items with the highest mean scores (top 15) centred around treating students with respect, patience, and understanding, and are listed below:

1. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
2. Treat me with respect
3. Tell me nicely when I make mistakes
4. Be able to take a joke
5. Listen if I have something to say
6. Be willing to explain things again
7. Give me a chance to explain myself
8. Explain things I don't understand
9. Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me
10. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories

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11. Give equal attention and praise among students
12. Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing
13. Be patient with me
14. Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work
15. Respect my feelings

Students indicated that they wanted their teachers to treat them respectfully and with fairness, listen to them, help them with their schoolwork, and show patience when addressing their academic and behavioural needs. A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the 15 highest ranked behaviours ($F = 7171.38$; $DF = 1, 86$; $P > 0.05$ for all cases). This indicated that students with EBD felt that the top fifteen behaviours all held a similar level of importance for developing positive relationships with teachers.

Open-Ended Responses to Student Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, students were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar student responses were grouped together and categorised according to the behaviours being described by students. The categories were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Academic support according to individual needs

There were 15 comments about supporting students academically according to their individual needs. Comments included: “Be willing to help,” “Help me with my work without getting annoyed with me,” “Makes hard work okay,” “Break things down, explain them properly” and “Wants me to do well.”

2. Have a sunny disposition

There were 13 comments about teachers displaying a positive disposition. Comments included: “Be fun,” “Be caring,” “Be nice,” “Be kind and patient and don’t get upset,” “Smile when you see me,” “Good sense of humour,” and “Easy going, no shouting”

3. Be understanding of students' needs

There were five comments about the importance of understanding students' needs. Comments included: "Understand when I'm having a bad day and leave me alone," "Care about how I am feeling and know that I find your subject hard," and "Knows what I like."

4. Respect students' boundaries

There were four comments about teachers respecting students' boundaries. Comments included: "Bond with students but don't be too nosey and invasive," "Stay outta my life outta school" and "I want my teacher to care but I don't want them to be my mother."

5. Be fair and consistent

There were three comments that stressed the importance of being fair and consistent. Comments included: "Bothers me when you get called out for doing nothing," "Don't favour students" and "Be the same every time I see you."

6. Don't pressure students

There were three comments about avoiding putting pressure on students. Comments included: "Don't push me to do stuff I don't want to do" and "Don't be naggy."

Student Focus Groups

There were four focus groups that were conducted with secondary students with EBD to reflect the different programs that participated in the study. In Western Australia six Year 10 students (two female, four male) from the same behaviour program within their secondary school participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 45 minutes, and another six Year 10 students (two male, four female) from the same senior behaviour centre participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately one hour. In British Columbia, Canada, four students ranging from Years 10 to 12 (2 female, 2 male) from the same alternate education program participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 30 minutes. In Nova Scotia, Canada, five students ranging from Years 10 to 11 (3 female, 2 male) from the same alternate education

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program participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 45 minutes. A brief demographic description of the participants follows.

Table 10

Demographic Description of Students with EBD Focus Group Participants

Location	Student	Gender	Age	Cultural Background
Western Australia – Behaviour Program within Secondary School	Maurice	Male	15	Caucasian
	Trina	Female	15	Caucasian
	Monica	Female	15	Caucasian
	Barney	Male	14	Caucasian
	Thomas	Male	15	Torres Strait Islander
	Mark	Male	15	Caucasian
Western Australia – Senior Behaviour Centre	Brian	Male	16	Caucasian
	Megan	Female	15	Caucasian
	Candace	Female	16	Caucasian
	Kenny	Male	16	Caucasian
	Sarah	Female	16	Indigenous (Maori)
	Stephanie	Female	16	Indigenous (Maori)
British Columbia	Dustin	Male	18	Caucasian
	Sherrie	Female	17	Aboriginal
	Marissa	Female	17	Caucasian
	Elmo	Male	15	Aboriginal
Nova Scotia	Barry	Male	17	Caucasian
	Linsy	Female	17	Caucasian
	Ben	Male	16	Aboriginal
	Cary	Female	16	Caucasian
	Sara	Female	16	Caucasian

Students were asked to reflect on what it means to have a good relationship with their teacher, and which teacher behaviours contributed to positive relationships with them. Students were asked to identify specific teacher behaviours and explain how those

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behaviours contributed to positive relationships. Several themes emerged from the focus group and will be discussed below.

Having a Warm, Friendly Disposition

The most important theme that emerged for students was their teachers demonstrating behaviours that displayed a warm, friendly disposition. Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that display a Warm, Friendly Disposition

- Smile
- Laugh
- Be polite
- Joke with students, but be aware of limits
- Don't get angry
- Don't yell
- Use teachers' first names
- Be in a good mood / be cheerful
- Be able to laugh at self / don't be easily offended
- Greet students
- Be enthusiastic about your job
- Use an upbeat, welcoming voice
- Have relaxed, inviting body language
- Be patient with students

Students expressed that when their teachers displayed behaviours that made them seem warm and friendly, it eased their anxieties and allowed for positive relationships to develop. Barry and Linsy, from Nova Scotia, explained:

Barry I like when they're in a good mood and smiling and stuff like that. Not trying to be like a hard-ass or nothing like that.

Linsy When they're smiling and stuff, I just feel like my comfort zone gets bigger. But if they're just straight up and bossy and no emotion at all, then it just makes me feel uncomfortable and I don't want to talk to them at all, so I'll probably just ignore everything that's going on.

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Students in British Columbia, agreed, and explained how one of their favourite teacher's calm demeanour and willingness to joke with them to made them feel comfortable in class:

- Sherrie He makes jokes and stuff and if you joke around with him, he doesn't get offended about anything. He's just really, like, chill.
- Elmo Easy going guy.
- Marissa Alfonso makes everybody's day better.
- Researcher Okay. And he's a friendly guy? Would you say he's friendly?
- Sherrie Oh yeah [laughs], I've never seen Alfonso mad, ever.

Students in Nova Scotia explained that using teachers' first names helped break down barriers and increased comfort levels:

- Ben Yeah, because I'm addressing you as you. You're nothing higher than me and the teachers here they do try and make it so that they're equal with us, for the most part.
- Cary I feel when you call someone like – I'm going to use the principal and Northside – Mr. Valar, and then Pam. Like, Mr Valar: there's this much space between us; there's like a mile between us but with me and Pam there's like an inch. Do you understand what I'm trying to say? Like, me and Pam, we're like friends. Mr. Valar, we're strangers, we don't know each other, we don't want to know each other. But me and Pam, you know what I mean?

Students also explained that when their teachers acted happy to see them, it increased their comfort levels and made them feel welcome. Students in Western Australia explained how their teachers did that:

- Megan Take an interest in me showing up.
- Researcher Okay, so if you're showing up and I acknowledge that, how does that make you feel?
- Megan Better, rather than just – I don't know – when I walk into the classroom every morning teachers and students, just everyone: 'Morning! How

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was your weekend?’ or ‘How was last’ - you know, whatever.

Sarah And if they say it with a big smile.

Brian Something like if they reward you for – if they make you feel like you accomplished something just for coming to school.

The teacher behaviours that demonstrated a warm, friendly disposition allowed students to feel comfortable, equal, and connected with their teachers. The students in BC summed it up best:

Elmo [I]t’s like, be a human, not a teacher.

Sherrie Be a teacher, but be cool about it.

Researcher Be a human teacher.

Elmo Yeah, like, be like a person and not just sit there and tell you what to do.

Dustin I guess take your job seriously, not yourself so much... Yeah. Be able to be like Elmo says, just be human.

Talking with and Listening to Students

Students stressed the importance of teachers talking with them for developing positive relationships. Students described conversations that were not related to school, and involved getting to know them and their interests. Examples of behaviours that involved talking with and listening to students are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that involve Talking with and Listening to Students

- Talk to students about what’s going on in their life
- Talk with students about their personal interests and common interests
- Take an interest in students as individuals
- Have casual conversations (eg. ‘How’s your day going?’, ‘How are you doing?’)
- Tell students about yourself
- Respect students’ privacy / keep their confidentiality
- Listen if a student is having a bad day
- If you notice something is wrong, pull students aside and ask if they are okay

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- Listen when students come to you with problems, but don't pry
- Touch base with individual students during class
- Don't get involved in students' personal relationships
- Get to know how individual students react to different situations
- Make eye contact when talking with students
- Say hello to students
- Be soft spoken, don't raise your voice
- Notice changes in students and ask about them (ie. new shoes, new hair colour)

Students emphasised the importance of their teachers talking with them on a personal level about subjects unrelated to school, taking a personal interest in them and getting to know them as individuals, and listening to them. Brian, from WA, described how having conversations beyond the classroom with his teachers helped him connect with them:

When I had a conversation [with my teacher], then we got on quite well. I got the feeling like they didn't understand me – like, [other teachers] didn't understand what I was talking about and that. Like they didn't give me a chance to talk to them and get to know them and that... I know you're not meant to get to know your teacher and that, but it helps you get on better in class if you know that the teacher likes you, I think.

The students in BC also stressed that they wanted to know something about their teachers' lives, and how that helped to break down the student-teacher barrier into a more human connection. When discussing one of their favourite teachers and why they were able to have a good relationship with her even when they didn't enjoy her subject, the students said:

Sherrie She's really friendly and she talks about her home life and then our home life, and then we talk – she's not always all about school.

Elmo She's not afraid to talk.

Researcher Okay. Actually, that brings up a good point: does it help you guys develop a good relationship if a teacher just sort of will talk about their life or what's going on? You know, obviously not too much information, but...

Marissa Yeah.

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- Elmo We sit here and we talk about our lives with them, and then if a teacher don't talk back – just says 'Oh yeah. Oh yeah.' and shakes their head – but, I don't know, they'll talk back.
- Researcher Is that sort of like the barrier breaking as well?
- Sherrie Yeah, it's not like it's just teacher-student, it's more like a friendly –
- Dustin Like a person to person
- Sherrie Yeah, we're actually like person to person.

Students expressed that it was important for their teachers to take a personal interest in them because it displayed caring. The students in Nova Scotia said:

- Linsy It's really important because if they don't have any personal interest in me, then I probably won't get along with them. Because if they don't really have interest then I probably wouldn't like the way they talk to me.
- Cary If they don't care about me, I'm not going to care about them. I know that sounds rude, but it's just the truth. I'm sure that if you were around someone and they didn't really care about you, you wouldn't be like 'Okay, yeah I want to be your friend when you don't care about me', so I don't care about you. But, I think it's important because if I'm going to get along with a teacher I want them to know, like what Ben said, how I'm going to react to a situation, so they know how to prevent it before I get myself before I get in trouble. And that's what the teachers here, that's what they do. They prevent you from freaking out.

Helping Students with their Work

Students put a strong emphasis on the importance of teachers helping them with their work and being patient and understanding of student progress. Examples of teacher behaviours that helped students with their work are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Help Students with their work

- Show students step-by-step how to do something
- Circulate class and ask individual students if they need help, don't wait for students to ask
- Acknowledge raised hands, don't let students struggle for too long
- Sit with students one-on-one and walk them through their work
- Don't get frustrated at a student for getting an answer wrong

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- Don't call on students to answer in front of class if their hand isn't up
- Let students know where they went wrong
- Help all students, not just a select few
- Give students a chance to try work on their own, but be ready to help if they get stuck
- Make time for extra help
- Express that you want to help

Students expressed that by helping them with their work, teachers were showing that they cared for students. Elmo, from BC, explained:

Researcher Do you guys feel like if they're helping you with your school, does that show you that –

Sherrie They care.

Elmo They care.

Researcher That shows you that they care? Okay, how so?

Elmo Because if you have a teacher that doesn't really help you, you're not going to go anywhere. But then to the teacher that will actually help you, you'll go somewhere in life. If you have a teacher that just sits there and tells you what to do and you ask for help and they don't help you, you're not going anywhere... Cos you're not going to learn.

Students also explained that it was important for their teachers to check in with them to see if they needed help, rather than just waiting for the students to ask for it. Cary explained that making an effort to ask whether the students need help expressed caring:

...I feel like when a teacher doesn't help me, I feel like they don't care if I know or not...But if I'm sitting there with my hand up for like an hour waiting for help, I'm not going to do my work, because I don't know how to do it. So I feel like the teacher doesn't care enough to come help me, so I think it's really important for a teacher to help you to have a good relationship with them. ...if they come over and ask you for help instead of expecting you to raise your hand when you need it - cos some people are uncomfortable doing that - and if they come over and ask you, then you're going to open up a little bit more to that teacher, and you're going to be like 'Oh, okay, so maybe he does care/maybe she does care.'

Students in WA agreed that it was important for the teachers to take the responsibility to check if students required help, and how that showed caring on their part:

Monica I like it when a teacher will come and ask you if you're stuck or 'Do you need to go over it?' or does – then they can explain it better.

Researcher So does that help you to have a better relationship with that teacher?

Monica Yeah, because then you've – some part that they actually might care, in some ways, of your education and stuff.

There was general agreement that students appreciated when teachers would give them one-on-one attention and be patient with them until they understood. Megan, in WA, discussed one of her favourite teachers, and how she helped with her school work:

Kris is a really good teacher. She'll sit with you until you understand it. If you don't understand it, she'll make you understand it, but she'll make sure by the end of that lesson, she'll make sure that you know what you're doing and it's easy for you. And she's always offering help and she'll explain it until you understand. But nicely, calmly, she's not – never judges you...

Showing Respect for Students

Students indicated that being treated with respect was essential for having positive relationships with their teachers. Behaviours that gave students space when they needed it, acknowledged the individuality of students, and maintained student privacy were identified as important for showing respect. These behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Show Respect for students

- Treat students the way teachers want to be treated
- Take time to get to know students
- If a student is having a bad day, give them space
- Don't invade students' personal space
- Avoid 'talking down' to students; talk to them as equals
- Don't pry into students' lives
- Don't make fun of students

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- Keep students' results private
- Treat students as individuals
- Avoid yelling
- Don't judge students based on appearance

Students indicated that respecting their boundaries was an important part of treating them with respect. Students in BC explained that giving them space when they were upset demonstrate respect for their feelings:

Elmo ...[L]ike you're having a bad day and you tell that teacher –

Sherrie And they just keep nagging.

Elmo And they keep doing the same thing you just told them not to. That's something you don't do. Like if someone's having a bad day and the teacher keeps doing the same thing you tell them not to, like follow you around, keeps asking you what's wrong when they already know.

Researcher So you want them to, sort of, respect your space?

Elmo Yeah, the bubble.

Students explained that taking a personal interest in them was important because it made them feel valued. However, they also wanted their teachers to respect their boundaries and not pry into their personal lives. Students explained that learning about their interests, rather than the details of their personal lives, displayed respect for them as individuals, as well as respect for their boundaries. Brian, in WA explained:

I've had teachers that like, cos they know I'm Scottish and they know I like football and that, they go home on the weekend and they type in some[thing] on the internet and they come back and they try and have a conversation with me about something that I'm interested in. That makes me quite – makes me feel quite good. Makes me feel like that they're interested in getting to know me.

Encourage students

Students indicated that they wanted their teachers to encourage them with positive feedback that was honest and helped them to improve. They explained the importance

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of feeling that their teachers believed in them and wanted them to succeed. Examples of behaviours that encouraged students are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Encourage Students

- Be happy when students do well
- Tell students when they have done well
- Be nice when correcting/redirecting students
- Give feedback privately
- Tell students you want them to do well
- Tell students you believe they are capable
- Be interested in students' progress (ask how they are going)
- Give honest, constructive feedback that tells them how to improve
- Don't be upset or angry if students don't complete work or don't do well

These behaviours showed that students appreciated feeling like teachers wanted them to do well and were invested in their success. Sherrie described how when her teacher was happy that she did well, she felt motivated to continue doing well:

Sherrie ...with Carrie whenever I get assignments done or whatever then she tells me –

Elmo 'Good job!'

Sherrie Yeah, and she's like all happy about it, then it makes me just want to keep doing more and more work, I guess.

Students also indicated that positivity was important when getting feedback from their teachers, but that they also wanted honest feedback so they could improve. However, the way the teacher gave the feedback was crucial, as students wanted their teachers to be calm, polite, and to give feedback privately to maintain their dignity. Students from Nova Scotia explained how one of their favourite teachers delivered negative feedback:

Linsy He usually pulls you out in the hall, or just one on one time. He sits down with you and eye contact and smiles.

Sara He'll be like 'Close, but not quite'.

Cary Yeah, and even if you get in trouble, he'll be like –

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Linsy Nice words.

Cary ‘Can you please not do that in my classroom’ instead of be like ‘Oh my God, get out!’ You know what I mean? He’s nice.

Researcher So as long as there’s something nice about it, even if they’re telling you that you did something wrong – but it’s just the way they do it?

Linsy Yeah.

Students also indicated that it was important for their teachers to express that they wanted the students to do well. When asked if there was anything to add that was important for developing positive relationships with teachers, Maurice said:

Researcher Is there anything else that I’ve missed here?

Maurice Hope.

Researcher Hope? What do you mean by hope?

Maurice I mean like encouragement, hope that [we] do well.

Be fair and understanding in classroom/behaviour management

Students indicated that in order to have positive relationships with them, teachers needed to be fair to students when dealing with their misbehaviours, and show understanding towards the students. Students gave examples of these behaviours, listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that show fairness and understanding in classroom/behaviour management

- Don’t be too strict, but make sure students do work
- Don’t be dictatorial
- Understand that students may need more leeway
- Avoid blaming students for things they haven’t done
- Be consistent
- Treat students equally (similar consequences for similar actions)
- Forgive students for misbehaviour (don’t hold grudges)
- Avoid giving ultimatums
- Ask students if something was wrong after absences

Students indicated that authoritarian approaches to classroom management and strict enforcement of rules were counterproductive to developing positive relationships with them. Ben described how strict teachers made him feel belittled and uncomfortable:

Yeah, if they're as stiff as a board, then I don't feel comfortable so I won't work freely, I won't feel that I don't have to do this work for this dick...when they're badasses and everything, it kind of makes you feel smaller. But when they're nice teachers and their body language and they're smiling and everything, that opens up your circle bigger.

Students explained that they weren't opposed to having rules, but that the number of rules and the way that they were enforced affected their perception of their teacher as strict. Cary explained:

My grade 9 teacher was the rudest man I have ever met in my life. He never smiled, he constantly yelled at you, his body language was stiff and stern, and like 'This is my way' blah, blah, blah. But if a teacher's easy going like Mr. Drake, my grade 10 math teacher - he was happy and he joked with you. And I'm not saying that he'd let me do whatever I wanted, but he would let me get away with a lot more, just because he knew - he knows that I get frustrated... So smiling, being happy, joking with you; I'm pretty sure you're going to like the teacher a lot more, instead of being like 'Do this or leave the classroom'.

Making class fun and not too strenuous

Students indicated that they appreciated when their teachers made class fun and weren't overly demanding when it came to assigning work. Behaviours that made class fun and not too strenuous are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Make Class Fun and not too Strenuous

- Give a generous amount of time to complete assignments (or no deadline at all)
- Don't assign homework
- Don't give too much work
- Play games in class
- Do activities in class that are fun (eg. field trips)

Students indicated that when their teachers were flexible and not too demanding in setting deadlines, it displayed understanding. Elmo and Sherrie, explained:

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- Elmo Yeah. Say you have an assignment, it's not like you have this one class to do it and get it done.
- Researcher So how does that help you guys have a better relationship with the teacher?
- Elmo You don't rush and you can actually talk to the person.
- Sherrie Yeah.
- Researcher So do you feel like - does that take your needs into consideration more if they do that?
- Sherrie Yeah.
- Researcher So then if they're taking your needs into consideration, then does that show you that they care somehow?
- Elmo That they're there; they're human. They have feelings too.

Many of the students interviewed expressed the anxiety that they experience regarding schoolwork. When their teachers gave them lenient, or non-existent, deadlines, students explained how that helped to ease their anxieties and created an appreciation for their teachers' understanding. Trina and Barney, in WA, were asked how it made them feel when their teachers gave them favourable deadlines:

- Trina It makes me feel like properly, like calm, and not stressed about, you know, I'm not going to get the homework or assignment done, so I've got time to finish it.
- Barney You would think that they're a heaps cool teacher.
- Researcher Because they've given you extra time?
- Barney Yeah. And they're, like, relaxed and not mean.

Students also expressed that they appreciated extra time for schoolwork and not having homework assigned because they would not get the support they needed to do it, which could cause anxiety. Candace, from WA, stated:

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Candace If they don't give you time, then you start to stress and then you panic and then you don't end up doing anything. Like if you're panicked, you're probably going to trip a wobbly and storm out of class...I think it's good if you have a choice of whether or not to do homework... because a lot of people find your home assignments stressful because they actually need the support of the teacher to do what they do and otherwise –

Researcher And so having the availability of the support here?

Candace Yeah, it's a lot easier to finish tasks. Especially since a lot of people have learning disabilities and things that are like, if they can't understand the task, they're not going to understand it more by just staying at home and staring at it. They actually need someone there to explain what they're doing and help them through it.

Putting Trust in Students

Students indicated that when teachers showed that they trusted the students, it helped the students to feel respected and to give trust to the teachers in return. Behaviours that displayed putting trust in students are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that put Trust in Students

- Believe that students are capable of doing their schoolwork
- Give students responsibility
- Allow students space and time if they are having an emotional episode
- Tell students about yourself

Students indicated that it was important for their teachers to trust them in order to earn their trust and respect. Students expressed that if they were having an emotional episode, teachers could show trust by giving them space and allowing them to return to regular routines when they were ready. Brian, from WA, stated:

[I]f I needed help, then I'd probably tell you before I'll go to a counsellor or something...I'd tell you to see if you can help me with anything in class, or if you can get off my back or something because there's a reason, you know what I mean? If I can trust you.

Students explained that when teachers told students about their lives, it showed that they trusted the students enough to give personal information. Students in WA explained how putting trust in students made them feel respected, and helped to earn their trust back in return:

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- Sarah If I trusted you – the only reason I would trust you is because I would know, or I'd think, that you trust me back. If you didn't, then I wouldn't trust you at all.
- Researcher But if I told you stuff about myself, Sarah, would that help you to trust me?
- Sarah Yeah, that would.
- Brian Yeah, it makes you feel good to make you feel like you've earned their trust. Like you're not going to tell some mental patient – not mental patient – you're not going to tell the worst kid in the class about your baby....
- Researcher So Brian, you're saying that you like to know stuff about me –
- Brian No, no, it's not that I want to know stuff about you –
- Researcher You like it that I'll tell you.
- Brian I like it that you respect – that I've got your respect that you can trust me. It feels good.

Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia

An examination of the highest 15 ranked behaviours for each location revealed that 9 behaviours made the top 15 for both locations. Students with EBD in both locations generally agreed upon the most important behaviours for developing positive relationships with their teachers, but West Australian students put a greater emphasis on behaviours that displayed fairness and understanding, while Canadian students put a greater emphasis on teacher behaviours that supported them academically. Figure 9 describes the top behaviours identified by gifted students in the different locations.

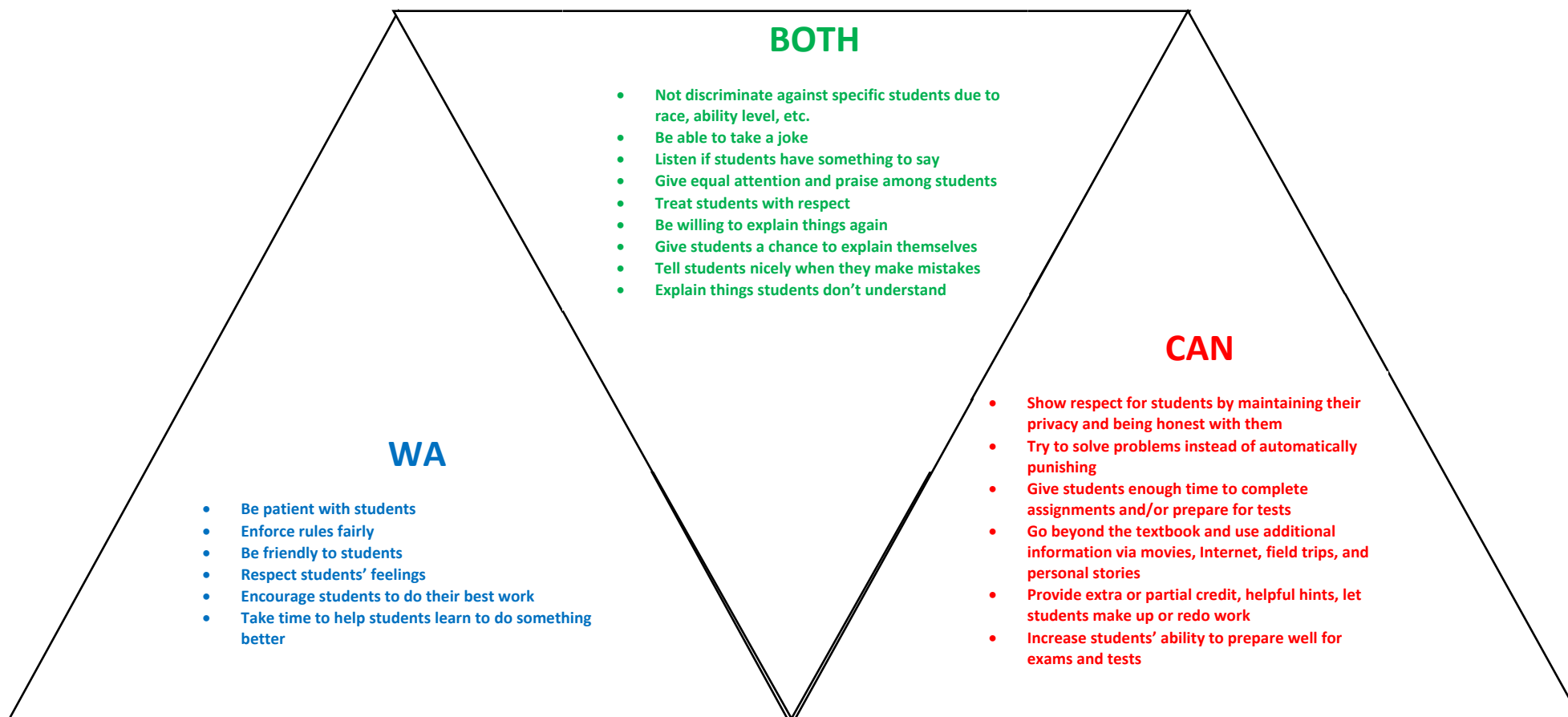


Figure 9 - Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Students with EBD in WA and CAN (Survey Items)

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A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between students with EBD in both locations ($F = 78.76$; $DF = 12$; $P = 0.00$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. Of the 70 teacher behaviours scored by students with EBD, only 12 were found to have statistically significant differences (Table 11), signifying that students in both locations generally shared similar views. Only one of these 12 behaviours was ranked in the top 15 by both locations ('Give equal attention and praise among students'). Three of the 12 behaviours were ranked in the top 15 by students from WA, but did not make the top 15 for students in Canada ('Be friendly to me', 'Be patient with me', and 'Enforce rules fairly'), indicating that students with EBD in WA put more of an emphasis upon teacher behaviours that displayed caring and fairness.

Table 11

Teacher Behaviours Scored Significantly Different by Students with EBD in Different Locations

Behaviour	WA Student w. EBD Mean	CAN Student w. EBD Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.
Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (e.g., my moods, relationships, and health)	4.90	4.33	0.57	0.01
Be friendly to me	5.25	4.69	0.56	0.01
Be patient with me	5.40	4.82	0.58	0.00
Try to ease my personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce my academic stress, help me problem solve personal situations)	4.38	4.82	-0.44	0.03
Enforce rules fairly	5.33	4.78	0.55	0.02*
Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)	5.15	4.71	0.44	0.05*

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Let me decide some things in class	3.88	4.45	-0.57	0.01
Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	3.75	4.35	-0.60	0.00
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	3.15	4.40	-1.25	0.00
Show me how to do things	5.15	4.78	0.37	0.04*
Allow students to get help from other students	4.35	4.86	-0.51	0.02
Give equal attention and praise among students	5.38	4.94	0.44	0.03*

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

Of the 43 comments responding to the open-ended survey question, 38 were coded into categories which contained comments from students with EBD in both locations. West Australian students made five comments that were organised into one category which contained comments only from students in WA: 'Be understanding of students' needs'. This further supports the notion that students in WA put a greater emphasis on affective teacher behaviours that displayed caring and understanding. Aside from this one point of emphasis, comments were distributed relatively equally between Canadian and West Australian students within the different categories (Providing academic support according to individual needs, Respecting students' boundaries, Avoiding pressuring students, Having a sunny disposition, and Being fair and consistent), indicating that the students generally held similar views on how to develop positive relationships with them.

The focus groups with students with EBD revealed that overall, Canadian and West Australian gifted students held similar views regarding the teacher behaviours most important for developing positive relationships. For Canadian students, there was a much stronger emphasis on talking with students and a slightly stronger emphasis on encouraging students. West Australian students put a larger emphasis on showing respect for students and trusting students, and a slightly stronger emphasis on helping

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students with their work. Despite these differences, both groups discussed all identified themes as important, however the groups in the different locations discussed their respective themes at greater length and in greater detail. The differences between the two groups were negligible, indicating that the students with EBD in both locations agreed upon which behaviours were most important in developing positive relationships with their teachers.

5.5 Results Relevant to Research Question 2(b)

2. *b) What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?*

Teacher Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version was completed by 23 teachers working at senior behaviour centres and secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia, and at alternate programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, Canada. The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .94. Mean scores and standard deviations of survey items were calculated and are presented in Table 12 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating high agreement.

Table 12

Mean Scores of Teachers of Students with EBD Survey Items

Item	Number of respondents	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Treat students with respect	23	5.00	6.00	5.96	0.21
Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	23	5.00	6.00	5.96	0.21
Talk with them about their goals and interests	23	5.00	6.00	5.91	0.29
Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)	23	5.00	6.00	5.83	0.39

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Be patient with them	23	5.00	6.00	5.83	0.39
Provide feedback and encouragement	23	5.00	6.00	5.83	0.39
Be considerate	23	4.00	6.00	5.83	0.49
Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.54
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.62
Listen if they are upset or have a problem	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.54
Spend time with students when they need help	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.54
Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.62
Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.54
Be proud of students	23	5.00	6.00	5.74	0.45
Encourage them to participate in activities	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.54
Encourage them to do their best work	23	4.00	6.00	5.74	0.54
Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them	23	5.00	6.00	5.74	0.45
Make them feel important	23	4.00	6.00	5.70	0.63
Try to ease students' personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce their academic stress, help them problem solve personal situations)	23	4.00	6.00	5.70	0.63
Listen if they have something to say	23	4.00	6.00	5.70	0.56
Enforce rules fairly	23	4.00	6.00	5.70	0.63
Explain things students don't understand	23	4.00	6.00	5.70	0.63
Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	23	4.00	6.00	5.65	0.65
Be willing to explain things again	23	4.00	6.00	5.65	0.65
Be concerned if students have not understood	23	4.00	6.00	5.65	0.57
Respect students' feelings	23	4.00	6.00	5.65	0.57
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions)	23	4.00	6.00	5.65	0.57

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thoroughly, lead students to answers)					
Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions	23	4.00	6.00	5.61	0.66
Talk to them outside of the classroom	23	4.00	6.00	5.61	0.58
Be friendly to them	23	4.00	6.00	5.61	0.72
Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	23	4.00	6.00	5.61	0.72
Take time to help students learn to do something better.	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.66
Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.73
Be able to take a joke	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.66
Be someone students can count on when they have a problem	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.73
In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.73
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.66
Tell students how to improve (e.g. explain their errors, redirect them when needed)	23	4.00	6.00	5.57	0.66
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	23	4.00	6.00	5.52	0.73
Give students a chance to explain themselves	23	4.00	6.00	5.48	0.67
Help students when they get in trouble by providing guidance	23	4.00	6.00	5.48	0.73
Show students how to do things	23	4.00	6.00	5.48	0.73
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	23	4.00	6.00	5.48	0.79
Tell them nicely when they make mistakes	23	4.00	6.00	5.48	0.79
Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	23	4.00	6.00	5.43	0.73
Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)	23	4.00	6.00	5.39	0.78
Increase students' ability to prepare well for exams and tests	23	4.00	6.00	5.39	0.78

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Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)	23	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.83
Know when students are bored	23	4.00	6.00	5.35	0.78
Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning	23	3.00	6.00	5.30	0.88
Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)	23	4.00	6.00	5.30	0.88
Give equal attention and praise among students	23	3.00	6.00	5.30	1.02
Let students decide some things in class	23	4.00	6.00	5.26	0.75
Be strict if necessary	23	4.00	6.00	5.26	0.86
Help students catch up on work they miss	23	4.00	6.00	5.26	0.69
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	23	3.00	6.00	5.22	0.95
Let students talk about things if they don't agree with me.	23	4.00	6.00	5.22	0.80
Help students solve problems by giving them information	23	4.00	6.00	5.17	0.78
Sympathize with them	22	3.00	6.00	5.14	0.99
Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style	23	3.00	6.00	5.13	0.87
Make sure students have what they need for school	23	3.00	6.00	5.13	0.97
Allow students to get help from other students	23	3.00	6.00	5.13	1.01
Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)	23	4.00	6.00	5.09	0.85
Trust them	23	3.00	6.00	5.04	1.02
Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	23	3.00	6.00	4.83	0.98
Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)	23	3.00	6.00	4.83	1.11
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	23	2.00	6.00	4.74	1.10

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Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident	22	1.00	6.00	4.64	1.62
Be fond of all students	23	3.00	6.00	4.57	1.24
Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)	23	1.00	6.00	3.61	1.08

Items with the highest mean scores (top 15) were predominantly focused on providing personal support and are listed below:

1. Treat students with respect
2. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
3. Talk with them about their goals and interests
4. Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)
5. Be patient with them
6. Provide feedback and encouragement
7. Be considerate
8. Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)
9. Have a pleasant or humorous nature
10. Listen if they are upset or have a problem
11. Spend time with students when they need help
12. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
13. Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)
14. Be proud of students
15. Encourage them to participate in activities

Teachers indicated that they should treat students with respect, patience, and understanding, provide students with encouragement, help them with their schoolwork, and have an approachable disposition. A repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined that there was no statistically significant difference within the top 15 behaviours, indicating that teachers viewed these behaviours as being of a high and relatively similar value. All 15 behaviours received mean scores above 5.7 (average ranking of 'strongly agree'), nearing an

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almost ‘perfect’ score of 6.0 (average ranking of ‘very strongly agree’), indicating that teachers viewed all the top 15 behaviours as being very important for developing relationships with their students.

Open-Ended Responses to Teacher Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, teachers were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar teacher responses were grouped together and categorised according to the behaviours being described by teachers. The categories were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Be Gentle and Understanding

There were 12 comments about being gentle and understanding with students. Comments included: “Be good natured,” “Empathy,” “Patience,” “Be honest, have a good sense of humour, have compassion, gentle voice, never ‘lose’ it,” “Allow for negotiation between teacher and student that keep the dignity of both intact” and “I make a point of spending extra time with any student I have had issues with the previous lesson.”

2. Ensure Learning is Geared to Students’ Needs

There were nine comments about ensuring that curriculum was delivered in a manner that would address the needs of the students. Comments included: “Hands on/experiential learning,” “Provide opportunities for students to figure it out on their own” and “We don’t give homework.”

3. Show your Human Side

There were seven comments that stressed the importance of teachers showing that they were people too, with human emotions. Comments included: “Smile and laugh,” “Let students see you as a person, not just an authority figure,” “They like to know something about you that takes it beyond just a teacher enforcing work and rules” and “Show you have genuine concern, have a smile ready and let them see you as human.”

4. Show an interest in students as individuals

There were seven comments about teachers taking an interest in students as individuals. Comments included: “Be sincerely interested in students,” “Keep distance but take a genuine interest in them,” “They need to feel you are honest and trustworthy and that you genuinely care about them and have an interest in them as people beyond their academic work” and “Read their moods and avoid escalating things.”

5. Be patient and take time to develop relationships

There were five comments about letting relationships develop over time. Comments included: “Students take time to build their relationship with you,” “Rapport building both in and out of school activities” and “Carefully develop relationships over time.”

6. Give students ownership

There were two comments about giving the students ownership and/or responsibility. The comments were “When it comes to rules, students must help to determine them, so they have a sense of ownership” and “Let students lead and have student teaching times.”

Teacher Interviews

Two teachers working in behaviour programs at two Western Australian secondary schools, two teachers working at a West Australian senior behaviour centre, two teachers working at an alternate education centre in British Columbia, and three teachers working at an alternate education centre in Nova Scotia participated in individual interviews which lasted between 15 and 40 minutes. All of the teachers who participated worked in programs that were student-centred and relationally based and had low student to teacher ratios, which allowed them to develop strong, positive relationships with their students. As a result, all teachers interviewed had been successful in developing positive relationships with gifted students. A brief demographic description of the participants follows.

Table 13*Demographic Description of Teachers of Students with EBD Interview Participants*

Location	Teacher	Gender	Age Range	Years Experience Range	Main Subject Area Taught
WA- Senior Behaviour Centre	Ms. Maloney	Female	36-45	16-20	English/Coordinator
	Mrs. Spence	Female	46-55	10-15	Maths
WA – Secondary Behaviour Program	Ms. Apple	Female	46-55	21-30	Society & Environment / Coordinator
	Ms. Ettinger	Female	46-55	16-20	Science / Coordinator
NS Alternate Program	Ms. McGonnagal	Female	36-45	16-20	Math/ Principal
	Mr. Foster	Male	26-35	1-5	Health & Physical Education
	Mr. Clarke	Male	26-35	1-5	Maths
BC Alternate Program	Mr. Larson	Male	46-55	More than 31	English
	Mr. Chili	Male	36-45	10-15	Arts

Teachers were asked to reflect on what it means to have a good relationship with their students, and which behaviours they employed that contributed to positive relationships with students. Teachers were asked to identify their own specific behaviours and explain how those behaviours contributed to positive relationships. Several themes emerged from the interviews and will be discussed below.

Create a Safe, Warm Environment

The most important theme that emerged from interviews was the importance of creating a warm environment that students would enjoy coming to and feel safe in.

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Teachers identified several behaviours that helped them create these environments.

Examples of these behaviours are listed below.

Examples of Teacher Behaviours that Create a Safe, Warm Environment

- Greet students at the door and in the hallway
- Have fun and joke with students on their terms
- Laugh at yourself
- Laugh at student jokes
- Smile
- Have clear expectations and enforce them fairly to create a sense of safety
- Listen if a student has something to say, but don't pry into their personal lives
- Keep a calm, low voice
- Give students eye contact and full attention when they speak with you
- Have non-school related conversations with students
- Be kind and polite with students (ie. use 'please' and 'thank you')
- Keep classroom door open before/after school and between classes
- Allow students to hang out in your class before/after school

Teachers stressed the importance of connecting with their students as people, rather than as teacher and student. Mr. Larson, an English teacher in BC with more than 30 years of experience teaching in alternate school programs with students with EBD explained how he tried to create a welcoming environment with simple everyday interactions:

I deliberately start each morning by going around, as we mingle in the hall, and saying hello to every single student by name - personally, individually – and frequently asking how the evening went, how are things going – non-school related conversations. Just person to person. So I do that every morning, and if I'm walking through the hall throughout the day and I pass a student, I always say 'Hello, so-and-so.' And I almost always get a little smile. So I'm trying to reinforce a few things there: 1) that you are a person and you are important enough for me to talk to, and hopefully I'm important enough for you to talk to me. So we're actually important people in each other's lives.

Teachers also stated how warm and safe environments could be created through the use of humour. Teachers stressed the importance of being able to laugh at themselves

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without getting offended, and to be able to laugh at student humour. Ms. Ettinger, a Science teacher and Coordinator of a secondary school behaviour program, stated that a sense of humour showed her human side:

I'd be the first person to laugh at myself. It's showing that you are reasonably human. And I can take a joke a long with them and I suppose you set those boundaries about how far they go with you.

Teachers also identified boundaries that were important to respect with their students. They stressed the importance of being available and willing to listen to students, but they also emphasised the need to avoid prying into the students' personal lives. Mr. Chili, an Art teacher at an alternate program in BC explained:

That line would be their personal lives. If they want to talk to me about that, that's fine, but I don't ever ask. I do ask if it's something that I know isn't going to be a touchy subject.

Being willing to listen showed that teachers were caring, while respecting student boundaries and maintaining their privacy created a sense of safety for students. Teachers identified other behaviours that helped create a desirable environment, including actions as simple as leaving doors open before, between, and after classes and giving students full attention when they were talking. Mr. Chili explained how he created a sense of approachability with his students:

Chili I have my Art room open. I always tell them if they need anything in other classes, come; it's not a problem. If they need jackets in other rooms, can I open that. But my Art room in the morning is usually open and they come and sit in there...

Researcher So like having an open door...

Chili Open-door policy, to some degree. It's not all the time. And always having an open ear too, cos they want to talk, you don't want to say 'Hey, no, I'm right in the middle of something.' You stop what you're doing, and your body language is important too, right? You can't sit there with your arms crossed, angry that they're taking up your time.

Other behaviours that contributed to warm and safe environments included being kind and polite with students. Mr. Larson described how something as simple as politeness could get through to the most angry, frustrated student:

New teachers have come here and sometimes I've said to them 'You'd be amazed at how much good you can do, and how quickly

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you can create good relationships with students by just saying “Thank you” for their work. Or saying “Could you please do such and such?” ...I mean, you’ve got to have genuine affection for the kids. If you don’t have genuine affection for them, they’ll know it. They’ve got radar. You can call it love radar if you want. They can tell if you don’t really care for them... You know it’s always ironic to me that the most aggressive, miserable, angry, frustrated kid, who meets mildness, gentleness, will often just calm down...

Get to Know Students at an Individual Level

Teachers stressed the importance of getting to know their students as individuals, and also letting their students see them as individuals. Examples of behaviours that allowed teachers to get to know students at an individual level are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Allow Teachers to Get to Know Students at an Individual Level

- Talk with students about their interests
- Share a bit about yourself, but don’t be boastful
- Talk about common interests
- Talk about common connections (eg. places lived/visited, people you both know, etc.)
- Talk with students individually as class settles
- Get to know students first before focusing on academics
- Learn how students react in different situations

Teachers described the importance of getting to know students individually, and letting the students see them as individuals. Teachers described the process and stressed that it was important to focus on learning about the student first, before focusing on academics. Mr. Larson described how he took his time to get to know students before moving onto academic activity:

I’m not really all that interested in worrying about how to figure out the academic curriculum for each student the very first day that the student comes. In some cases, or in a lot of cases, that’s not really an issue. But in some it is because they’re not prepared to learn academics yet – they’re just too frustrated, they’re just too angry.

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Teachers also described that sharing a bit about themselves was an effective way of starting the interpersonal exchange. Ms. Spence, a maths teacher in WA, explained how she started the process of getting to know students:

Unless they actually like you, you are not going to make any headway. They have had such terrible experiences in the past...It's not so much about whiz bang lessons; it's about how I engage with them. I actually give a bit out about myself. It's a way into a relationship... I give a little bit of information about me and use that to get a relationship going.

Teachers did, however, express the importance of not giving students too much personal information. Mr. Clarke, a maths teacher at an alternate program in Nova Scotia, explained where he drew the line of giving information:

They know I'm married, they know I have a little son. I share a few things about them, but I don't share any intimate family details with them. But generalities – I took Joey sledding the other day and he had a great time, it was his first time – stuff like that. Very surface, very light. If I was going through a nasty divorce, that would not come out in the class...They do not have access to Facebook, my personal email, phone numbers – any other contact like that? No.

Teachers also stressed that it was important not to be boastful about their lives, given some of the difficult circumstances that many students with EBD live in. Ms. McGonagal explained:

Researcher So you don't go too deep into your own personal life?

McGonnagal Not too deep. You should never do that, no. I mean I have huge advantages that our students don't have, and you can come across as bragging. One of the years in this building...there was a staff member here who a lot of the students came to me and complained because they felt she was bragging about how big her driveway was and how big her TV was and how many TV's she had. That may or may not have been her intent, but it's how she came across, and that was a lesson I learned then about not wanting to say too much about that.

When it came to getting to know the students as individuals, teachers described having individual conversations with students about their common interests and common experiences. Teachers acknowledged that even if they did not share many

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common interests with a student, it was important to make the effort to learn a little bit more about what was important to that student. Ms. McGonagal stated:

I don't care if you hate hockey and know nothing about hockey. If that kid that's sitting at the back of your classroom...loves hockey, you better learn to like hockey, or learn something about hockey. But don't pretend that you're an expert on hockey because they can tell when you're pretending. You've got to be sincere.

Encouraging Students in a Respectful, Constructive Manner

Teachers stressed that giving students feedback was important for developing relationships, but that the way in which feedback was delivered could be as important as the message. They stressed that students should be encouraged in a respectful, constructive manner. Examples of behaviours that encouraged students in a respectful, constructive manner are listed below.

Examples of behaviours that Encourage Students in a Respectful, Constructive Manner

- Provide praise that is relevant
- Address negative behaviour, but always include something positive in the feedback
- Let students know you enjoy teaching them
- Acknowledge student effort, even if student gets something wrong
- Give feedback privately
- Tell students how to improve

Teachers explained that encouraging their students was very important because their previous educational experiences often left them feeling unconfident in their abilities. Mr. Clarke, in NS, said “With a lot of these students, if you spend all your time saying ‘This is wrong’, they’re going to think that everything’s wrong,” and stressed the importance of always including something positive when giving students feedback. Mr. Larson agreed that students’ prior experiences with being corrected caused them to sometimes be defensive. He stated that he always gave specific feedback that was straightforward so that students could see the value in it:

[Feedback] certainly has to be specific and simple to understand. Cos a lot of our kids, they soon feel defensive when they’re being corrected. They often feel they’ve been corrected or maligned –

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that's their perception – often in the regular [school] and so if I'm starting to sound like another person who's criticizing, they don't like the sound of that.

The teachers also put a strong emphasis on delivering feedback to students in a private manner, to maintain student dignity. Ms. Spence, in WA, stated “I will do it privately if that is important to the student. I don't like singling students out. It's like students picking team members, there is always someone left out. I don't that want to be my students.” Mr. Clarke, in NS, described how he gave negative feedback in private, and how his students felt about that:

[W]hen we have to have a conversation that isn't such a pleasant conversation, we don't do that around other students. We do it in a – you know, if it's a minor thing we'll take them out in the hallway and have a quick chat with them. And I think that students do appreciate that I don't call people out in class.

Ms. Apple, stated that even positive feedback should be delivered privately, adding:

They know if they are doing the right thing behaviour wise and also academically. We reward the little gains and celebrate them privately as 'shame' is a big thing here. You can't draw attention to these students in public, it's shameful and they disengage.

All the teachers interviewed agreed that students needed to hear positive feedback in order to encourage them. Mr. Larson expressed the importance of encouraging his students, given their previous academic experiences:

I have to be joyful in what I'm doing. I need to really enjoy the work I do. And I tell them 'I love my job'; they need to see that I'm not a teacher who hates his job teaching a bunch of rejects. Because that's the sense that I could create if I was just a grumpy old fart who found these kids irritating because they don't do things the way they 'should'...

Being flexible with the Curriculum to Meet Students' Needs

Teachers indicated that they needed to be flexible with curriculum to meet the needs of the students, not vice versa. Behaviours that displayed teacher flexibility in meeting their students' needs are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Display Teacher Flexibility with the Curriculum to Meet Students' Needs

- Give students extra chances

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- Give students more time to complete work
- Give students a break from work when needed
- Adjust expectations of student production when students are upset
- Collaborate with students to find a plan that will work for them
- Show students how to do things step-by-step
- Try to read student moods as they come into class and adjust expectations accordingly
- Avoid authoritarian approach (ie. ‘This is the work you have to do, so do it’)

Teachers indicated that when they adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of their students, it created a sense of understanding and an appreciation from students. This in turn created a better atmosphere in the classroom that was conducive to work. Mr. Larson, in BC, explained:

... they soon sense that I’m trying to adapt the curriculum to meet whatever needs they have. Whether it’s at their grade level, or my expectations of what they can do – what they can produce – and my expectations on how long they can work, they soon sense that I’m trying to work with them. Some students can’t work for the whole block, so if they work for half a block, and do something recreational for the other half of the block, then I’m okay with that. And I think that as soon as the students see that my efforts are genuine, that I really want to help, then most of the behavioural problems go away.

Mr. Clarke, in NS, indicated that students’ emotional states should determine what is expected of them academically, due to the various emotional challenges his students faced:

You have to be a lot more empathetic and a lot more willing to be flexible in how you – how they show you learning. So that’s not to say that they don’t do reading, writing, the same things that everyone else does, but it may take them much longer, or they may have to come back and do it at a different time when they’re in a better mood. So a lot of the time, you know, if the student comes in at 9 in the morning and he’s furious, you know you might have a math exam scheduled for that morning, but a math exam’s not going to happen that morning. So that’s really important. You need to be flexible in when learning takes place and realize that there’s other priorities too.

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Mr. Larson agreed, and said that students' appreciated when he took their emotional state into consideration and collaborated with them to determine what they were capable of:

I will have students saying 'You know what? This is a bad day. I don't feel like doing any work' ... So I might say to that student 'Well, okay. Would you be able to just do a journal about how you're feeling today?', 'Okay, I can do that.', or 'No, I don't feel like doing anything.' And then I will say 'Well, alright then, we all have bad days. Do you think you'll be able to do your work tomorrow?', 'Yeah, I'll get back to it tomorrow – I'll do it tomorrow, let's do it' they'll often say.

Showing Flexibility and Understanding when Dealing with Misbehaviour

Teachers indicated that it was important for them to display flexibility and understanding when students displayed negative behaviour. Examples of teacher behaviours that demonstrated flexibility and understanding are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Show Flexibility and Understanding when Dealing with Misbehaviour

- Avoid authoritarian enforcement of rules
- Show concern and care for students when they misbehave (ie. 'Are you okay?', 'What's going on?')
- Don't try to address behaviour while students are upset
- Avoid getting angry, take a walk to cool off if necessary
- Give students time to cool off if they are upset
- Don't react to every minor misbehaviour (ie. language, humour)
- Explain to students that fair is not equal, and they will be treated fairly

Teachers indicated that when students displayed negative behaviours, it was important to show students that they were more important than their behaviour, so that students could see that they were cared for. Ms. McGonagall, in NS, described an incident with a student who was having a meltdown:

[W]hen I took him out in the hallway and sat down with him, I said 'What is going on? Why are you doing this? I don't understand. Is there something going on at home?' ... He knew I was concerned and cared about – sincerely - about what [was] going on.

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Teachers also indicated that with students with EBD, authoritarian approaches were not effective. Mr. Larson indicated that it was important not to get caught up with minor behaviours, because there could be so many:

[T]here's no need for me to get uptight about every little thing that goes wrong, and they will sense that quickly; that I'm not the sort of person that gets uptight just because things didn't go quite right in class today. You know, there's always tomorrow.

Teachers stressed that it was important to defer addressing negative behaviour while either party was upset – teacher or student. Ms. McGonagal explained that while the behaviour did need to be addressed, it was far better to wait until the student had time to cool off:

[T]he timing of when you do that is critical. If you have a kid that's upset about something, you're not necessarily going to stop that and give them feedback about why they need to do something different. You need to do something to change their behaviour at the time, which may include letting them cool down or something like that, rather than dealing with the negative behaviour. Then you have to back to it though, and give them the feedback, whether it's positive or negative.

Teachers explained that deferring until after both parties were calm helped to avoid rash actions or words and helped both parties maintain their dignity. Mr. Larson described how he handled situations in which he became upset:

There have been occasions, where a student has made me – where I feel angry about how obnoxious a student has just been. And on occasion I've just walked out my door, gone for a little walk around the school, take a few deep breaths and come back with a new plan. Rather than reacting with anger.

Be aware of Physical Space and Positioning

Teachers indicated that their physical positioning and spacing was important for working with their students. Examples of behaviours that showed awareness of physical space and positioning are listed below.

Examples of Behaviours that Demonstrate Awareness of Physical Space and Positioning

- Avoid standing at the front of the room all of the time, move around the class

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- Avoid standing over students
- Speak with students at their level (crouch or sit)
- Respect students personal space

Teachers explained that their physical positioning could communicate a sense of power over students, and that it was important to be aware of where, and how they stood. Ms. Spence, in WA, described what she did to break down physical barriers, saying “I always teach from the side of the room. I don’t want them to think that I am superior to them.”

Teachers also indicated it was important to interact with students at their physical level. Ms. Spence described how doing so avoided displays that put up barriers between her and her students:

When I go up and speak to them I crouch or sit at their level. Yesterday they told me how much they hate teachers standing over them. That’s a power position. But if you are at their side it’s okay, you’re at their level.

Being on the Same Side as Students

Teachers described behaviour that it was important that students saw their teachers as being on their side. Examples of behaviours that showed teachers were on the same side as their students are listed below.

Examples of behaviours that Display Teachers as Being on the Same Side as their Students

- Tell students you are on their side / want them to do well
- Empathise with students
- Treat students as equals

Teachers indicated that it was important to explicitly state to students that they were on their side and wanted them to do well, as Ms. Apple, explained, “These kids need to know that we genuinely care for them, that we have their back. They need to know that you are on their side.” Teachers also described that for students to believe that teachers were on their side, their teachers needed to treat them as equals. Ms. Spence, in WA, stated:

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I treat them as another human being. I really try and make the point that there is no hierarchy. There is not a level there [motions with her hand at her neck] that they are below and we are above.

Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia

Teachers in both locations rated behaviours at a very high level of importance, with Canadian teachers assigning an average mean score of $\bar{x} = 5.37$ per survey item and teachers in WA scoring survey items at an average of $\bar{x} = 5.53$. The high survey item mean scores indicated that teachers in both locations believed that positive relationships were central to their practice, which was confirmed in interviews.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between gifted students and their teachers ($F = 2750.66$; $DF = 1$; $P = 0.02$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. Of the 70 behaviours scored by teachers of gifted students, only seven were found to have statistically significant differences between the two locations (Table 14). Of note, teachers in WA had two items - 'Communicate achievement to students and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)' and 'Try to ease students' personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce academic stress, help problem solve personal situations)' - that received maximum average scores of 6.0 (average rating 'very strongly agree') and were rated significantly higher than their Canadian peers. Canadian teachers only rated one item significantly higher than teachers in WA: 'Make sure students have what they need for school'. This suggested that overall the two groups had high agreement with slight variations regarding the behaviours most important for developing positive relationships with their students.

Table 14

Teacher Behaviours Scored Significantly Different by Teachers of Students with EBD in Different Locations

Behaviour	WA Teacher Mean	CAN Teacher Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.
Trust students	5.58	4.45	1.13	0.02

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Try to ease students' personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce academic stress, help problem solve personal situations)	6.00	5.36	0.64	0.01*
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	5.83	5.27	0.56	0.05*
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)	5.92	5.36	0.55	0.02*
Communicate achievement to students and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	6.00	5.45	0.55	0.01*
Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them	5.92	5.55	0.37	0.05*
Make sure students have what they need for school	4.75	5.55	-0.80	0.03

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

All of the 42 comments responding to the open-ended survey question were categorised into themes which contained comments from teachers in both locations, indicating a convergence of views from the two groups. Two categories were contained comments predominantly from teachers in Canada: 'Be patient and take time to develop relationships' and 'Ensure learning is geared to students' needs', with Canada to WA comments occurring in ratios of 4:1 and 8:1 respectively. These categories suggest that Canadian teachers put a greater emphasis on taking time to develop relationships and adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of their students. Overall, however, both groups put a greater emphasis on being gentle and understanding, showing an interest in students as individuals, and displaying their human sides to students.

The interviews conducted with teachers of students with EBD revealed that Canadian and West Australian teachers held very similar views regarding the behaviours most

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important for developing positive relationships. Teachers from both locations emphasised creating warm and safe environments, getting to know students at an individual level, being flexible with curriculum to meet the needs of their students, and being flexible and understanding when dealing with behaviour problems. Teachers from WA put a greater emphasis on letting students know that they were on the same side and being aware of physical spacing and positioning in the classroom.

Analysis of differences between Students with EBD and their Teachers

Figure 10 describes the top 15 ranked survey items according to students with EBD and their teachers, and the agreement on certain behaviours by both groups. It was found that both students with EBD and their teachers highly regarded teacher behaviours that showed respect for students, patience with students, and gave them information that went beyond the textbook. Students with EBD were found to prefer behaviours where their teachers listened to them, were patient with them in supporting them in their learning, were nice to them, and treated them equally.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between gifted students and their teachers ($F = 103.42$; $DF = 33$; $P = 0.00$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. It was found that teachers had higher mean scores for 67 of the 70 behaviours, 52 of which were statistically significantly higher ($P < 0.05$). None of the three behaviours that were scored higher by students were found to be statistically significantly higher. Teachers of students with EBD saw more value in nearly all of the listed behaviours, suggesting that teachers were more aware of the importance of having positive relationships than their students were, and that students and teachers do not necessarily have drastically different views on which behaviours are most important.

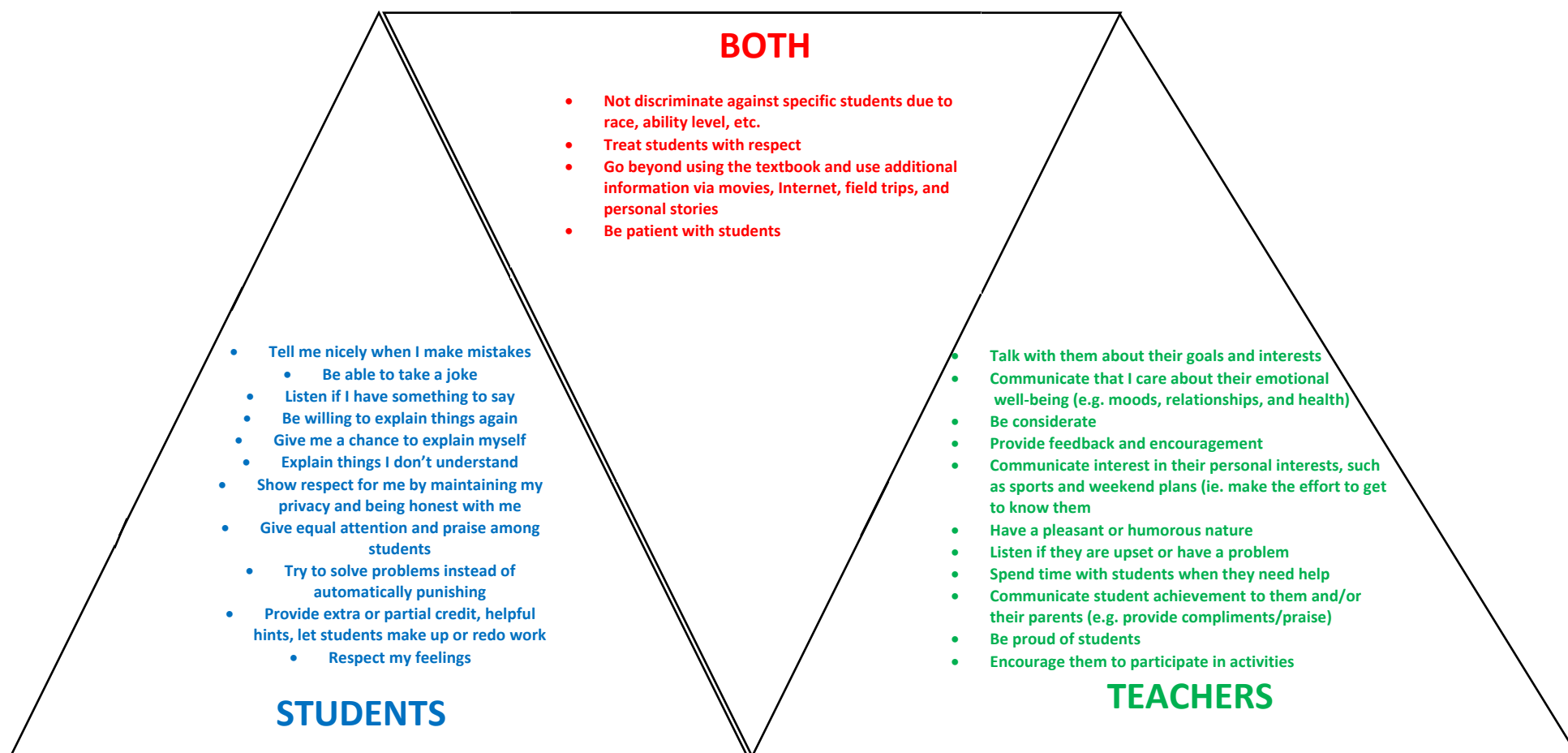


Figure 10 - *Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Students with EBD and their Teachers (Survey Items)*

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Themes that emerged from teacher interviews and student focus groups were very similar in nature, and supported the notion that the students and teachers were in agreement on how positive relationships could be developed. Table 15 displays the themes that emerged for each group, listed in order of importance, as expressed by the participants.

Table 15

Interview and Focus Group Themes – Students with EBD and their Teachers

Rank	Item	Support Type
1	Have a warm, friendly disposition	Create a warm, safe environment
2	Talk with students	Get to know students on an individual basis
3	Help students with their work	Encourage students
4	Show respect for students	Be flexible with curriculum to meet students' needs
5	Encourage students	Show flexibility and understanding when dealing with behaviour
6	Be fair and understanding in behaviour management	Be aware of physical space and positioning
7	Make class fun and not too strenuous	Be on the same side as the students
8	Trust Students	

The similar nature of the themes discussed by teachers and students suggested that there was an understanding between the two groups about how positive relationships were developed.

Figure 11 displays teacher behaviours that were mentioned in teacher interviews, focus groups, and on the open-ended survey question.

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TEACHERS	BOTH	STUDENTS
Keep classroom door open before/after school and between classes	Smile	Let students use teachers' first names
Allow students to hang out in your class before/after school	Laugh	Be in a good mood / be cheerful
When sharing about yourself, but don't be boastful	Joke with students, but be aware of limits	Use an upbeat, welcoming voice
Talk about common connections (eg. places lived/visited, people you both know, etc.)	Be able to laugh at self / don't be easily offended	Be patient with students
Acknowledge student effort, even if student gets something wrong	Greet students at the door and in the hallway	Talk to students about what's going on in their life
Give students extra chances	Listen if a student has something to say but don't pry	Take an interest in students as individuals
Collaborate with students to find a plan that will work for them	Give students eye contact and full attention when speaking with them	Respect students' privacy / keep their confidentiality
Try to read student moods as they come into class and adjust expectations accordingly	Be able to laugh at self / don't be easily offended	If you notice something is wrong, pull students aside and ask if they are okay
Don't try to address behaviour while students are upset	Be kind and polite (ie. Use 'please' and 'thank you')	Notice changes in students and ask about them (ie. new shoes, new hair colour)
Explain to students that fair is not equal, and they will be treated fairly	Talk with students about their personal interests and common interests	Don't get involved in students' personal relationships
Avoid standing at the front of the room all of the time, move around the class	Tell students about yourself	Circulate class and ask individual students if they need help, don't wait for students to ask
Speak with students at their level (crouch or sit)	Tell students when they have done well / provide praise	Acknowledge raised hands, don't let students struggle for too long
Empathise with students	Have non-school related conversations with students	Don't get frustrated at a student for getting an answer wrong
Treat students as equals	Let students know you enjoy teaching them and be enthusiastic about your job	Don't call on students to answer in front of class if their hand isn't up

Touch base with individual students during class	Help all students, not just a select few
Learn how students react in different situations	Give students a chance to try work on their own, but be ready to help if they get stuck
Be soft spoken, don't raise your voice	Make time for extra help
Show students step-by-step how to do something	Don't judge students based on appearance
Sit with students one-on-one and walk them through their work	Don't assign homework
Take time to get to know students	Don't give too much work
If a student is having a bad day, give them space and a break from work	Tell students you believe they are capable
Avoid authoritarian approach (ie. 'This is the work you have to do, so do it')	Be interested in students' progress (ask how they are going)
Give feedback privately	Treat students equally (similar consequences for similar actions)
Respect students personal space	
Be nice when correcting/redirecting students	
Avoid getting angry, take a walk to cool off if necessary	
Give honest, constructive feedback that tells them how to improve	

Figure 11 - Teacher Behaviours Most Valued by Students with EBD and their Teachers (Interview/Focus Group/Open Survey Items)

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Teachers and students both identified behaviours that created warm, welcoming environments through behaviours that showed teachers to be friendly, patient, and understanding. Both groups also emphasised the importance of having conversations and getting to know each other as people, as well as the importance of teachers providing support to students in their learning. Teachers placed more of an emphasis on subtle behaviours that allowed students to feel comfortable in their classes and being flexible and adaptable to meet the social and academic needs of the students, while students emphasised teacher patience with their learning and behavioural needs. Overall, there was high agreement on the most important behaviours for developing positive relationships

5.6 Overview of Methods Used to Answer Research Questions 3 and 4

3. *a) Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with gifted secondary students?*
 - a. Which support type is considered most important according to gifted secondary students?*
 - b. Which support type is considered most important according to teachers of gifted secondary students?*

4. *Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with secondary students with EBD?*
 - a. Which support type is considered most important according to secondary students with EBD?*
 - b. Which support type is considered most important according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?*

The items on Student-Teacher Relationship Survey were organised by support type category. Items 1-28 represented emotional support, items 29-50 represented instrumental support, items 51-58 represented informational support, and items 59-70 represented appraisal support. Data obtained from the surveys were analysed through

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descriptive statistics using the SPSS v20 (IBM, 2011) software package. Items were then collected into their respective support type categories and overall mean scores were calculated for each category for each participant, based upon student and teacher ratings on a 6-point scale (very strongly agree to very strongly disagree). The top 15 rated items were also collected and analysed according to support type category.

After completing the closed-ended survey items, students and teachers were asked to list any teacher behaviours that they felt were important for having positive student-teacher relationships. Responses were coded and arranged by support type category.

Two student focus groups consisting of six Year 10 gifted students from Western Australia, and five Year 10 gifted students from Canada were conducted. Interviews were also conducted with five teachers from Western Australia nominated by gifted students as being teachers with whom they had positive relationships with, and two gifted program coordinators from Canada. For students with EBD, four focus groups were conducted, consisting of 12 students with EBD from Western Australia, four students with EBD from British Columbia, and five students with EBD from Nova Scotia. Interviews were conducted with two teachers from senior behaviour centres in Western Australia, two teachers in secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia, two teachers from alternate programs in British Columbia, and three teachers from alternate programs in Nova Scotia. The focus groups and the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Open-coding was used to identify themes that emerged from the interviews and from the focus groups with respect to support type categories.

The data were analysed for differences between participants in Western Australia and Canada using mean scores and ANOVA and MANOVA tests to check for significant differences in survey responses. Open ended survey responses, focus group themes, and interview themes were also compared to analyse for differences between the two locations. These same measures were also analysed to compare the perspectives of students and their teachers. Findings from the analysis of survey data, focus groups, and interviews are discussed in the following sections.

5.7 Results Relevant to Research Question 3(a)

3. a) *Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with gifted secondary students according to gifted secondary students?*

Student Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version was completed by 58 gifted students in two different Gifted and Talented programs in Western Australian schools and by 75 gifted students in four different gifted programs in Ontario, Canada. The survey had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .96. Items were collected into support type categories and reliability for each support type category was found to be strong: emotional support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .88; instrumental support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .89; informational support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .83; and appraisal support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .85. The mean scores and standard deviations of support type categories were calculated and are presented in Table 16 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating agreement.

Table 16

Gifted Student Survey Support Type Mean Scores

Support Type	Number of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Informational	8	5.04	0.63
Instrumental	22	4.74	0.54
Appraisal	12	4.72	0.68
Emotional	28	4.67	0.48

Gifted student survey responses indicated that informational support (involves providing guidance, advice and information to aid in problem-solving) behaviours were the most important for developing positive relationships with teachers. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and it was found that informational

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support had a statistically significant higher mean score when compared to each of the other support type categories ($F = 33.31$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$, for each support type). Informational support was the only support type to receive a mean score above 5.0 (average rating of ‘strongly agree’). The ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between any of the remaining three support types. Further, the three support types had a mean score range of just 0.06, indicating students ranked them relatively similar in terms of their importance to developing positive relationships.

The top 15 ranked student survey items were also analysed, as these represented the most important behaviours in developing positive relationships with teachers. Items were tagged with their appropriate support type category. A point system was created to give a score for each support type in the top 15 behaviours. The top ranked behaviour received 15 points; second ranked behaviour received 14 points; third ranked behaviour received 13 points, etc. The top 15 behaviours, their support type, their mean scores, and their points are listed in Table 17.

Table 17

Top 15 Ranked Student Survey Items – Gifted Students

Rank	Item	Support Type	Mean	Points
1	Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	Instrumental	5.62	15
2	Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	Emotional	5.55	14
3	Treat me with respect	Emotional	5.29	13
3	Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	Informational	5.29	13
5	Have a pleasant or humorous nature	Emotional	5.29	11
6	Be able to take a joke	Emotional	5.26	10

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7	Allow students to get help from other students	Informational	5.23	9
8	Explain things I don't understand	Informational	5.23	8
9	Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests	Instrumental	5.20	7
10	Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)	Informational	5.20	6
11	Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	Emotional	5.19	5
12	Be friendly to me	Emotional	5.16	4
13	Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	Instrumental	5.14	3
13	Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)	Appraisal	5.14	3
15	Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	Emotional	5.12	1

Mean scores were calculated for each support type within the top 15 items, and the difference between the mean scores of the top 15 items and the overall support type mean score was calculated. The number of items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type, as well as each support type's percentage share of the top 15 behaviours. The percentage of support type items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type. The total score for each support type was also calculated. The results are shown in Table 18.

Table 18*Support Type Analysis of Top 15 Survey Items- Gifted Students*

Support Type	Mean Score of Support Type Items in Top 15	Difference from Overall Support Type Mean Score	Number of Items in Top 15	% of Top 15	% of Support Type in Top 15	Points
Emotional	5.27	0.59	7	46.7	25.0	58
Instrumental	5.32	0.58	3	20.0	13.6	25
Informational	5.24	0.19	4	26.7	50.0	36
Appraisal	5.14	0.42	1	6.7	8.3	3

Student responses indicated that emotional support accounted for seven of the most important 15 behaviours (46.7%), and had the highest point total of 58. This is contradictory to the overall support type rankings in Table 16 that ranked emotional support as having the lowest mean score of the four categories. What this suggests is that some emotional support behaviours were very important to students for developing positive relationships with their teachers, but other emotional support behaviours were regarded as far less important. This is supported by the difference between top 15 behaviour mean score and overall support type mean score for emotional support (0.59). This large gap between behaviours within the same support type category suggests that there is a wide variety of ways to display emotional support, but students highly value only a select few emotionally supportive behaviours. This was verified by a quartile analysis of behaviour means scores by support type (Table 19).

Table 19*Quartile Analysis of Gifted Student Behaviour Score by Support Type – Percentage of support type behaviours in each quadrant*

Support Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Emotional	39.3%	21.4%	14.3%	25.0%
Instrumental	18.2%	31.8%	22.7%	27.3%

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Informational	0.0%	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%
Appraisal	25.0%	25.0%	41.7%	8.3%

*Min = 3.80, First Quartile = 4.39, Median = 4.81, Third Quartile = 5.07, Max = 5.62

It is evident that gifted students viewed some emotional support behaviours as very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers, with 25% of all emotional support behaviours receiving a mean score in the fourth quadrant (75th percentile). However, it is also evident that a majority of emotional support behaviours were viewed as having low relative importance, with the majority (39%) of all emotional support behaviours receiving a mean score in the first quadrant (25th percentile). This would explain how the overall mean score for emotional support would be lowered due to the data being skewed towards the first quadrant, and supports the notion that some emotional support behaviours are very important to gifted students for developing positive relationships with their teachers, but other emotional support behaviours are far less important.

Figure 12 compares emotional support behaviours that were ranked in the both the top 15 (Quadrant 4, Table 19) and the bottom 15 (Quadrant 1, Table 19) by gifted students. The emotional support behaviours that were highly rated centred around showing respect for students by treating them with fairness, having a sense of humour and pleasant disposition, and allowing students to feel comfortable in asking questions or interacting with the teacher. The emotional support behaviours that students held in low regard involved teachers expressing care and concern for students' feelings and emotional states. This suggests that while gifted students do value emotionally supportive behaviours, a fine line exists and they do not want their teachers to intrude into their personal lives.

HIGHLY VALUED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT BEHAVIOURS			LESS VALUED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT BEHAVIOURS		
Rank	Item	Mean	Rank	Item	Mean
2	Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	5.55	56	Make me feel important	4.38
3	Treat me with respect	5.29	57	Listen if I'm upset or have a problem	4.36
5	Have a pleasant or humorous nature	5.29	61	Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	4.31
6	Be able to take a joke	5.26	62	Be someone I can count on when I have a problem	4.22
11	Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	5.19	64	Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (eg. my moods, relationships, and health)	4.18
12	Be friendly to me	5.16	65	Sympathize with me	4.11
15	Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	5.21	66	Communicate interest in my personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know me)	3.99
			67	Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (eg. posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	3.87
			68	Talk to me outside of the classroom	3.86

Figure 12 - Gifted Student View of Emotional support Behaviours and Boundaries

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Informational support had the second most behaviours in the top 15 (four) and had the second highest point total (36). Four out of the eight informational support behaviours were ranked in the top 15. The difference between top 15 behaviour mean score and overall support type mean score was 0.19, the lowest difference for the four support type categories. The quartile analysis showed that half of the informational support behaviours fell into the fourth quadrant (75th percentile) and that only one informational support behaviour had a score beneath the median (4.81). This suggested that gifted students highly value informational support behaviours across the board, and supports the top overall ranking for informational support in Table 16. This further indicated that students valued informational support most as a whole support type, but that certain emotional support behaviours were very important.

There were three instrumental support behaviours in the top 15, including the highest ranking behaviour. Despite having the highest ranking behaviour, instrumental support had the third highest point total (25). Similar to emotional support, the difference between top 15 behaviour mean score and overall support type mean score was relatively high (0.58), suggesting that the highest ranking instrumental support behaviours were far more important to students compared to other behaviours that showed instrumental support. The overall mean score for instrumental support was 4.73 (average rating of 'agree'), which suggests that while students value instrumental support as a whole, there were specific instrumental support behaviours that stood out as particularly important.

There was only one appraisal support behaviour in the top 15, for a total of 3 points. While students still valued appraisal support overall ($\bar{x} = 4.72$, average rating of 'agree'), the majority of the behaviours were not regarded as important as informational and emotional support type behaviours.

Open-Ended Responses to Student Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, gifted students were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar student responses were grouped together and categorised according to support type. There were 87 behaviours mentioned, and the behaviours

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for each category were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Emotional support

Of the 87 comments mentioned by students, 47 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support. Comments included: “teachers must not be biased,” “keep relationship formal,” “be cheerful and talk to students about personal interests,” “don’t release anger on students,” “understand that all students are different” and “don’t get too personal with students.” This supported the notion that certain emotional support behaviours were very important to students, but there were boundaries that students valued and did not want crossed.

2. Instrumental support

Of the 87 comments mentioned by students, 22 were categorised as instrumental support. Comments included: “give contacts to ask questions out of school,” “do a range of activities; group and individual,” “allow students to create own versions of work,” “give homework that students enjoy” and “cater for different people’s learning techniques.”

3. Informational support

Of the 87 comments mentioned by students, 15 were categorised as informational support. Comments included: “discuss honestly what is vital to remember,” “discussing things to help with understanding in whole class,” “be understanding and able to explain things,” “encourage students to take initiative by relating subject matter to the real world” and “allow us to talk in class.”

4. Appraisal support

Of the 87 comments mentioned by students, 3 were categorised as appraisal support. The comments were “only yell when needed,” “praise and promote students for their success” and “push students to succeed, but not too hard that students lose pride in their abilities.”

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Student Focus Group

Two student focus groups were conducted. In Western Australia, the Student focus group consisted of six Year 10 students (four female, two male) from the same Gifted and Talented class and in Ontario the focus group consisted of five Year 10 students (three male, two female) from the same Enrichment program class. Students discussed teacher behaviours and broad types of support. Students were asked to describe the different ways in which they were supported by teachers, and how that support contributed to better relationships with their teachers. Several themes emerged which were connected with support types. These themes will be discussed below.

Student Comfort in Class (Emotional support)

Students described how positive relationships they had with their teachers allowed them to feel more comfortable in class. Comfort was achieved in numerous ways, including: teachers having a sense of humour, teachers being warm and friendly and avoiding getting angry, teachers allowing students to feel safe in asking questions, teachers treating students fairly, and teachers respecting boundaries.

When asked what it means to have a good relationship with their teacher, the students replied:

Jen Well, school work and everything, you just feel more comfortable with cos he's really nice and everything. You know if you make a mistake or something he won't get angry or anything. It's just easier, and stuff.

Kim It's a more relaxed environment inside the classroom.

Connor Well, you feel less pressure in class, you don't feel that you have to catch up with anything in particular, so you work at your own pace. And sometimes it helps you work faster.

Students explained that this increased comfort level allowed them to perform better academically. They felt that it was important that teachers allowed them to feel safe in asking questions, as Mundeep explained: "I think that they should be approachable, so you're not scared to ask them questions and you're not thinking they're going to make fun of you or they're going to say something mean."

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Students indicated that feeling comfortable asking questions supported their learning, which made them feel that their teachers cared:

John ... you can actually go and you can actually talk to them if you don't understand something. Then you can actually do good in that area. If you don't have a good relationship then you wouldn't want to go talk to them because you don't know how they're going to react. Like they think you're dumb or something.

Mona That's exactly what I was going to say. If I'm scared they're going to think that I'm dumb, I won't go ask for help. So then I won't understand.

Mundeep Yeah I just think the same thing. Being comfortable encourages asking questions and being more inquisitive and making sure you're understanding what you're learning.

Students further indicated that comfort could be achieved through a teacher's sense of humour, which helped them to view their teacher as a nicer person. When asked why having a sense of humour was important to a relationship with their teacher, students stated:

Connor ... It's not the fact to know that you can make more jokes, it's to know that he's comfortable with you when you make jokes.

Harry You don't want someone who can't take a joke because they're really not a nice person to be around. You don't want them getting angry every time they get made fun of or something.

Students explained that the use of humour and personal anecdotes helped break down the student-teacher barrier:

Mundeep I think with personal stories, again it's like kind of not seeing them as much as this all-powerful teacher, but kind of seeing it as a person too and that kind of – you know, you're a person, they're a person – so it has that kind of quality where you know more about them so you can see where they're coming from in their lives and why they might do certain things and that kind of helps you understand how to treat them better.

Adam If they use humour then you know that they're actually enjoying teaching you, as opposed to just doing it because it's their job and they have to do it.

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In contrast, students felt that teacher anger reduced their comfort level in class.

Students explained that getting angry at them created barriers between student and teacher:

...if they're writing on the board and they make a mistake, and you point it out, and they get mad at you for pointing it out, they should at least check it to see if maybe they did make a mistake because no one's perfect or anything. Just by doing that, they make you feel inferior to them – like the almighty teacher and they cannot go wrong.

Students indicated that they wanted their personal boundaries respected and that teachers should avoid inserting themselves into students' personal lives. They indicated that teachers could get to know them better, but at a casual level. Students explained that they sought support from other sources for personal problems, and that teachers' roles did not involve close personal relationships:

John ... people know that they would first go and talk to their friends and stuff about it...cos it's your teacher...so it's kind of like going to your boss to talk about an issue in your life.

Adam Well you're less likely to talk to teachers outside of the classroom because it's like a different level of relationship. Like when you're with your friends, you know, it's all good. But when you talk to a teacher it's – for some teachers it can be intimidating because you know they're the ones who have power over your marks and stuff. You don't want to say something that will screw you over in the long run. If you're having problems with work and stuff and you know they're intimidating, you always have your friends to talk to, your parents to talk to...you have Google.

Jerry I think just because you're more comfortable with your friends and family more because, I guess, you know them longer and better. Teacher's there for like one year. You get to know them for one year and they leave, right? So it's not really that long-term relationship so more likely you're not going to confide in a teacher versus your friends and family.

Students described the teacher as having a defined role, where boundaries needed to be respected. It appeared that there were barriers that needed to come down to have positive relationships (like seeing the teacher as an individual person – through a sense of humour, for example), but some barriers need to remain in place (not wanting to know a teacher too personally). This supported the idea that certain emotional support behaviours are highly regarded by students, but that other emotional support

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behaviours are seen as being too intrusive and crossing the barrier that students want. This was reinforced in another theme that emerged from the focus group (Having a Professional Relationship) and is discussed below.

Meeting Students' Academic Needs (Informational support)

Students revealed that they viewed the teaching of the subject material as the basis for all student-teacher relationships. Students felt that teachers' first priority lay in teaching – or providing them with the information they needed to succeed academically. When asked why academic support was important for developing a positive relationship, students responded:

- Connor Well the academic side – first of all you should know that they're a teacher. The first thing they are here for is the education. So when they help you out they should help you out with your educational level first, before they move on to anything else in particular...
- Harry They're kind of useless if they don't really teach you. That's what they're there for, so...that's what their main purpose is, so if they don't teach you, there's not really much point in having them.

Students elaborated that they felt this role formed the basis for student-teacher relationships and more positive relationships could develop after students felt secure that they had the knowledge they needed:

- Kim Because first and foremost, they are the teacher like Connor said. And your relationship with your teacher naturally will develop from a professional one – so student-teacher – to something more than that. You become friends, you find that you have something in common or you really like the teacher because you can remember that 'Oh, he taught me this and this and this' ...
- Jen Yeah, because they're a teacher and that's their job. Like when you start with them, they're teaching you stuff and when you develop that relationship where you feel happy and comfortable with them, it's sort of from their teaching and how they do it. That's where it sort of originates from.

Students explained that by addressing their academic concerns, teachers showed that they cared about the concerns of students, which helped to promote positive relationships. Mundeep explained:

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... it shows that they care about your learning, as opposed to handing you a textbook and saying 'Here, do this'. That kind of sends the message that they don't really care and that propels you to think 'Oh, well if they don't care, then I shouldn't care either'. So if they care, then you're more compelled to care about what you're doing too. You try and show them respect in return for doing their work, you do your work.

Students also stated that academic support took priority over emotional support.

When asked why emotional support from teachers was not as important as academic support, students responded:

Jen Because they are a teacher, the caring stuff is more from your friends... But you don't expect a teacher to care for you and stuff on a really personal level, like, that's not what they're meant to do. But it's important, but still the academics is more important.

Kim Your teacher is not supposed to be your Aunt Agnew, you know. They're here to teach you – yes, if they take an interest in your personal life, that's fine but they're not supposed to be there to listen to all your problems and your worries, they're supposed to teach you first and foremost.

Invested Teachers and Engaging Classes (Instrumental support)

Students emphasised the importance of teachers being available to help students and having fun, interesting classes to develop positive relationships. Students appreciated teachers showing a willingness to help them and indicated that having fun, engaging classes helped them to like their teacher more. Jen described an appreciation for her teacher's willingness to help them succeed:

Dr. Garnett, he's always like coming back from his weekend or something or the next day saying 'You know I was thinking about this class' and he's always, and there's always excursions or something or professionals coming to talk to us and I think that really makes the subject more interesting and the teacher a lot more nicer because you know that they're going that little bit extra to help the class and that.

Students further indicated that it was harder to connect with a teacher whom they viewed as boring:

Researcher So if someone's boring – if you have a boring teacher – do you find it hard to have a decent relationship with them?

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- Mary Yeah, because you don't see them as a person, you see them as a machine in front of the classroom that just –
- Kim A vacuum cleaner [laughter]
- Kylie And you can't really develop a relationship if you don't want to listen to someone, so yeah.
- Adam ...you don't just want to sit there doing textbook or questions the whole period. If you have an enjoyable class where you're doing different kinds of activities and different ways of doing work then it's more exciting and it's like –
- Researcher So that helps you like the teacher better?
- Adam Yeah, cos they give you more opportunities and ways to do things, then it's more enjoyable.

Students also expressed that it was important for teachers to allow them to have input regarding assignments and the freedom to choose how to complete work. The students felt that by doing this, teachers were displaying respect and understanding for students' abilities:

- Adam Well it's just understanding of your needs and how you think. Cos everybody's different so they should understand that. Cos some teachers think that the whole class is all the same and they all think the same and they all learn the same and they just do stuff the same. But then when you have someone who thinks differently or has a different way of doing things, and they don't like that, that's not showing much respect for the person who knows how to do it like that because they're not letting you express yourself.
- Mundeep I think in terms of when they're giving assignments, especially with the enhanced students, I think we typically need time to think bigger and kind of outside of the box, like outside of a separate box that everyone's thinking inside of...It goes back to you knowing that they understand you and what you want to do, and it goes back to seeing they respect you and they know your opinions and ideas and they know that you'll do better if you're able to do this...

Jen summarised how instrumental support (providing tangible assistance in the forms of one's time, skills, or services) contributed to her feelings towards her favourite teacher:

Dr. Garnett's just really friendly on a teacher level, like, he's always there to help us, whether it's with the work we're doing in class or the

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excursions he takes us on, or just helping us in general, he's always thinking and he's always there for us, and you know that he'll be able to help you whenever...

Positive and Constructive Feedback (Appraisal support)

Students made few comments with respect to appraisal support (providing evaluative, critical feedback on behaviours), but did indicate an appreciation for positive feedback that showed them how to fix mistakes and improve. Students described how they appreciated the positive feedback of one of their favourite teachers:

Kim ...He always says - even if you're fifty percent - he'll always say that you did a good job and yeah...

Researcher So he's very positive?

Kim Yeah, he never says anything bad.

Students explained that in addition to positivity, feedback should be constructive in order to show them how to improve. By showing them ways of improving, students felt that their teachers were displaying care:

Adam Well when they give you feedback, you get to know how you're doing and then if they're nice about it, then you get more respect for them because you know they understand how you're doing and you understand what they're saying. So it's kind of like a two-way street where they're giving you feedback and you're getting their respect from your work.

Researcher So the way they give it is important? Like, they try and be positive?

Adam Yep. Yeah, by kind of like saying 'Okay, you need to work a bit on here and this is how you do it', as opposed to 'Ha! You got that wrong, you suck. Go back and do it, I'm not going to teach you how to do it'.

Mundeep I think it goes back to the caring. Like they care about how you're doing, as opposed to just throwing something at you and then you finish it and you get it back marked and there's nothing exchanged between the teacher and you...I think it kind of shows how they're caring about how you're doing in that class and how you're developing your learning, as opposed just, they're marking it just to mark it.

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Balance

Students indicated that striking a balance between emotional support and academic support was important. Although they felt that positive relationships started with informational support, they indicated that feeling comfortable in class and being able to have fun in class further developed positive relationships with their teachers. Students described that they wanted their teachers to connect with them through humour and allow them to have fun, but that teachers should be able to get the students to focus on work when necessary:

Kim I feel the teacher should be assessing the students and wondering what techniques...will appeal to these students more. And probably the balance as well. Something that's really important is the teacher can be strict, but like as Jen says, will still come up and talk about personal things, like lame jokes and stuff like that.

Connor Well, I think that the best way a teacher could help us learn is with a balance. You know, a teacher needs to be able to, I suppose, have a sense of humour...to be able to laugh whenever there's a story about him or there's a joke at all. And with Kim, he needs to be able to go to enough of a firm tone to make sure that you do your work as well. So he needs to make sure that you're having fun, but you're not getting distracted.

Support Type Summary

During the course of the focus groups, teacher behaviours were mentioned 98 times. Of the 98 times behaviours were mentioned, 50 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support behaviours, 28 behaviours were categorised as instrumental support behaviours, 11 were categorised as informational support behaviours, and 9 were categorised as appraisal support behaviours. Students indicated the primary focus should be on informational support, which formed the basis of the student-teacher relationship. From there, certain emotional support behaviours were viewed as very important, but there was a limit to how teachers should show emotional support. Instrumental support was viewed as important to developing relationships, as students could appreciate a teacher who was willing to 'go the extra mile' to help them. Although appraisal support was not mentioned frequently by students, it was clear that students appreciated the feedback they received from teachers to be positive and constructive. Students stressed that striking a balance between academic support and allowing them to feel comfortable in class was important.

Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia

Regarding student views on support type, a MANOVA revealed that West Australian gifted students scored emotional support ($F = 3308.05$; $DF = 128$; $P = 0.03$) and informational support ($F = 3308.05$; $DF = 128$; $P = 0.00$) statistically significantly higher than Canadian gifted students, but there was no significant difference in the way students scored instrumental support and appraisal support. Despite scoring informational and emotional support statistically significantly higher than their Canadian peers, West Australian gifted students ranked these two support types in the same order as the Canadian students (Table 20), with informational support ranking the highest, and emotional support ranking the lowest.

Table 20

Support Type Rankings for Gifted Students in WA and CAN

Rank	WA Gifted Students		CAN Gifted Students	
	Support Type	Mean	Support Type	Mean
1	Informational	5.22	Informational	4.91
2	Appraisal	4.83	Instrumental	4.69
3	Instrumental	4.80	Appraisal	4.63
4	Emotional	4.77	Emotional	4.59

ANOVA tests revealed that informational support was the only support type to have a statistically significant difference to the other support types for students in WA ($F = 24.09$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$) and for students in Canada ($F = 13.01$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$). This indicated that students in both locations had the same view: informational support was seen as the most important support type, with the other support types being of lesser value, and having relatively similar value to each other.

Gifted students in both locations ranked emotional support the lowest of the four support types, however, certain emotional support behaviours were viewed by both groups as very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers. Of the top 15 scored behaviours for West Australian gifted students, seven were emotional support behaviours, while Canadian gifted students had six emotional support behaviours in their top 15. All six behaviours identified in the top 15 by Canadian gifted students were also included in the top 15 by the West Australian

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gifted students. West Australian gifted students identified five informational support behaviours in their top 15, while Canadian gifted students identified four informational support behaviours in their top 15. All four behaviours identified by Canadian students were included in the top 15 by the West Australian students. This indicated that the students in both locations agreed that informational support was the most important support type overall, but that certain emotional support behaviours were very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers.

Students made 87 comments in response to the open-ended survey question. 28 comments were made by gifted students from WA, while Canadian gifted students made 59 comments. Table 21 displays the number of comments given by students in both locations for each category.

Table 21

Open-Ended Survey Question Responses by Location and Support Type – Gifted Students

Support Type	Number of Comments	WA Gifted Student Comments	CAN Gifted Student Comments
Emotional	47	11	36
Instrumental	22	8	14
Informational	15	7	8
Appraisal	3	2	1

When compared to the overall ratio of Canadian student comments to West Australian student comments (2.1:1), it appears that there was little difference in the view of instrumental support (ratio 1.8:1). The ratio of comments implied that Canadian gifted students put a greater emphasis on emotional support (3.3:1), and West Australian gifted students put a greater emphasis on informational support (1.14:1) and appraisal support (0.5:1). The number of comments for emotional support displayed that certain emotional support behaviours were very important for gifted students, particularly Canadian students.

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The focus groups conducted with gifted students in each location revealed no significant differences in the two groups' views on support types. Both groups emphasised informational support as the foundation from which relationships could develop with their teachers. Both groups also discussed the importance of respecting students' personal boundaries when providing emotional support, making comments to the effect of "...they are a teacher, the caring stuff is more from your friends... But you don't expect a teacher to care for you and stuff on a really personal level, like, that's not what they're meant to do" (WA gifted student) and "If you're having problems with work and stuff and you know they're intimidating, you always have your friends to talk to, your parents to talk to...you have Google" (Canadian gifted student). Both groups emphasised the importance of certain emotional behaviours, like treating students equally and with respect, and having a pleasant, friendly demeanour and sense of humour, but indicated that they did not feel comfortable getting too close with their teachers. Overall, the focus groups revealed that West Australian and Canadian gifted students held similar views regarding the importance of the different support types.

5.8 Results Relevant to Research Question 3(b)

3. *b) Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with gifted secondary students according to teachers of gifted secondary students?*

Teacher Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version was completed by 33 teachers working in the gifted programs at two different secondary schools in Western Australia, and 16 teachers working in four gifted programs in Ontario, Canada. The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .98. Items were collected into support type categories and reliability for each support type category was found to be strong: emotional support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .93; instrumental support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .96; informational support items had a Cronbach's alpha

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score of .90; and appraisal support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .85. The mean scores and standard deviations of support type categories were calculated and are presented in Table 22 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating agreement.

Table 22

Teacher Survey Support Type Mean Scores – Teachers of Gifted Students

Support Type	Number of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Informational	8	5.26	0.75
Emotional	28	5.23	0.83
Instrumental	22	4.99	0.84
Appraisal	12	4.95	1.10

Teacher survey responses indicated that informational support behaviours (involves providing guidance, advice and information to aid in problem-solving) were the most important for developing positive relationships with gifted students, closely followed by emotional support behaviours (perceptions of love, trust, empathy, and care). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and it was found that informational support and emotional support mean scores had no statistically significant difference ($F = 26.37$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.95$), but both informational and emotional support had statistically significant higher mean scores than appraisal support ($F = 26.37$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$ for both cases) and instrumental support ($F = 26.37$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$ for both cases). The ANOVA also found that there was no statistically significant difference between appraisal and instrumental support ($F = 26.37$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.90$). This implied that teachers viewed support types in tiers, with informational and emotional support being regarded as the most important (top tier) for developing positive relationships with their students, and the second tier consisting of instrumental and appraisal support. The mean scores for informational and emotional support ($\bar{x} = 5.26$ and $\bar{x} = 5.23$, respectively) indicated an average ranking of 'strongly agree'. While not being regarded as highly as informational and emotional support, the mean scores for instrumental ($\bar{x} = 4.99$) and appraisal support ($\bar{x} = 4.95$) were both classified as 'agree', and were very close to reaching a 'strongly agree' rating. This implied that

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teachers felt that instrumental and appraisal support were important in developing relationships with their students, just not as important as informational and emotional support.

The top 15 ranked teacher survey items were also analysed, as these represented the most important behaviours for developing positive relationships with students. Items were tagged with their appropriate support type category. A point system was created to give a score for each support type in the top 15 behaviours. The top ranked behaviour received 15 points; second ranked behaviour received 14 points; third ranked behaviour received 13 points, etc. The top 15 behaviours, their support type, their mean scores, and their points are listed in Table 23.

Table 23

Top 15 Ranked Teacher Survey Items – Teachers of Gifted Students

Rank	Item	Support Type	Mean	Points
1	Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	Emotional	5.73	15
1	Treat students with respect	Emotional	5.73	15
3	Be patient with them	Emotional	5.63	13
4	Have a pleasant or humorous nature	Emotional	5.59	12
4	Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	Informational	5.59	12
4	Encourage them to do their best work	Appraisal	5.59	12
7	Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	Emotional	5.55	9
8	Listen if they have something to say	Emotional	5.51	8
9	Provide feedback and encouragement	Appraisal	5.50	7

10	Be willing to explain things again	Instrumental	5.49	6
10	Be considerate	Emotional	5.49	6
12	Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them	Emotional	5.47	4
13	Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)	Emotional	5.43	3
14	Respect students' feelings	Emotional	5.39	2
14	Explain things students don't understand	Informational	5.39	2

Mean scores were calculated for each support type within the top 15 items, and the difference between the mean scores of the top 15 items and the overall support type mean score was calculated. The number of items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type, as well as each support type's percentage share of the top 15 behaviours. The percentage of support type items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type. The total score for each support type was also calculated. The results are shown in Table 24.

Table 24

Support Type Analysis of Top 15 Teacher Survey Items – Teachers of Gifted Students

Support Type	Mean Score of Support Type Items in Top 15	Difference from Overall Support Type Mean Score	Number of Items in Top 15	% of Top 15	% of Support Type in Top 15	Points
Emotional	5.55	0.32	10	66.7	35.7	87
Instrumental	5.49	0.50	1	6.7	4.5	6
Informational	5.49	0.23	2	13.3	25.0	14
Appraisal	5.55	0.59	2	13.3	16.7	19

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Teacher responses indicated that emotional support accounted for ten of the top 15 behaviours (66.7%), and had, by far, the highest point total of 87. The dominance of emotional support behaviours in the top 15 indicates that teachers viewed emotional support behaviours as the most important to developing positive relationships with their students, given that the mean score for emotional support was not found to be statistically significantly lower than informational support ($P = 0.95$). On the whole, teachers of gifted students ranked emotional support higher than gifted students in overall mean score ($\bar{x} = 5.23$, $\bar{x} = 4.67$, respectively), in comparison to other support types, and in top 15 behaviour analysis, indicating that teachers regarded emotional support as being more important for developing relationships than students did.

Despite having the highest overall mean score, informational support had only two behaviours listed in the top 15. This indicated that, as a whole support type, teachers held informational support in high regard, but that the individual behaviours that show informational support were not viewed as being particularly vital to developing positive relationships. Similarly, instrumental support and appraisal support had only one and two behaviours, respectively, listed in the top 15. These two support types also had similar overall mean scores, indicating that teachers value the support types, but not as much as emotional support and informational support on the whole, and not as much as the vital emotional support behaviours. This further supported the notion of a 'tiered' view of the support types by teachers, where emotional support and informational support made up the top tier (with emotional support being the more important of the two) and instrumental and appraisal support, still regarded as important, made up the second tier.

Open-Ended Responses to Teacher Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, teachers were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar teacher responses were grouped together and categorised by the researcher according to support type. There were 55 behaviours mentioned, and the behaviours for each category were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Emotional support

Of the 55 comments mentioned by teachers, 31 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support. Comments included: “listen to the interests and needs of students,” “avoid embarrassing students,” “laugh at yourself with them,” “maintain a professional approach,” “being friendly and welcoming is essential” and “be honest, you are not their buddy.” This supported the notion that certain emotional support behaviours were very important, but there were boundaries that teachers recognised and respected.

2. Instrumental support

Of the 55 comments mentioned by teachers, 16 were categorised as instrumental support. Comments included: “open door policy,” “make yourself available for students to ask questions,” “allow choice for assignments” and “flexibility – go with discussions off topic during lessons.”

3. Informational support

Of the 55 comments mentioned by teachers, 6 were categorised as informational support. Comments included: “be a facilitator so that students may extend themselves,” “challenge and extend each individual according to capabilities,” “be an expert in your subject area” and “provide expert/professional learning component or workshops/talks/presentations.”

4. Appraisal support

Of the 55 comments mentioned by teachers, 2 were categorised as appraisal support. Comments included: “Positive feedback” and “Use praise where ever possible, and suggest ways of improving rather than admonishing for poor performance.”

Teacher Interviews

The five participating teachers from Western Australia were all nominated by gifted students as teachers with whom they had positive relationships. As such, each teacher had experienced success in developing positive relationships with gifted students. The two participating gifted coordinators/teachers from Ontario had track records of

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developing positive relationships with students due to their unique roles. The interviews discussed teacher behaviours and broad types of support. Teachers were asked to describe the different ways in which they supported students, and how that support contributed to better relationships with their students. Teachers were also asked about the importance of the different support types. The interviews were coded according to support type and will be discussed below.

Emotional support

Of the 227 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, 126 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support behaviours. Teachers indicated that emotional support created the foundation for their relationships with students and was vitally important for connecting with students. They noted that gifted students often displayed anxiety and sensitivity, and that emotional support helped students feel secure enough to succeed academically. Teachers also noted that there was a fine line that needed to be respected when dealing with students.

In discussing the importance of emotional support, Mrs. Joncas, an English teacher and the Gifted and Talented Coordinator at her school in WA, described an experience with a distraught student:

The student support network is there around that but for me as her classroom teacher, I wasn't able to teach her anything to do with English when she felt like she did, and it was more important to deal with her emotionally and hear her story out and listen and be accepting of who she was and what she experienced...but I can't be convincing if I'm standing trying to tell them about subjects, or the world...if I'm banging on about something and someone's in distress – I would be a fool if I wasn't taking account of that.

Ms. Stirling, a maths teacher and gifted coordinator in Ontario, described how many gifted students experienced anxiety and that emotional support was essential to help ease their anxiousness and hypersensitivity:

Especially a gifted student, cos we get some kind of students who think they are imposters, if the test was wrong, right? So they're going to have that anxiety and that fear that because something's difficult then perhaps they're not that smart. So if you have that positive relationship with them, then you can nurture them along and they can sort of overcome the anxiety and we can try and realize that they do have the ability...[You have to recognize] that they're very

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sensitive souls, so be sensitive to their needs, and realize that emotionally they are a little bit more fragile sometimes.

Mrs. Perry, a languages teacher and gifted coordinator in Ontario, agreed:

And those relationships with gifted students – because they do have high anxiety, some of them, and they do have a sense of urgency about their lives that some other students don't have – the requirement for that relationship building is also that you be available...They feel like they're failing if something's not going well, even if it's a normal teenage experience. And that part of the gifted student of wanting to be gifted and meeting everybody's expectations of what that means, can be overwhelming to them.

Teachers explained that it was important to be cordial and friendly with students, but to avoid trying to be friends with them. Mrs. Perry emphasised the importance of establishing that she was not friends with her students, but making sure that the students understood that she had their best interests at heart:

I'm interested in you being successful – that's my message. So if you don't like it – I'm not telling you to do [something] because I want to hurt you, I'm telling you to do it cos it's good for you. And I don't have to live with you, and you can call me anything you want, but this is what must happen for you to be successful. They respect that. I'm not interested in being their friend, you know, I'm not interested in being their buddy...and they know that. It doesn't mean I don't like them. It doesn't mean they don't like me. It just means we're not friends.

Ms. Stirling agreed, simply stating “You need to keep a professional distance, so I'm friendly, but I'm not their friend, if that makes sense.”

As teachers who have been successful at developing positive relationships with gifted students, the participants recognised the importance of having friendly and cordial interactions with students and acknowledged that it was important to recognize the boundaries students identified in order to develop positive relationships with them.

Informational support

Of the 227 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, only 11 were categorised by the researcher as informational support behaviours. Teachers indicated that it was vital for them to be well versed in their subjects, and be willing to go beyond the curriculum and extend gifted students. The low number of behaviours

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mentioned indicated that there was a smaller variety of behaviours that provide informational support, as compared to the large number of ways teachers can show emotional support. Regardless, teachers indicated that it was crucial to provide students with the information and guidance they need to reach their potential and see success in school. Dr. Garnett described that being able to extend gifted students was important due to their high ability, and that they really appreciated having those opportunities to explore:

I'm not aware that I do anything particularly different other than being willing to extend them because with these students, they...can do all of the coursework that's required for Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 science in one-third to one-half the time...I find that those students are, for Year 10, incredibly aware on a global basis or a universal basis. Exploring these issues is something that they really appreciate and that's another big dimension of education.

Mrs. Perry added that students appreciated moving through curriculum at a faster pace and at a deeper level than mainstream students:

In a classroom situation when you're teaching gifted students, you have to increase the pace of the learning, the breadth and the depth. You have to because they need that. It's not a nicety; it's required...you can spend half, or less than half the time doing it with the gifted students because they're processing speed is faster and because they want to get on with doing something meaningful.

Dr. Garnett indicated that students would disengage if they felt that the teacher was not well versed in their subject:

I can't know everything, but I believe that students need – they like to feel safe, they like to feel comfortable – and the teacher [knows] what he or she is doing. And the students can be disenamoured, disenchanted in a class where the teacher doesn't know stuff.

Mrs. Joncas added, “Once they've sussed you out and they think you're a drip, that's it, you're lost...Cos if you don't know the subject, they're going to think you're a fool.”

Instrumental support

Of the 227 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, 51 were categorised by the researcher as being instrumental support behaviours. Teachers indicated that gifted students had a greater urge to learn and appreciated teachers

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taking extra time to help them, doing a wider variety of academic activity, allowing students to make some decisions regarding learning, and showing a passion for their subject. Mr. Armstrong described how gifted students had a common urge to learn and there should be more focus on academic activity in the classroom:

[Gifted students] have the same urge to learn. So in that sense they are better, or you treat them slightly differently because you can do more with them so there is more emphasis probably on academic activity, and you can tend to do more with those classes than the lower ability kids.

Because of that urge to learn, teachers indicated that gifted students were more appreciative of receiving extra help than mainstream students. Ms. Campbell, an English teacher, explained:

[B]eing able to say to them ‘You can come back at recess or lunchtime and talk to me about this issue’ and I’ll spend 10 minutes of our collective time looking at it, going through the concepts you’re not sure of. They do appreciate that and they will say ‘Thank you, you know I appreciate that’ and there will be a positive sort of vibe from that, whereas other students I think might take it a little bit for granted that that’s what you should be doing.

Teachers stated that gifted students appreciated having input regarding the direction of their learning. Ms. Stirling said:

...with gifted kids, you’ve got to kind of let go of control and say ‘Here, this is what we need to study, how should we do it?’ and let them come up with it. Or ‘We gotta evaluate this, how would you like to be evaluated? What would seem fair?’ So, you know, letting go of the control...

Mrs. Perry added:

Don’t let the system dictate what is okay in terms of accomplishment because they can usually accomplish more than the system expects and you have to let them do that. You have to set them free to do those things. So my behaviour has to be open enough to say ‘What would you like to do? How can we adjust things to meet your needs?’

Teachers also implied that by being passionate about their subject could translate into student interest, which created a connection with students. Dr. Garnett explained:

I’m also very passionate about science. I believe science is important...and the passion that I have for learning and about science rubs off on students. And this is something that’s really obvious; if young people have a teacher, and the teacher thinks that what he or

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she is teaching is important, they think it's important. So the teacher's values tend to rub off on the students.

Overall, teachers emphasised that because gifted students tended to be more engaged in their learning, that it was important for teachers to show interest in their subjects, interest in helping the students learn about the subject, and flexibility to allow students direct some of their learning.

Appraisal support

Of the 227 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, 39 were categorised by the researcher as appraisal support behaviours. Teachers stated that appraisal support was crucial for developing positive relationships with gifted students, and that the feedback teachers gave should be positive and should guide students to improvement. Teachers described that because of the urge to learn of gifted students and the focus on academic success, they needed to give the students consistent feedback so that students felt that they knew how they were progressing. When asked about the importance of giving feedback to developing positive relationships, Ms. Clack said, "If I don't give it, they actively seek it, so I can't not give it to them".

Ms. Campbell described how giving feedback was important because of the investment gifted students put into their schoolwork:

Researcher And that helps you connect with them? By giving them feedback?

Campbell I think it does because they can see that I actually acknowledge how much effort they have put in. A lot of the kids do spend hours or weeks putting their tasks together and if I give them a good amount of feedback, that's actually meaningful, I do feel that it improves our relationship, yeah.

Mrs. Perry described how giving positive feedback could help ease student anxiety about meeting the expectations that come with having a gifted designation, and was seen by students as proof of their teachers caring:

When they've done something well, they really need to hear that. When they've had a success, they really want to be patted on the back for that, because they feel that they're expected to succeed and so nobody's even going to notice if they do a good job. And so if you can take a moment and say 'That was pretty impressive' - even if

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that's all you say...Feedback about issues, negative issues, is also important. Because in many ways, the more feedback they get, the more they think you care.

As part of students' intellectual growth, teachers felt that it was important for them to let their students know that it was okay to struggle in their learning, and even fail. Ms. Stirling said:

...they do need to be challenged, like I said, and make sure that they know that it's okay to struggle and to think – that they need to think, and to push themselves to improve more and not just get by with what they already know.

Appraisal support was seen by teachers as being crucial to the development of positive relationships with gifted students by easing student concerns and showing a willingness to help students improve and succeed.

Balance

Teachers also indicated that emotional support and academic support were either of equal importance, or were complimentary in developing positive relationships with students. As academic support is comprised of three support-type categories, this implied that teachers view emotional support as the single most important of Tardy's (1985) four support types, when developing positive relationships with gifted students. When asked whether emotional support was more or less important than academic support, Dr. Garnett replied:

They're complimentary. Yeah, if the student in the class feels safe and feels respected, and feels valued, and he or she is given appropriate praise and encouragement, then that emotional support often translates into higher and higher achievement.

Mrs. Joncas also indicated that both types of support were essential:

[I]t becomes a relationship and what is driving it is you have a genuine interest and a passion in them as people as well as in your subject. Cos if you don't know the subject, they're going to think you're a fool. And if you're not interested in them, they don't give a rat's about you. And then that mutual respect just grows.

Mrs. Perry explained that academic and emotional support were linked because of the high importance gifted students place on their academics:

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The emotional support is tied to the academic support because they have a desire to do well. As I said, their identity is often about being smart...[Students] need my support to pursue the things that are difficult for them academically, and they need to know that I care about them. But also, they need to have the emotional support when they can't cope, and that happens a lot.

Overall, teachers indicated that all support types were essential to developing positive relationships with gifted students. However, teachers did put a premium on emotional support, identifying it as the foundation from which positive relationships developed. Teachers also acknowledged that there were boundaries within emotional support that needed to be respected in order to connect with their students in a meaningful way.

Analysis of Differences between Canada and Australia

Regarding teacher views on support type, a MANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference in the way support types were scored between teachers in the two locations ($F = 1607.91$; $DF = 44$; $P = 0.16$). West Australian and Canadian teachers also ranked the support types in similar fashion, with informational support and emotional support ranking the highest and second-highest in both locations (Table 25).

Table 25

Support Type Rankings for Teachers of Gifted Students in WA and CAN

Rank	WA Gifted Teachers		CAN Gifted Teachers	
	Support Type	Mean	Support Type	Mean
1	Informational	5.22	Informational	5.36
2	Emotional	5.21	Emotional	5.29
3	Appraisal	4.95	Instrumental	5.17
4	Instrumental	4.90	Appraisal	4.96

An ANOVA ($F = 21.54$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$) revealed that for West Australian teachers, informational support and emotional support were categorised as a homogeneous subset with statistically significant higher means than for instrumental and appraisal support ($P = 0.00$, for both), which were grouped as a second homogeneous subset. This indicated that West Australian teachers viewed informational and emotional support as clearly more important than instrumental support and appraisal support.

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For Canadian teachers ($F = 8.12$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$) instrumental support was found to have no statistically significant difference with any other support type. The top tier homogeneous subset included informational, emotional, and instrumental support, while the second homogeneous subset included instrumental and appraisal support. This indicated that Canadian teachers agreed with their contemporaries from WA that informational support and emotional support were clearly more important than appraisal support, but that Canadian teachers placed a slightly higher value on instrumental support than teachers from WA.

Emotional support was ranked second by mean score for teachers in both locations, however, an analysis of the top 15 behaviours revealed that in both WA and Canada, nine of the top 15 behaviours were emotional support behaviours. This indicated that there was agreement between the two groups that emotional support was the most important support type for developing positive relationships with students. This was further supported by the fact that, despite having the second-highest mean score for teachers in WA and teachers in Canada, the emotional support mean score was shown to have no statistically significant difference with the informational support mean score in either location.

Teachers made 55 comments in response to the open-ended survey question. 41 comments were made by teachers of gifted students in WA, while Canadian teachers of gifted students made 15 comments. Table 26 displays the number of comments given by teachers in both locations for each category.

Table 26

Open-Ended Survey Question Responses by Location and Support Type – Teachers of Gifted Students

Support Type	Number of Comments	WA Teacher Comments	CAN Teacher Comments
Emotional	31	24	7
Instrumental	16	9	7
Informational	6	5	1
Appraisal	2	2	0

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The ratio of West Australian teacher comments to Canadian teacher comments was approximately 2.7:1. The corresponding ratios for each support type indicated that teachers in both locations agreed that emotional support (3.4:1) was the most important support type for developing positive relationships with their students. Appraisal support was not mentioned by Canadian teachers at all and was only mentioned twice by teachers from WA, indicating teachers in both locations believed appraisal support to be less important than the other support type categories. Instrumental support received nearly equal amounts of comments from teachers in WA and teachers in Canada (1.3:1). Given the overall ratio of responses, it can be assumed that Canadian teachers placed a higher value on instrumental support than West Australian teachers. Similarly, informational support was commented on by West Australian teachers at a 5:1 ratio, indicating that teachers from WA placed a higher value on informational support than did teachers from Canada.

The interviews conducted with teachers of gifted students in each location revealed no significant differences in the two groups' views on support types. Both groups stressed that academic support and emotional support needed to be provided in balance, making comments to the effect of "They're complimentary" (West Australian teacher) and "The emotional support is tied to the academic support because they have a desire to do well...their identity is about being smart" (Canadian teacher). Both groups also stressed the importance of extending the students academically, respecting students' boundaries, and providing students with positive and constructive feedback. The interviews displayed that teachers in both locations felt that all support types were important for developing positive relationships with their students.

Analysis of Differences between Gifted Students and their Teachers

With regards to support type, a MANOVA ($F = 4018.22$; $DF = 177$; $P = 0.00$) showed that teachers valued emotional ($P = 0.00$), instrumental ($P = 0.01$), and informational support ($P = 0.03$) at statistically significant higher levels compared to their students. Appraisal support was found by the MANOVA to have unequal population variances, so an independent t-test was run. The t-test showed that appraisal support had a statistically significant higher score ($F = 4.53$; $DF = 108, 180$; $P = 0.02$) for teachers

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when unequal variances were assumed. Students were shown to value informational support the most, with the three remaining support types being relatively close in their importance.

A MANOVA found that teachers scored 15 behaviours significantly higher than students ($F = 243.92$; $DF = 77$; $P = 0.00$). Of the 15 behaviours that were scored significantly higher by teachers, 11 were emotional support behaviours that mostly centred on expressing concern for students' emotional well-being and giving personal support (Appendix H). This further supported the notion that teachers placed a higher value on emotional support than their students did.

Interviews and focus groups further displayed that teachers of gifted students placed a greater emphasis on emotional support than their students did. When asked whether emotional or academic support were more important, teacher responses included “50-50” and “They’re complimentary”. When students were asked about teachers providing emotional support, common responses included “The caring stuff is more from your friends” and “You don’t expect a teacher to care for you...on a really personal level, that’s not what they’re meant to do”. Students indicated that teachers could provide emotional support through behaviours that promoted cordial interactions, but they wanted their boundaries respected. In the focus groups, students emphasised informational support as the most important support type, making comments to the effect of “They’re kind of useless if they don’t really teach you...that’s what they’re there for”. Teachers also acknowledged the importance of providing students with academic extension and support, but did not emphasise informational support as being more important than emotional support.

5.9 Results Relevant to Research Question 4(a)

4. a) *Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with secondary students with EBD, according to secondary students with EBD?*

Student Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version was completed by 40 secondary students with EBD in secondary school behaviour programs and in senior behaviour centres in Western Australia, and by 49 secondary students in alternate education programs in British Columbia and Nova Scotia, Canada. The survey had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .96. Items were collected into support type categories and reliability for each support type category was found to be strong: emotional support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .92; instrumental support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .88; informational support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .83; and appraisal support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .82. The mean scores and standard deviations of support type categories were calculated and are presented in Table 27 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating agreement.

Table 27

Students with EBD Survey Support Type Mean Scores

<u>Support Type</u>	<u>Number of Items</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
Informational	8	4.95	0.90
Appraisal	12	4.76	1.09
Emotional	28	4.73	1.06
Instrumental	22	4.66	1.04

Student survey responses indicated that informational support (involves providing guidance, advice and information to aid in problem-solving) behaviours were the most important for developing positive relationships with teachers. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and it was found that informational support had a statistically significant higher mean score when compared to each of the other support type categories ($F = 13.68$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$, for each support type). However, despite having a statistically significantly higher mean score, informational support received an average rating of 'agree', which gave it the same average rating as the other support types. The ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between the mean scores for emotional, instrumental, and appraisal support. This

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indicated that students with EBD viewed informational support as the most important support type, with the remaining three support types being viewed as relatively similar in importance to developing positive relationships and less significant.

The top 15 ranked student survey items were also analysed, as these represented the most important behaviours in developing positive relationships with teachers. Items were tagged with their appropriate support type category. A point system was created to give a score for each support type in the top 15 behaviours. The top ranked behaviour received 15 points; second ranked behaviour received 14 points; third ranked behaviour received 13 points, etc. The top 15 behaviours, their support type, their mean scores, and their points are listed in Table 28.

Table 28

Top 15 Ranked Student Survey Items- Students with EBD

Rank	Item	Support Type	Mean	Points
1	Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	Emotional	5.40	15
2	Treat me with respect	Emotional	5.33	14
3	Tell me nicely when I make mistakes	Appraisal	5.27	13
4	Be able to take a joke	Emotional	5.26	12
5	Listen if I have something to say	Emotional	5.20	11
6	Be willing to explain things again	Instrumental	5.19	10
6	Give me a chance to explain myself	Instrumental	5.19	10
8	Explain things I don't understand	Informational	5.18	8
9	Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	Emotional	5.13	7
9	Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and	Informational	5.13	7

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personal stories

9	Give equal attention and praise among students	Appraisal	5.13	7
12	Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	Informational	5.10	4
13	Be patient with me	Emotional	5.08	3
14	Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	Appraisal	5.06	2
14	Respect my feelings	Emotional	5.06	2

Mean scores were calculated for each support type within the top 15 items, and the difference between the mean scores of the top 15 items and the overall support type mean score was calculated. The number of items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type, as well as each support type's percentage share of the top 15 behaviours. The percentage of support type items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type and the total score for each support type was also calculated. The results are shown in Table 29.

Table 29*Support Type Analysis of Top 15 Survey Items – Students with EBD*

Support Type	Mean Score of Support Type Items in Top 15	Difference from Overall Support Type Mean Score	Number of Items in Top 15	% of Top 15	% of Support Type in Top 15	Points
Emotional	5.21	0.47	7	46.7	25.0	64
Instrumental	5.19	0.53	2	13.3	9.1	20
Informational	5.14	0.19	3	20.0	37.5	19
Appraisal	5.15	0.39	3	20.0	25.0	22

Student responses indicated that emotional support accounted for seven of the most important 15 behaviours (46.7%), and had the highest point total of 64. This is contradictory to the overall support type rankings in Table 27 that ranked emotional

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support third out of the four support types. What this suggests is that certain emotional support behaviours are very important to students with EBD for developing positive relationships with their teachers, but other emotional support behaviours are far less important. This is supported by the difference between top 15 behaviour mean score and overall support type mean score for emotional support (0.47). This large gap between behaviours within the same support type category suggests that there is a wide variety of ways to display emotional support, but students highly value only a select few emotionally supportive behaviours, and was verified by a quartile analysis of behaviour means scores by support type (Table 30).

Table 30

*Quartile Analysis of Students with EBD Behaviour Score by Support Type –
Percentage of Support Type Behaviours in each Quadrant*

Support Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Emotional	25.0%	32.1%	14.3%	28.6%
Instrumental	31.8%	22.7%	27.3%	18.2%
Informational	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%
Appraisal	25.0%	8.3%	33.3%	25.0%

*Min = 3.83, First Quartile = 4.52, Median = 4.82, Third Quartile = 5.00, Max = 5.40

It is evident that students with EBD viewed emotional support behaviours as very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers, with 28.6% of all emotional support behaviours receiving a mean score in the fourth quadrant (75th percentile). Emotional support behaviour scores were distributed relatively evenly above and below the median (4.82), however, of the 12 behaviours scored above the median, 8 fell into the fourth quadrant, compared to 4 in the third quadrant. This suggests that students with EBD felt that if emotional support behaviours were important for developing relationships, then they were highly important for that purpose.

Informational support was found to have a statistically significantly higher overall mean score than each of the other support types. However, an analysis of the most

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important teacher behaviours (top 15) reveals that informational support had the lowest point total (19) of the four support types, relatively close to appraisal support (22 points) and instrumental support (20 points), but far behind emotional support (64 points). This suggests that students felt that the most critical informational support behaviours were not as important as the most critical emotional support behaviours, and were of relatively similar value to the other important behaviours. Perhaps this can be explained by the variance of mean scores within the four different support types. Table 31 displays the different support types and differences between their most and least important behaviours.

Table 31

Differences between Most Important and Least Important Support Type Behaviours – Students with EBD

Support Type	Rank of Most Important Behaviour	Rank of Least Important Behaviour	Mean score of Most Important Behaviour	Mean score of Least Important Behaviour	Mean difference between most and least important behaviours
Emotional	1	69	5.40	3.89	1.52
Instrumental	6	70	5.19	3.83	1.36
Informational	8	44	5.18	4.63	0.55
Appraisal	3	64	5.27	4.18	1.09

It is clear that informational support had the least variance among its behaviours, supported by the fact that informational support had the smallest standard deviation ($s = 0.90$) of the four support types. The range between mean scores of the highest and lowest ranked behaviours for informational support was approximately half that of appraisal support and almost a third of the range for emotional support and instrumental support. The quartile analysis (Table 30) confirmed that only one behaviour fell into the first quadrant (25th percentile). The remaining 7 behaviours were distributed in the other quadrants relatively evenly, however, quadrants three and four shared the highest percentage (37.5% each) of informational support behaviours, demonstrating that students with EBD viewed informational support as being highly

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important. This suggested that as a group, informational support behaviours were regarded at high levels of importance. However, when it came to the most crucial teacher behaviours for developing positive relationships, informational support behaviours were not identified as being more important than instrumental or appraisal support behaviours, and far less important than emotionally supportive behaviours.

There were two instrumental support behaviours in the top 15, and instrumental support had the second lowest score (20 points). Similar to emotional support, there was a large range between the most important instrumental support behaviours and the least important behaviours, suggesting that the highest ranking instrumental support behaviours were far more important to students compared to other behaviours that showed instrumental support. The overall mean score for instrumental support was 4.66 (average rating of 'agree'), which suggests that students valued instrumental support as a whole, but in terms of the most important behaviours for developing positive relationships, instrumental support behaviours were of similar importance to informational and appraisal support behaviours, and far less important than emotional support behaviours.

There were three appraisal support behaviours in the top 15, which accounted for the second highest point total (22). Similar to emotional and instrumental support, there was a large range between the most important appraisal support behaviours and the least important behaviour, suggesting some appraisal support behaviours were crucially important, where others had a much lower value. Overall, appraisal support had the second highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 4.76$, average rating 'agree'), and all appraisal support behaviours had mean scores above 4.0 (agree), indicating that appraisal support was important for developing positive relationships with students with EBD, and that some appraisal support behaviours were especially critical.

Open-Ended Responses to Student Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, students with EBD were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar student responses were grouped together and categorised according to support type. There were 43 behaviours mentioned, and the behaviours

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for each category were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Emotional support

Of the 43 behaviours mentioned by students, 25 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support. Comments included: “Understand when I’m having a bad day and leave me alone,” “Care about how I am feeling and know that I find your subject hard,” “Be kind and patient and don’t get upset,” “Be nice” and “Act like my friend, not a teacher.”

2. Instrumental support

Of the 43 comments mentioned by students, 7 were categorised as instrumental support. Comments included: “Be willing to help,” “Give students enough time to finish work,” “No homework” and “Help me with my work without getting annoyed at me.”

3. Informational support

Of the 43 comments mentioned by students, 5 were categorised as informational support. Comments included: “Be creative in teaching,” “Makes hard work okay,” “Makes me understand” and “A teacher who makes you do your work, good at your subject, break things down, explain them properly.”

4. Appraisal support

Of the 43 comments mentioned by students, 6 were categorised as appraisal support. Comments included: “Don’t be naggy,” “Wants me to do well” and “Communicate achievement to students, not parents.”

Student Focus Group

There were four focus groups that were conducted with secondary students with EBD to reflect the different programs that participated in the study. In Western Australia six Year 10 students (two female, four male) from the same behaviour program within their secondary school participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 45 minutes, and another six Year 10 students (two male, four female) from the same

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senior behaviour centre participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately one hour. In British Columbia, Canada, four students ranging from Years 10 to 12 (two female, two male) from the same alternate education program participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 30 minutes. In Nova Scotia, Canada, five students ranging from Years 10 to 11 (3 female, 2 male) from the same alternate education program participated in a focus group that lasted for approximately 45 minutes. Students were asked to describe the different ways in which they were supported by teachers, and how that support contributed to better relationships with their teachers. Several themes emerged which were connected with support types. These themes will be discussed below.

Creating an Atmosphere of Respect and Trust through Warmth and Friendliness (Emotional support)

The most discussed and highly regarded support type in the focus groups was emotional support. Students described how positive relationships that they had were created through the warmth and friendliness shown by their teachers, which allowed them to trust and respect their teachers. Students emphasised how talking with them and having conversations that were not related to school helped them to connect, and how their teachers remained positive and cheerful without admonishing them. Students appreciated teachers taking an interest in them, sharing information about teachers' lives, and being polite.

Students in BC explained that when their teachers had a calm, polite demeanour, it made them feel that their teacher liked them and it allowed them to feel comfortable and open to having a positive relationship:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| <u>Researcher</u> | What should a teacher be like when they interact with you? |
| <u>Dustin</u> | Calm, polite. I don't know – pretty much that. |
| <u>Marissa</u> | Same thing Dustin said. |
| <u>Sherrie</u> | Yeah. Friendly. |
| <u>Researcher</u> | Yeah, okay. Next question: so do you need to feel welcome and comfortable in a teacher's class to develop a positive relationship with them? |

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Elmo Yeah... Mandatory; minimum

Researcher Yeah? Why?

Elmo I don't know – cos then like – if you know the teacher hates you, you don't want to be there. But if the teacher talks to you, maybe I'll go to class.

Students explained how the teacher's demeanour could overcome the first barrier to positive relationships, which was whether the students would come to class. Students in WA explained how their teacher's demeanour made them feel about attending:

Researcher Alright. How does a teacher's demeanour make a difference? So when they smile, whether they've got a bit of a sense of humour, is that something that resonates well with you? Do you respond well to that?

Brian Yeah, makes you want to come into class on Monday... I'm kind of glad that I'm not going to a teacher that doesn't like me or anything...[It's helpful] if they're nice.

Sarah I like walking into a class and the teachers all smile at me and stuff. And they're all happy, they're like 'How do ya Kitty?' It's fun.

Researcher So Sarah, for you, if I'm the kind of teacher who smiles, happy, 'How was your weekend?' – you know, if I can take a joke, is that important for you?

Sarah Yeah, that would actually make me want to come to school for the rest of the year, unlike last time. I only turned up to school for like, three or four weeks.

Once the teacher's positive demeanour made the students actually want to attend, students expressed that the relationship truly blossomed when their teachers talked with them and took a personal interest in them. It showed them that their teachers cared, which promoted the development of positive relationships. When asked how their teachers showed that they cared, students in BC had the following exchange:

Dustin I don't know, just like asking 'How's your day going Dustin?' or something like that...Casual conversation and stuff.

Marissa Being curious about how things are going and having an interest on

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things you do, I guess.

Elmo If you're having a bad day, yeah, teachers should come and talk to you so they know what's up.

Researcher Cool. Sherrie...how does a teacher show concern for you, or take a personal interest in you – what type of things do they do?

Sherrie I don't know, like, rather than talking about school all the time, then we talk about maybe my home life or things that are going on with me in the day or anything like that.

Researcher And you appreciate that, that they're sort of looking beyond you like a –

Sherrie Yeah, I'm not just a student, I'm more of like a friend in a way.

Elmo A human being.

Students found that talking with their teacher about non-school related topics helped them feel like it was a more personal relationship. They also described how it was important for their teachers to share a bit about themselves for the relationship to develop. When discussing one of their student-teacher interactions, students in BC discussed how they felt there was a fair exchange between the students and one of their favourite teachers:

Sherrie Yeah, she's really friendly and she talks about her home life and then our home life, and then we talk – she's not always all about school.

Elmo She's not afraid to talk.

Researcher Does it help you guys develop a good relationship if a teacher just sort of will talk about their life or what's going on? You know, obviously not too much information, but...

Marissa Yeah.

Elmo We sit here and we talk about our lives with them, and then if a teacher don't talk back – just says 'Oh yeah. Oh yeah.' and shakes their head – but, I don't know, they'll talk back.

Sherrie Yeah, if they have situations where they can relate to something and then they tell you about, you know...it's not like it's just teacher-student, it's more like a friendly -

Dustin Like a person to person

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Sherrie Yeah, we're actually like person to person.

Students explained that these exchanges could ensure trust was being earned through respecting students' confidentiality. Cary, in NS, explained that being able to talk to her teachers and know that they would respect her privacy helped develop positive relationships with them:

... at my [old] school, I would be really cranky or upset or depressed and all they would do is send me to the counsellor and I don't get along with counsellors at Northside at all because they tell every teacher around everything that I've said, so.... I think having a good relationship with a teacher is where you can go and you can talk to them about your problems and they listen, they understand and they don't judge you. Cos I've had personal conversations with Pam and nobody else knew about it and she didn't tell any other teacher – nobody. And I think that's good.

Students felt that when their teachers trusted them enough to tell them bits about themselves, it showed that their teachers respected them. Brian, in WA, explained:

Researcher So Brian, you're saying that you like to know stuff about me –

Brian No, no, it's not that I want to know stuff about you –

Researcher You like it that I'll tell you.

Brian I like it that you respect – that I've got your respect that you can trust me. It feels good.

When students felt respected, that formed the foundation of their relationships with teachers, as Sherrie in BC, said, "You can't have a relationship with anybody if you're not respected". Students stressed that respect could be shown in many ways, including: encouragement, talking with students, respecting students' boundaries (e.g. be willing to listen to students but not prying) and privacy, and being friendly.. Ultimately, the students just wanted to feel that their teachers were human, and that their teachers viewed them as human:

Elmo Don't add everything on the cake, like if you're having – it's like, be a human, not a teacher.

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- Sherrie Be a teacher, but be cool about it.
- Researcher Be a human teacher.
- Elmo Yeah, like, be like a person and not just sit there and tell you what to do.
- Dustin I guess take your job seriously, not yourself so much...Be able to be like Elmo says, just be human.

Helping Students with their Work (Instrumental support)

Students revealed that once they felt that they trusted and respected their teachers as people, it was very important for their teachers to be willing to take time to help them with their schoolwork. They indicated that helping with their work consisted of teachers checking in with students and asking if they needed help, sitting with them one-on-one, giving students lenient deadlines or no deadlines at all, and not giving homework. Students repeatedly indicated that helping them with their work was important for developing positive relationships because it eased their anxieties and showed that their teachers cared. When asked how teachers helping him with his work showed caring, Elmo responded:

Because if you have a teacher that doesn't really help you, you're not going to go anywhere. But then to the teacher that will actually help you, you'll go somewhere in life. If you have a teacher that just sits there and tells you what to do and you ask for help and they don't help you, you're not going anywhere...Cos you're not going to learn.

Many of the focus group participants explained that they often experienced anxiety related to their school work and that when teachers were willing to help them it eased those worries. Candace, in WA, said "If I don't get the support though, like if I don't know what I'm doing, I start to get really anxious."

Students explained that it was important for their teachers to check on how they were doing, rather than wait for students to ask for help. Cary emphasised that it showed her teachers cared when they didn't leave her alone to struggle:

Yeah, because I feel like when a teacher doesn't help me, I feel like they don't care if I know or not. So I've struggled all through school – like I have my whole life, and I still do today – and when I get the help I need, I understand it. But if I'm sitting there with my

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hand up for like an hour waiting for help, I'm not going to do my work, because I don't know how to do it. So I feel like the teacher doesn't care enough to come help me, so I think it's really important for a teacher to help you to have a good relationship with them.

Monica and Barney, in WA, agreed that when their teachers asked if they needed help, it showed that their teachers were going beyond their basic job responsibilities:

Monica I'm the same, I like it when a teacher will come and ask you if you're stuck or 'Do you need to go over it?' or does – then they can explain it better.

Researcher So does that help you to have a better relationship with that teacher?

Monica Yeah, because then you've – some part that they actually might care, in some ways, of your education and stuff.

Researcher Okay, so for you Barney, would you feel like, as Monica said that if the teacher came over and said 'Hey, can I help you with that?', that that would be a sign that they cared about you?

Barney Yeah, because then that way they want you to be smarter and not just get paid.

Students described that they appreciated when their teachers would sit with them one-on-one and walk them through their work. Megan, in WA, discussed how one of her favourite teachers helped her with her work:

Laura is a really good teacher. She'll sit with you until you understand it. If you don't understand it, she'll make you understand it, but she'll make sure by the end of that lesson, she'll make sure that you know what you're doing and it's easy for you. And she's always offering help and she'll explain it until you understand. But nicely, calmly, she's not – never judges you...

Students also explained that giving them plenty of time to complete assignments, with lenient deadlines, or no deadlines at all, showed that their teachers displayed understanding of their struggles and their needs. Sara, in NS, described her particular situation:

Sara ...[S]ee, I have OCD, and I am diagnosed with it and I have to take a pill for it – but I always have to have something a certain way and in my words and I can't have a deadline for it because if it feels like something's not in the right spot, I have to find that spot that's right for it.

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Researcher And so that might take you longer?

Sara Yeah, exactly.

Researcher So then by giving you more time or something, that's taking your needs into consideration?

Sara Yeah.

Candace, in WA, agreed with Sara, and explained how time constraints could trigger her anxiety, which could then lead to outbursts, saying "If they don't give you time, then you start to stress and then you panic and then you don't end up doing anything. Like if you're panicked, you're probably going to trip a wobbly and storm out of class."

The students who participated in the focus group also indicated that teachers should not assign homework, largely due to the fact that the students felt that they needed their teachers with them to support their attempts to complete the work. Candace explained:

Candace ... I think it's good that they don't kind of enforce that, because a lot of people find your home assignments stressful because they actually need the support of the teacher to do what they do and otherwise -

Researcher And so having the availability of the support here?

Candace Yeah, it's a lot easier to finish tasks. Especially since a lot of people have learning disabilities and things that are - like, if they can't understand the task, they're not going to understand it more by just staying at home and staring at it. They actually need someone there to explain what they're doing and help them through it.

By helping students with their work, teachers were viewed as being caring and understanding, which ultimately contributed to their overall humanity, according to students:

Elmo Yeah. Say you have an assignment, it's not like you have this one class to do it and get it done.

Researcher So how does that help you guys have a better relationship with the

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teacher?

Elmo You don't rush and you can actually talk to the person.

Sherrie Yeah.

Researcher So do you feel like - does that take your needs into consideration more if they do that?

Sherrie Yeah.

Researcher So then if they're taking your needs into consideration, then does that show you that they care somehow?

Elmo That they're there; they're human. They have feelings too.

Encouraging Students through Feedback (Appraisal support)

Students indicated that it was important for teachers provide encouraging, constructive feedback delivered in a private manner so as not to embarrass students. Students indicated that teachers should show that they want students to do well, provide constructive feedback in a nice way, deliver feedback privately, and avoid being dictatorial and strict.

Students indicated that when they could see that their teachers were happy for their success and wanted them to do well, their motivation increased. Students in BC explained:

Sherrie Yeah, like with Carrie whenever I get assignments done or whatever then she tells me –

Elmo 'Good job!'

Sherrie Yeah, and she's like all happy about it, then it makes me just want to keep doing more and more work, I guess.

Maurice, in WA, was asked if there was anything remaining to be discussed that was important for developing positive relationships with his teacher:

Maurice Hope.

Researcher Hope? What do you mean by hope?

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Maurice I mean like encouragement, hope that [we] do well.

Students explained that feedback didn't have to be positive all the time, as long as it was delivered in a nice, polite fashion:

Researcher Okay, so it's really important to be positive when giving feedback?

Barry Yeah.

Linsy I like being positive.

Researcher So what about if they have to tell you – cos we don't always do everything correct, and say you made a mistake –

Barry Just don't be like – just don't come out and say it. Just break it to you easy and stuff.

Cary Pull you aside.

Linsy Break it to you like Wayne does...He usually pulls you out in the hall, or just one on one time. He sits down with you and eye contact and smiles.

Sara Yeah, Wayne does it nicely. He'll be like 'Close, but not quite'.

Cary Yeah, and even if you get in trouble, he'll be like –

Linsy Nice words.

Cary 'Can you please not do that in my classroom' instead of be like 'Oh my God, get out!' You know what I mean? He's nice.

Students also indicated an appreciation for receiving feedback privately. They indicated that public feedback, either positive or negative, had the potential to embarrass them depending on the individual student. Students in WA explained that they often had been embarrassed by teachers, and preferred receiving feedback privately:

Stephanie Well, if I didn't do well...you don't say my name out loud. By all means, say what I wrote down, but just don't say my name out loud. Don't embarrass me in front of the rest of the class cos I fucked up. But if you're going to tell me, then take me outside or something and tell me.

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- Candace Or maybe set some time after class or even during. You know some teachers pull you to your desk and you'll have a bit of a conversation about what's happening. Just stuff like that.
- Monica My maths teacher just calls out people who did well or passed and then it's pretty obvious who hasn't passed, or who hasn't got their score.
- Researcher And how does that make you feel, Monica?
- Monica I really don't like it and I hate being in that person's class, and I hate working with them, because they don't try to help me in any way. They don't really care if I do well and aren't getting the stuff.

Students also explained that they did not appreciate dictatorial teachers or teachers who were overly strict. They indicated that they appreciated when teachers 'gave them a bit of rope' and understood that they may have days where they need a bit of understanding, rather than stringent enforcement of rules. Students in NS expressed disdain for teachers who were rigid and strict:

- Cary My grade 9 teacher was the rudest man I have ever met in my life. He never smiled, he constantly yelled at you, his body language was stiff and stern, and like 'This is my way' blah, blah, blah. But if a teacher's easy going like Mr. Drake, my grade 10 math teacher. He was happy and he joked with you. And I'm not saying that he'd let me do whatever I wanted, but he would let me get away with a lot more, just because he knew – he knows that I get frustrated...I'm pretty sure you're going to like the teacher a lot more, instead of being like 'Do this or leave the classroom'.
- Ben Well when they're bad-asses and everything, it kind of makes you feel smaller. But when they're nice teachers and their body language and they're smiling and everything that opens up your circle bigger.
- Barry I like when they're in a good mood and smiling and stuff like that. Not trying to be like a hard-ass or nothing like that...

Walk Students through Problems (Informational support)

There were only a few comments made by students regarding informational support. Students focused on the importance of teachers giving them direct instruction on how to complete tasks by walking students through the problems in a step-by-step manner, as well as the importance of having fun activities in class.

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Students stressed the importance of teachers walking students through problems, rather than letting them struggle for too long. They emphasised that some students required more direction, or for some things to be explained more than once to understand their tasks properly:

Candace If you give us a bit of instruction, something to actually follow, then we're actually going to have more of a chance of doing it and therefore we're actually going to like you better because you're actually being a good teacher. You're not just giving us this thing we have to do like 'Here ya go, that's your child, have fun', which a lot teachers actually do that. They just write on the board 'There it is, have fun' and they just sit in their desk.

Sarah And if they actually explain it to you so you get a better understanding for it. If they just tell you 'Here's the task, it's up on the board. Now do what you gotta do'. In my last place I used to put my hand up and say 'I still don't understand it'. They used to go 'Read the task, you'll understand it'. I used to read it and then I still wouldn't understand it, so I would look -

Megan You look stupid.

Support Type Summary

During the course of the focus groups, teacher behaviours were mentioned 199 times. Of the 199 times behaviours were mentioned, 126 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support behaviours, 34 behaviours were categorised as instrumental support, 30 were categorised as appraisal support, and 9 were categorised as informational support. Students indicated that the primary focus should be on emotional support, which forms the basis of the student-teacher relationship. Emotional support behaviours were deemed necessary for students to even consider attending class, and once the students felt that there was mutual respect and trust with the teacher, the other support types had important roles to play, especially instrumental support. Students described how once they were in class, it was crucial for their teachers to check in on them and support them with their school work, as this displayed caring. Students also indicated that appraisal support was important, and emphasised that it was the manner in which feedback was delivered that was most important. The students indicated that they appreciated being encouraged by their teachers, and knowing that their teachers wanted them to do well. While

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acknowledging that negative feedback was important, the students stressed that it must be constructive, delivered in a nice way, and delivered privately. Informational support was mentioned the least, but students did put a strong emphasis on teachers using direct instruction to walk them through problems step-by-step. Overall, students with EBD indicated that emotional support formed the foundation of positive relationships, but that once that foundation was formed, the other support types were very important as well.

Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia

In order to compare student views on support type, an MANOVA was run, but it was revealed that all four support types had unequal variances across the groups. As a result, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was run and it revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two locations for any support type. Students in both locations ranked informational support and appraisal support as the two most important support types, respectively, but differed in the order of importance for emotional support and instrumental support (Table 32).

Table 32

Support Type Rankings for Students with EBD in WA and CAN

Rank	WA Students with EBD		CAN Students with EBD	
	Support Type	Mean	Support Type	Mean
1	Informational	5.00	Informational	4.92
2	Appraisal	4.84	Appraisal	4.70
3	Emotional	4.83	Instrumental	4.68
4	Instrumental	4.64	Emotional	4.65

An ANOVA revealed that informational support had a statistically significantly higher mean score than the other three support types for Canadian students ($F = 7.19$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$). There were no statistically significant differences between emotional, instrumental, and appraisal support, and thus informational support was classified as a separate homogeneous subset from the other three support types. This indicated that Canadian students felt informational support was clearly more important than other support types. A separate ANOVA revealed that for students in WA, instrumental support had a statistically significantly lower mean score than the

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other three support types ($F = 10.31$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$). There were no statistically significant differences between emotional, informational, and appraisal support, and thus instrumental support was classified as a separate homogeneous subset from the other three support types. This suggests that students in WA felt that emotional, informational, and appraisal support were all significantly more important than instrumental support. Overall, the ANOVA results suggested that the Canadian students put more emphasis on informational support behaviours that addressed their learning needs, while West Australian students sought more of a balance between affective and academic support.

Students with EBD in both locations ranked emotional support in the bottom half of support type importance, however, certain emotional support behaviours were viewed by both groups as very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers. Emotional support behaviours accounted for five of the top 10 behaviours (including the top three), and six of the top 15, for Canadian students. For students in WA, emotional support behaviours accounted for 6 of the top 10 behaviours (including the top four), and eight of the top 15. With regards to informational support, Canadian students had three informational support behaviours in their top 15 (two in the top ten), whereas West Australian students had only one informational support behaviour in the top 15 (none in the top ten). Analysis of the most important teacher behaviours by support type reveals that students in both locations agreed that emotional support behaviours were most critical for developing positive relationships with teachers, with students in WA putting a slightly stronger emphasis on affective teacher behaviours, and Canadian students putting a stronger emphasis on teacher behaviours that supported their learning.

Students made 43 comments in response to the open-ended survey question. 23 comments were made by West Australian students with EBD, while Canadian students made 20 comments. Table 33 displays the number of comments given by students in both locations for each category.

Table 33

Open-Ended Survey Question Responses by Location and Support Type- Students with EBD

Support Type	Number of Comments	WA Students w. EBD Comments	CAN Students w. EBD Comments
Emotional	25	14	11
Instrumental	7	3	4
Informational	5	4	1
Appraisal	6	2	4

Students in both locations emphasised the importance of emotional support for developing positive relationships. For both groups, emotional support behaviours accounted for more than half of all comments, while the other three support types were noted at a relatively similar rate.

The focus groups conducted with students with EBD in each location revealed no significant differences in the two groups' views on support types. Both groups emphasised emotional support as being the foundation from which relationships could develop with their teachers. Both groups also stressed that after emotional support, the next most important factor was helping students with their work (instrumental support), with students from WA putting a slightly greater emphasis on this type of support than their Canadian peers. Appraisal support and informational support were regarded as important to a similar extent by students in both locations. Overall, the focus groups revealed that West Australian and Canadian gifted students held very similar views regarding the importance of the different support types.

5.10 Results Relevant to Research Question 4(b)

4. *b) Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with secondary students with EBD, according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?*

Teacher Survey Responses

The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version was completed by five teachers working in senior behaviour centres in Western Australia, seven teachers working in secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia, five teachers working at alternate education programs in British Columbia, and six teachers working at alternate education programs in Nova Scotia. The Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version had high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of .94. Items were collected into support type categories and reliability for each support type category was found to be high for three support types: emotional support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .95; instrumental support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .95; informational support items had a Cronbach's alpha score of .85. Appraisal support items were found to have an acceptable level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha score of .74. The mean scores and standard deviations of support type categories were calculated and are presented in Table 34 in rank order from highest to lowest, with high scores indicating agreement.

Table 34

Teachers of Students with EBD Survey Support Type Mean Scores

Support Type	Number of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional	28	5.57	0.78
Informational	8	5.49	0.75
Appraisal	12	5.36	0.96
Instrumental	22	5.35	0.82

Teacher survey responses indicated that, as a group, emotional support behaviours (perceptions of love, trust, empathy and care) were the most important for developing positive relationships with students with EBD. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted and it was found that emotional support had a statistically significantly higher mean score than instrumental support ($F = 8.45$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$) and appraisal support ($F = 8.45$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.01$), but not informational support ($F = 8.45$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.78$). There were no statistically significant differences between the

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mean scores of the other support types. This indicated that teachers of students with EBD felt that, as a group, emotional support behaviours were the most important for developing positive relationships with students, followed by informational support, with the remaining support types being of relatively similar importance. All support types received mean scores with an average ranking of ‘strongly agree’ ($\bar{x} \geq 5.0$), indicating that teachers felt all support types were important for developing positive relationships with students.

The top 15 ranked teacher survey items were also analysed, as these represented the most important behaviours for developing positive relationships with students. Items were tagged with their appropriate support type category. A point system was created to give a score for each support type in the top 15 behaviours. The top ranked behaviour received 15 points; second ranked behaviour received 14 points; third ranked behaviour received 13 points, etc. The top 15 behaviours, their support type, their mean scores, and their points are listed in Table 35.

Table 35

Top 15 Ranked Teacher Survey Items – Teachers of Students with EBD

Rank	Item	Support Type	Mean	Points
1	Treat students with respect	Emotional	5.96	15
1	Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	Emotional	5.96	15
3	Talk with them about their goals and interests	Emotional	5.91	13
4	Communicate that I care about students’ emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)	Emotional	5.83	12
4	Be patient with them	Emotional	5.83	12
4	Provide feedback and encouragement	Appraisal	5.83	12

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4	Be considerate	Emotional	5.83	12
8	Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)	Emotional	5.74	8
8	Have a pleasant or humorous nature	Emotional	5.74	8
8	Listen if they are upset or have a problem	Emotional	5.74	8
8	Spend time with students when they need help	Instrumental	5.74	8
8	Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	Informational	5.74	8
8	Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	Appraisal	5.74	8
8	Be proud of students	Appraisal	5.74	8
8	Encourage them to participate in activities	Appraisal	5.74	8

Means scores were calculated for each support type within the top 15 items, and the difference between the mean scores of the top 15 items and the overall support type mean score (Table 10) was calculated. The number of items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type, as well as each support type's percentage share of the top 15 behaviours. The percentage of support type items in the top 15 was calculated for each support type and the total score for each support type was also calculated. The results are shown in Table 36.

Table 36

Support Type Analysis of Top 15 Teacher Survey Items – Teachers of Students with EBD

Support Type	Mean Score of Support Type Items in Top 15	Difference from Overall Support Type Mean Score	Number of Items in Top 15	% of Top 15	% of Support Type in Top 15	Points
Emotional	5.84	1.10	9	60.0	32.1	103
Instrumental	5.74	1.08	1	6.7	4.5	8
Informational	5.74	0.79	1	6.7	12.5	8
Appraisal	5.55	0.78	4	26.7	33.3	36

Teacher responses indicated that emotional support accounted for nine of the top 15 behaviours (60%) and had, by far, the highest point total of 103. The dominance of emotional support behaviours in the top 15 indicated that teachers viewed certain types of emotional support behaviours as the most critical for developing positive relationships with their students. On the whole, teachers of students with EBD ranked emotional support much higher than their students in terms of overall importance ($\bar{x} = 5.57$, $\bar{x} = 4.73$, respectively), in comparison to other support types, and in top 15 behaviour analysis, indicating that teachers regarded emotional support as being more important for developing relationships than students did.

Of the remaining support types, appraisal support was found to have no statistically significant difference between instrumental and informational support as a complete group of behaviours, but received the second most points in the top 15 behaviour analysis. This indicated that teachers regarded appraisal support behaviours as being the second most important type of essential behaviours for developing positive relationships with their students.

Open-Ended Responses to Teacher Survey Items

After completing the closed-ended survey items, teachers were asked to list any additional teacher behaviours that they felt contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Similar teacher responses were grouped together and categorised

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according to support type. There were 42 behaviours mentioned, and the behaviours for each category were counted, reviewed, and refined by reassigning behaviours appropriately where necessary. The summary is presented below.

1. Emotional support

Of the 42 comments mentioned by teachers, 25 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support. Comments included: “Be sincerely interested in students,” “Smile and laugh,” “Let students see you as a person, not just an authority figure,” “Be kind and gentle,” “Empathy” and “Patience.”

2. Instrumental support

Of the 42 comments mentioned by teachers, 9 were categorised as instrumental support. Comments included: “Hands on/experiential learning,” “We don’t give homework” and “Mentoring in and out of school.”

3. Informational support

Of the 42 comments mentioned by teachers, 6 were categorised as informational support. Comments included: “Choose methods of teaching that will work on an individual basis according to needs of each student,” “Let students lead and have student teaching times” and “Enable students to acquire skills as a lifelong learner.”

4. Appraisal support

Of the 42 comments mentioned by teachers, 3 were categorised as appraisal support. Comments included: “If they do cross the line explain that there is always pay back but make sure there are no hard feelings and don’t bear a grudge,” “Do things to build intrinsic motivation” and “They respond well to rules and boundaries...it makes them feel safe because their lives are often so chaotic.”

Teacher Interviews

The nine teachers who participated in interviews all worked in programs with a low student to teacher ratios that were student-centred and relationally based. As such, each teacher had experienced success in developing positive relationships with students with EBD. The interviews discussed teacher behaviours and broad types of

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support. Teachers were asked to describe the different ways in which they supported students, and how that support contributed to better relationships with their students. Teachers were also asked about the importance of the different support types. The interviews were coded according to support type and will be discussed below.

Emotional support

Of the 217 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, 153 were categorised by the researcher as emotional support behaviours. Teachers indicated that emotional support created the foundation for their relationships with students and was vitally important for connecting with students. They noted that without first addressing the affective needs of their students, they could not get anywhere academically. Ms. McGonagal, in NS, stated that emotional support was particularly important for students with EBD: “You have to emotionally support the kids and build the relationship before you can get ahead in the academics. And I think that’s true of any kid, but especially the youth at-risk.”

Mr. Larson, in BC, elaborated on why emotional support needed to be provided before academics could be addressed:

They’re so angry and frustrated, generally speaking, by so many things in their background that without a positive relationship I don’t think they’ll give us the time of day emotionally, and that’s important for them emotionally to give us the time of day because if they don’t emotionally connect with us, they’re not going to listen to much of anything we have to say.

Mr. Clarke, in NS, explained that academic support was very important for students with EBD, but that it could not happen until the affective needs of the students were addressed first:

A lot of these students need a lot of academic support. They’ve got large gaps in their learning, based on either non-attendance or for whatever reason...So academic support is extremely important. At the same time, I think I mentioned earlier, it’s not gonna happen if they’re not in, emotionally, a good head space, so probably emotional support – academic support is probably the number one reason we’re here, but it’s not gonna happen until they’re emotionally comfortable to be here. Again, if you come in in the morning and you’re in a furious mood and you’re angry, a math test isn’t gonna go well; there’s no point in giving it to them.

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Ms. Apple, in WA, explained why emotional support was so important for her particular students:

Have you met these kids? I love them but the class out there [motions to the classroom outside her office] are crazy...If we don't have a positive relationship with these students we would not get anything done. We have it all out there: self mutilators, depression, bi-polar and one who we cannot leave alone because she has attempted suicide twice this year. Can you imagine what they'd be like if we did not get along with them? That's what we do in here, build relationships. These kids need to know that we genuinely care for them, that we have their back. They need to know that you are on their side. I tell my staff - that's more important to them sometimes than the academic support we give. From that relationship we can build.

Informational support

Of the 217 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, only 3 were categorised by the researcher as informational support behaviours. Teachers emphasised that students appreciated being shown how to do things in a step-by-step manner. The low number of behaviours mentioned seems to indicate that there is a smaller variety of behaviours that provide informational support, as compared to the large number of ways teachers can show emotional support. Regardless, teachers indicated that it was crucial to provide students with clear explanations of how to complete tasks. Mr. Larson explained how he showed students explicitly how to complete tasks, and that his students appreciated it:

[T]he kids really appreciate being shown how to do things, and that's one of their frustrations that they felt in – for many of them, they've expressed this to me over the years – to be in a large class where they're learning challenged...they don't understand the work because they needed it explained, maybe a little bit differently, or a little bit more one-to-one...So when I'm teaching kids how to write a sentence...I give them direct academic input on how to do that. When it's time to write an essay on a book, then I don't let them loose; I show them – I don't do it for them, but I show them...So I show them step-by-step, they really appreciate that, and I tell them that 'If you do these things that I'm trying to help you with, you will pass the course' and they appreciate knowing that.

Instrumental support

Of the 217 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, 19 were categorised by the researcher as instrumental support behaviours. Teachers indicated

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that students with EBD appreciated when their work expectations were adjusted to their needs. Quite often, students' emotional states would interfere with their ability to work, and teachers indicated that it was important for them to acknowledge that schoolwork may not be a priority in a student's life at the moment. Mr. Larson explained his approach:

I'm reading each student as they come into my class, to see what kind of a mood each is...So, if I see somebody agitated, I might change what I planned to do with that kid that day. I might plan to do something different...that might help that kid remain calm.

Mr. Clarke, in NS, explained how it was important to give students a fair amount of time to complete assignments to address both their learning needs, and their emotional needs:

[These students] take longer to get to the same place. You have to be a lot more empathetic and a lot more willing to be flexible in how you – how they show you learning. So that's not to say that they don't do reading, writing, the same things that everyone else does, but it may take them much longer, or they may have to come back and do it at a different time when they're in a better mood.

Appraisal support

Of the 217 times teacher behaviours were mentioned during interviews, 42 were categorised as the researchers as appraisal support behaviours. Teachers stated that appraisal support was crucial to developing positive relationships with their students, and that the feedback teachers gave should be encouraging, constructive, and delivered privately. Teachers described that it was important to give feedback on academic and social behaviours to help their students develop. Mr. Chili, in BC, said:

It's one of the main things you need to do. Assessment for learning is huge, and a big component of that is feedback; academically, emotionally. Cos they're always pushing buttons and pushing you to see what they can get away with. And even asking you questions that you would think that they already know about life. You have to give feedback all the time.

Teachers emphasised the importance of making sure that they remained polite and positive with students in a calm, respectful manner that would encourage the students to continue to improve in their social interactions and in their academics. Mr. Larson explained:

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I have to be joyful in what I'm doing. I need to really enjoy the work I do. And I tell them 'I love my job'. They need to see that I'm not a teacher who hates his job teaching a bunch of rejects. Because that's the sense that I could create if I was just a grumpy old fart who found these kids irritating because they don't do things the way they 'should' according to the regular system and take direction.

Overall, teachers indicated that all support types were essential for developing positive relationships with students with EBD. However, teachers emphasised that emotional support was the most important, as it formed the foundation of relationships with their students. Teachers explained that their students had to feel emotionally supported and connected before they could move on and support them academically, which also contributed to the relationship developing further.

Analysis of differences between Canada and Australia

Regarding teacher views on support type, a MANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between the support type mean scores of the teachers ($F = 1576.69$; $DF = 18$; $P = 0.14$). West Australian and Canadian teachers also ranked the support types in similar fashion, with emotional support receiving the highest mean score in both locations, followed by informational support (Table 37).

Table 37

Support Type Rankings for Teachers of Students with EBD in WA and CAN

Rank	WA Teachers		CAN Teachers	
	Support Type	Mean	Support Type	Mean
1	Emotional	5.68	Emotional	5.44
2	Informational	5.59	Informational	5.39
3	Appraisal	5.45	Instrumental	5.34
4	Instrumental	5.35	Appraisal	5.25

An ANOVA revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the support type mean scores for Canadian teachers ($F = 1.9$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.13$). The only statistically significant difference for teachers in WA was found between emotional support and instrumental support ($F = 8.45$; $DF = 3$; $P = 0.00$), indicating that teachers

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in WA placed a lower value of importance on instrumental support than their Canadian peers. Overall, both groups agreed that all support types were important, with emotional support and informational support leading the way.

Because teachers of students with EBD scored survey items with very little variance, many behaviours ended up receiving identical mean scores. Each location produced only 18 mean scores among the 70 survey items. Canadian teachers had 29 behaviours that received the five highest mean scores, while teachers in WA had 36 behaviours ranked within their top five mean scores (Table 38).

Table 38

Behaviours Receiving Top Five Mean Scores for Teachers of Students with EBD in WA and CAN

Support Type	WA Teachers		CAN Teachers	
	Number of behaviours in top 5	% of top 5	Number of behaviours in top 5	% of top 5
Emotional	22	61.1	16	55.2
Instrumental	3	8.3	7	31.8
Informational	6	16.7	4	18.2
Appraisal	5	13.9	2	9.1

For both groups, emotional support behaviours dominated the top five scores, with 16 emotional support behaviours (55%) for Canadian teachers and 22 emotional support behaviours (61%) for teachers in WA. The other support types were scored relatively similar by the two groups, with the exception of instrumental support, which was rated comparatively higher by Canadian teachers. The top five analysis suggested general agreement between teachers in both locations, with only slight differences emerging.

Teachers made 42 comments in response to the open-ended survey question. 29 comments were made by teachers of students with EBD in Canada, while teachers in WA made 13 comments. Table 39 displays the number of comments given by teachers in both locations for each category.

Table 39

Open-Ended Survey Question Responses by Location and Support Type – Teachers of Students with EBD

Support Type	Number of Comments	WA Teacher Comments	CAN Teacher Comments
Emotional	24	9	15
Instrumental	9	2	7
Informational	6	0	6
Appraisal	3	2	1

The ratio of Canadian teacher comments to West Australian teacher comments was approximately 2.2:1. The corresponding ratios for comments for each support type indicated that teachers in WA put a slightly stronger emphasis on emotional support (1.7:1) and appraisal support (0.5:1) compared to their counterparts, and Canadian teachers put a stronger emphasis on instrumental support (3.5:1) and informational support (6:0). Both groups agreed on emotional support as being the most important support type, as the comments from teachers in both locations were predominantly related to emotional support.

The interviews conducted with teachers in both locations revealed no significant differences in the two groups' views on support types. Both groups stressed that emotional support represented the foundation of their relationships with students, and that no progress could be made academically without first addressing the affective needs of their students, making comments to the effect of "...if they don't emotionally connect with us, they're not going to listen to much of anything we have to say" (Canadian teacher) and "These kids need to know that we genuinely care for them – that we have their back. I tell my staff that's more important to them sometimes than the academic support we give" (West Australian teacher). Both groups also explained that the other three support types were important for supporting students in their learning and encouraging them in their social and behavioural development.

Analysis of differences between students with EBD and their teachers

With regards to support type, A MANOVA revealed that teachers scored all support types at statistically significantly higher levels than students with EBD ($F = 2003.91$;

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DF = 107; $P = 0.00$). Survey data demonstrated that teachers viewed emotional support as the most important support type, as it had the highest mean score ($\bar{x} = 5.57$) and was found to have a statistically significantly higher mean score than instrumental support and appraisal support using an ANOVA ($F = 8.45$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$).

Analysis of the top 15 behaviours confirmed this view, as emotional support behaviours accounted for nine of the top 15 behaviours and had the highest point total by far. For students with EBD, survey data revealed that informational support received the highest overall mean score ($\bar{x} = 4.95$) and was found to have a statistically significantly higher mean score than each of the other three support types using an ANOVA ($F = 13.68$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$). This would suggest that students with EBD found informational support to be the most important type of support for developing positive relationships with their teachers, however, an analysis of the highest rated (top 15) survey items revealed that three informational support behaviours made the top 15, and none were ranked higher than eighth. The analysis also found that informational support actually received the lowest point total of the support types, while emotional support had seven of the top 15 behaviours and the highest point total by an average of three times that of the other support types. This suggested that while students highly valued informational support as a complete group of behaviours, it was emotionally supportive behaviours that were most critical in the development of positive relationships.

Teacher interviews and student focus groups displayed that teachers and students agreed upon emotional support as the most important for developing positive relationships. Teachers emphasised that without emotional support, no progress could be made with the students, either academically, or socially. Students also emphasised that if they did not feel that their teachers cared about them as individuals then they would not engage, or in some cases, even attend. Both groups acknowledged the importance of supporting students in their learning, noting a balance between informational, instrumental, and appraisal support was essential.

5.11 Results Relevant to Comparisons between Exceptionality Groups

This study involved participants in two different countries who were identified as, or worked with, students with one of two different exceptionalities. As such, a comparison of the perspectives of gifted students and students with EBD will be examined below, followed by a comparison of the perspectives of the students' teachers.

Analysis of differences between gifted students and students with EBD

An examination of the highest 15 ranked behaviours for each group revealed that only six behaviours were ranked in the top 15 by both groups. A MANOVA ($F = 313.97$; $DF = 124$; $P = 0.00$) was run and none of these six behaviours were found to have a statistically significant difference in mean score between the groups, indicating that both types of students agreed on their importance. Students found common ground on a few primary behaviours essential for developing positive relationships, but then diverged when it came to secondary essential behaviours. Primary behaviours agreed upon by students centred on treating students with respect and ensuring their understanding and engagement with learning. Table 40 shows the similar views of both groups of students regarding the most important teacher behaviours.

Table 40

Primary Behaviours Essential for Developing Positive Relationships with Both Groups of Students According to Students

Behaviour	Gifted Student Mean	Students with EBD Mean	Gifted Student Rank	Students with EBD Rank
Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	5.55	5.40	2	1
Treat me with respect	5.29	5.33	T-3	2
Be able to take a joke	5.26	5.26	6	4
Explain things I don't understand	5.23	5.18	8	8

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Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	5.29	5.13	T-3	T-9
Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	5.12	5.13	15	T-9

The first five primary behaviours were all ranked within the top nine behaviours for each group of students, indicating their high level of importance to both groups. These primary behaviours form a foundation from which positive relationships may develop with either type of student. Further analysis of the top 15 behaviours for each group showed that among the remaining most important behaviours, gifted students and students with EBD diverged on the type of behaviours that were most important for developing positive relationships with their particular group. These secondary behaviours represent the most important behaviours for developing a positive relationship with each particular type of student and are listed in Table 41.

Table 41

Secondary Behaviours Essential for Developing Positive Relationships with either Group of Students According to Students

Gifted Students			Students with EBD		
Behaviour	Mean	Rank	Behaviour	Mean	Rank
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	5.62	1	Tell me nicely when I make mistakes	5.27	3
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	5.29	5	Listen if I have something to say	5.20	5
Allow students to get help from other students	5.23	7	Be willing to explain things again	5.19	6
Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests	5.20	9	Give me a chance to explain myself	5.19	6
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g. always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)	5.20	10	Give equal attention and praise among students	5.13	9

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Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	5.19	11	Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	5.10	12
Be friendly to me	5.16	12	Be patient with me	5.08	13
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	5.14	13	Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	5.06	14
Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)	5.16	13	Respect my feelings	5.06	15

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare mean scores for each behaviour between gifted students and students with EBD ($F = 3.13.97$; $DF = 124$; $P = 0.00$). In cases where items were found to have unequal population variances, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. Of the 70 teacher behaviours scored by students, 22 were found to have statistically significant differences, indicating that gifted students and students with EBD agreed on the value of the majority of behaviours, but disagreed on the importance of a significant amount (31%) of behaviours. The analysis revealed that gifted students had significantly higher scores for eight behaviours. These behaviours supported their ability to succeed academically and allowed for cordial interactions with their teachers (Appendix J). Four of the eight behaviours were ranked in the top 15 by gifted students but not by students with EBD, supporting the notion that the secondary essential behaviours differed between the groups. Also, the highest ranked gifted student behaviour ('Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests'), which was identified as being the most significantly important behaviour for gifted students, was ranked 18th by students with EBD, further signifying that the different groups required different behaviours for developing positive relationships with their teachers.

Students with EBD were found to have significantly higher scores for 14 behaviours, three of which were ranked in the top 15 for students with EBD, but not for gifted students (Appendix K). These 14 behaviours centred on treating students with understanding, patience, and care, and providing encouragement and support for

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students in their learning. This further supported the notion that beyond the key primary behaviours, each group required a different set of behaviours to successfully develop positive relationships with their teachers.

Comments made by students responding to the open-ended survey questions were coded into categories. Table 42 displays the categories commented on by each group of students, and the percentage of total comments for each category.

Table 42

Open-ended Survey Responses by Category for Differing Student Groups

Gifted Student Category	Comments	% of total comments	Students with EBD Category	Comments	% of total comments
Relating to/Understanding students	20	22.0	Academic support according to individual needs	15	34.9
Have a supportive and engaging class	17	18.7	Have a sunny disposition	13	30.2
Treating students with fairness	11	12.1	Be understanding of students needs	5	11.6
Viewing issues from the student perspective	8	8.8	Respect students' boundaries	4	9.3
Respecting boundaries	6	6.6	Be fair and consistent	3	7.0
Restraint from anger	6	6.6	Don't pressure students	3	7.0
Assign an appropriate workload	6	6.6			
Use an engaging voice	5	5.5			
Ensuring open communication	4	4.4			
Use of humour through personal	3	3.3			

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anecdotes

Creating a quiet work environment	3	3.3
Relating subject matter to real world	2	2.2

Responses to the open-ended survey question revealed that gifted students and students with EBD generally agreed on behaviours that were important for developing positive relationships with their teachers. Both groups emphasised demonstrating understanding for students and supporting students in their academics. Gifted students made more than twice the amount of comments as students with EBD, evidenced by having twice as many categories assigned. While both groups agreed that having a supportive class was important, the comments indicated that a supportive classroom may look different for the different groups. Gifted student comments regarding a supportive classroom included:

- Have passion in teaching;
- Encourage in-class debate to evolve and involve student interest;
- Give homework that students enjoy;
- Discussing things to help with understanding in whole class; and
- Do a range of activities – both group and individual.

These types of behaviours suggested that gifted students preferred behaviours that made classes more challenging and engaging. The comments from students with EBD regarding a supportive classroom included:

- Be willing to help;
- Help me with my work without getting annoyed with me;
- Give students enough time to finish work;
- Makes hard work okay; and
- Break things down, explain them properly.

These types of behaviours suggested that students with EBD preferred behaviours that addressed their academic difficulties with patience and guidance. It seems that while

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both students agreed that behaviours demonstrating academic support are very important, academic support means different things to the different groups.

In terms of affective behaviours, gifted students and students with EBD made very similar comments on the importance of having a positive disposition, respecting boundaries, and treating students with fairness. Comments about understanding students and their needs indicated that the different groups required slightly different behaviours to address their particular needs. Gifted student comments included:

- Cater to different people's learning techniques;
- Don't assume I have extremely high skills in the area just because I'm gifted;
- Keep in mind all students cannot perform at the same level; and
- Understand that all students are different.

These comments suggested that gifted students required understanding relating to their academic performance and abilities. Comments from students with EBD included:

- Understand when I'm having a bad day and leave me alone;
- Knows what I like;
- Care about how I am feeling and know that I find your subject hard; and
- Does not judge me for not always coming to school.

These comments suggest that students with EBD required their teachers to be understanding of their emotional states and circumstances. Comments made by both groups of students indicated that they agreed on a majority of behaviours that help develop positive relationships with their teachers, but that there were noteworthy differences between the views of the two groups.

The focus groups conducted in this study supported the notion that the two groups of students generally agreed on the teacher behaviours that helped develop positive relationships, with moderate differences. Table 43 lists the different themes that emerged from the focus groups with both groups of students, in order of importance.

Table 43*Student Focus Group Themes in Order of Importance for Both Groups of Students*

Gifted Student Themes	Students with EBD Themes
Promoting Academic Success	Having a Warm, Friendly Disposition
Being Approachable	Talking with Students
Treating Students Fair and Equally	Helping Students with their Work
Acknowledging Student Individuality	Showing Respect for Students
Having a Sense of Humour	Encouraging Students
Positive Feedback	Being Fair and Understanding in Classroom /Behaviour Management
Showing Respect for Students	Making Class Fun and not too Strenuous
Respecting Students' Boundaries	Trusting Students
Assigning and Appropriate Workload	

Each theme was discussed by both groups as important, demonstrating general agreement. The differences between the two groups occurred in the emphasis that was placed on the different themes. Gifted students indicated that teacher behaviours that allowed them to succeed academically were the most important and formed the foundations for relationships, making comments to the effect of “First and foremost, they are the teacher” and “It’s from their teaching [that relationships develop] and how they do it.” Students with EBD indicated that it was important for teachers to support them in their learning, however, they stressed that the foundation of positive relationships was based on their teachers displaying warmth and friendliness to create atmospheres of trust and respect, making comments to the effect of “You’re not going to want to go to class if the teacher’s [in a bad mood and just says ‘Let’s do our work’]” and “[Smiling and greeting me in the morning] would actually make me want to come to school for the rest of the year.” Students with EBD also placed a stronger emphasis upon teachers being fair and understanding when dealing with behaviour issues, something that gifted students just briefly touched upon. While both groups stressed the importance of supporting students academically, the types of behaviours

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identified as doing this differed between the groups. Gifted students identified behaviours that promoted enrichment and acceleration, such as:

- show passion and enthusiasm for subject;
- go beyond the text by use of class excursions;
- have professionals come to talk to class;
- avoid repetitive work;
- promote extra-curricular activities; and
- use external resources.

Students with EBD identified behaviours that primarily addressed their insecurities about academic work:

- show students step-by-step how to do something;
- circulate class and ask students if they need help – don't wait for students to ask;
- sit with students one-on-one and walk them through problems; and
- don't get frustrated at a student for getting an answer wrong.

The overarching themes discussed by both groups of students showed that there was general agreement on the teacher behaviours most important for developing positive relationships with students, however, a closer examination of the behaviours discussed by each group revealed moderately different views.

Regarding student views on support type, a MANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences ($F = 4906.66$; $DF = 217$; $P > 0.05$ for each support type) between the overall support type scores for the two groups, signifying that the groups agreed on the relative importance of the different support types. Both groups ranked informational support as the most important support type (Table 44), and ANOVA tests revealed that for both groups, informational support was found to have a statistically significantly higher mean score than the other the other three support types (Gifted students: $F = 33.31$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$; Students with EBD $F = 13.68$; $DF = 1, 3$; $P = 0.00$). There were no statistically significant differences found between the three other support types.

Table 44*Support Type Rankings for Gifted Students and Students with EBD*

Rank	Gifted Students		Students with EBD	
	Support Type	Mean	Support Type	Mean
1	Informational	5.04	Informational	4.95
2	Instrumental	4.74	Appraisal	4.76
3	Appraisal	4.72	Emotional	4.73
4	Emotional	4.67	Instrumental	4.66

This indicates that both types of students held the similar view that when regarding the support types as whole groups, informational support was seen as the most important, with the other support types being of lesser, but relatively similar, value to each other.

Emotional support was ranked lowest by gifted students and second lowest by students with EBD, however, certain emotional support behaviours were viewed by both groups as very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers. Comparing the top 15 analysis of both groups, it was found that both groups had seven emotional support behaviours in their top 15, indicating certain types of emotional support were essential for developing positive relationships with teachers. For gifted students, emotional support behaviours in the top 15 centred on treating students with respect and having cordial, friendly interactions with teachers. For students with EBD, emotional support behaviours in the top 15 centred more heavily on treating students with respect, patience, and understanding. The point system used for weighing the importance of support type behaviours revealed that both types of students had emotional support behaviours as the highest scoring support type, with students with EBD putting a slightly greater emphasis on emotional support than gifted students (64 points to 58 points, respectively). For students with EBD, emotional support top 15 behaviours outscored all of the other support types combined (64 points to 61), indicating emotional support behaviours were by far the most crucial for developing positive relationships with teachers. The other three support types had point totals with a range of just three points, indicating that students with EBD regarded them as having similar importance, but being far less crucial than emotional support behaviours.

Gifted students also put a strong emphasis on emotional support behaviours, but had a stronger emphasis on informational support compared to students with EBD.

Informational support behaviours in the top 15 received 36 points, the second highest total for gifted students, whereas informational support behaviours in the top 15 for students with EBD received 19 points, the lowest total of any support type. This suggested that while both groups ranked informational support highest as a group of behaviours, students with EBD did not view individual informational support behaviours to be as vital as the gifted students did. Students with EBD also put a greater emphasis on appraisal support behaviours than gifted students did, as three appraisal support behaviours made the top 15 for a total of 22 points, compared to one top 15 behaviour and a total of 3 points for the gifted students. Instrumental support was regarded similarly by both groups with three behaviours in the top 15 and 25 points for gifted students and two behaviours and 20 points for the students with EBD.

Results indicated that for both groups, the most important support types were emotional support and informational support. Informational support was regarded by both groups as having the highest value as a complete group of behaviours, but individual emotional support behaviours were seen as being the most critical for having positive relationships with teachers. It also appeared that gifted students put a stronger emphasis on informational support. Figure 13 displays a visual representation of the quartile analysis for informational support type behaviours for both groups.

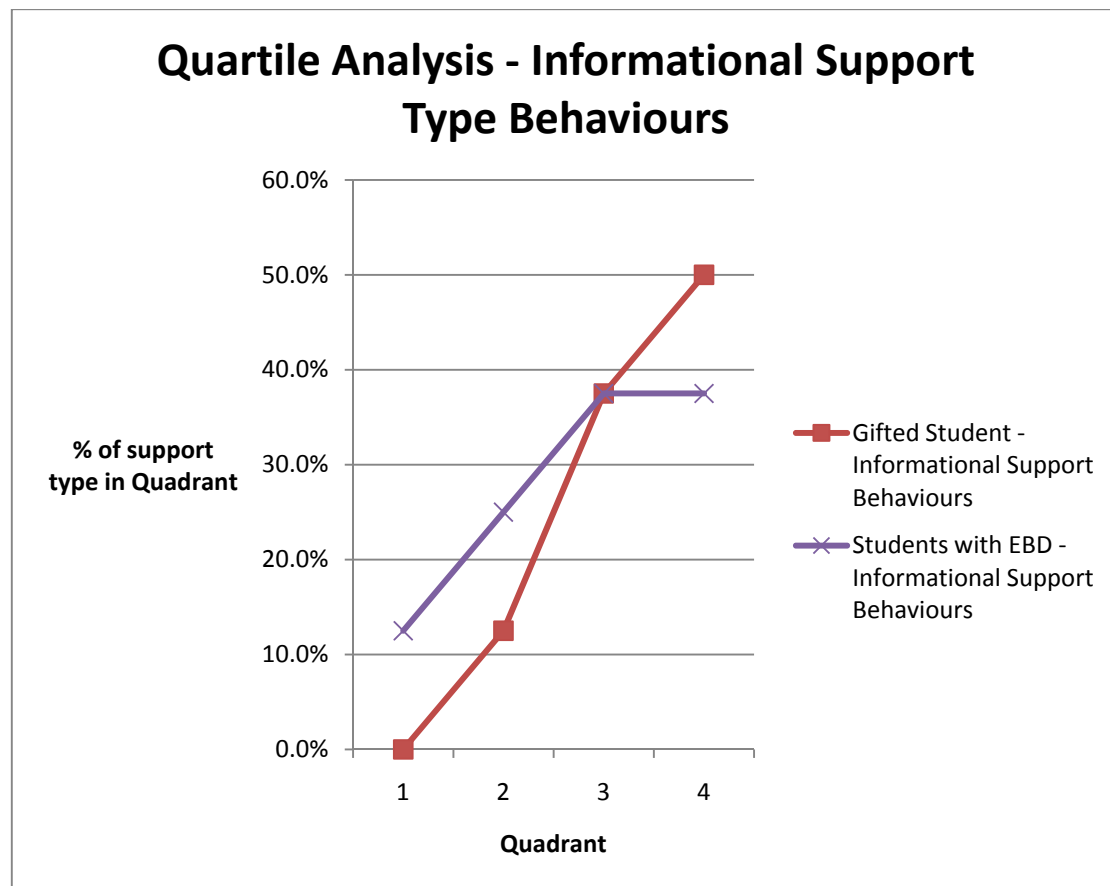


Figure 13 – *Quartile Analysis – Informational Support Type Behaviours*

For gifted students, informational support behaviours were skewed towards the third quartile, with most (50%) of the behaviours located in quadrant 4. This showed that the majority of the informational support behaviours received mean scores in the top 17 behaviours. There were no behaviours located in the first quadrant (25th percentile), indicating that gifted students did not view any informational support behaviours as being relatively unimportant. The extremes of the data points indicated gifted students viewed most informational support behaviours as very important relative to other behaviours, and no behaviours as relatively unimportant. Students with EBD had a more moderate view of informational support. The behaviour scores were not located in quadrant 4 at the same high rate, nor were they absent from quadrant 1, but the majority of behaviours were still located above the median in quadrants 3 and 4. This shows that students with EBD did hold a high value for informational support behaviours, but not to the extent that gifted students did.

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Of the 14 behaviours scored significantly higher by students with EBD (Appendix K), eight were emotional support behaviours. These behaviours emphasised teacher care and understanding of students' emotional needs, which were the type of behaviours that gifted students saw as intrusive and crossing personal boundaries. Five of these eight behaviours were located in quadrant 1 for gifted students, identifying them as the least important for developing positive relationships with teachers, and displaying how students with EBD put a greater emphasis on emotional support than did gifted students. Gifted students scored eight behaviours significantly higher than students with EBD, three of which were instrumental support behaviours, and three of which were emotional support behaviours. The emotional support behaviours centred on teachers being pleasant, considerate, and allowing students to ask questions, which showed how the different types of students preferred different types of emotional support.

Students made 134 comments in response to the open-ended survey question. 91 comments were made by gifted students, while students with EBD made 43 comments. Table 45 displays the number of comments given by students in both locations for each category.

Table 45

Open-ended Survey Question Responses by Exceptionality and Support Type - Students

Support Type	Number of Comments	Gifted Student Comments	Students with EBD Comments
Emotional	72	47	25
Instrumental	29	22	7
Informational	20	15	5
Appraisal	9	3	6

When compared to the overall ratio of gifted student comments to comments from students with EBD (2.1:1), it can be concluded that there was little difference in the view of emotional support (1.9:1). While the ratio of comments on emotional support implied that students held similar views, gifted student comments tended to focus on teachers being understanding of students relating to their differing abilities and

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academic performance, whereas emotional support comments from students with EBD focused on teachers being understanding of their emotional states and circumstances. This re-emphasised that while both groups put a strong emphasis on emotional support, the type of emotional support differed between groups. The comments also supported then notion that gifted students put more of an emphasis on instrumental support (3.1:1) and informational support (3.0:1), but that students with EBD put a greater emphasis on appraisal support (0.5:1).

The focus groups conducted in this study supported the notion that informational support and emotional support were the key support types for both groups of students. For gifted students, a select few emotional support behaviours were seen as critical for developing positive relationships with teachers, but as an overall support type group, informational support was seen as the most important. Students with EBD viewed informational support as very important, however emotional support was identified as the most important for developing positive relationships with teachers.

Gifted students indicated that certain emotional support behaviours were very important for developing positive relationships with their teachers. These behaviours centred on student comfort in class and included:

- teachers having a sense of humour;
- teachers being warm and friendly and avoiding getting angry;
- teachers allowing students to feel safe in asking questions;
- teachers treating students fairly; and
- teachers respecting boundaries.

The issue around respecting boundaries explains why certain emotional support behaviours were considered very important, and at the same time, many emotional support behaviours were viewed as intrusive. Behaviours that allowed for polite, cordial interactions with students were regarded highly, while behaviours that overtly showed care and concern for students' emotional well-being were regarded as crossing lines. When asked about this, gifted students made comments to the effect of "The caring stuff is more from your friends...you don't expect a teacher to care for you and stuff on a really personal level, like, that's not what they're meant to do."

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Gifted students indicated that their teachers showed caring through supporting their academic needs, but they did not seek direct affective support as they viewed that as intrusive. They viewed informational support as the most important support type that helped develop positive relationships because it helped teachers to fulfil their primary roles in students' lives. Gifted students made comments to the effect of "First of all you should know that they're a teacher. The first thing they are here is for the education" and "They're kind of useless if they don't really teach you. That's what they're there for ...that's what their main purpose is, so if they don't teach you, there's not really much point in having them."

For students with EBD, emotional support was viewed as the key support type in connecting with teachers. Whereas gifted students defined clear boundaries about sharing personal information and expressing concern for student emotional-well being, students with EBD expressed a desire to have a more personal connection with their teachers. One of the main themes that emerged from the focus groups with students with EBD was teachers talking with students. These conversations ranged from casual small talk to sharing personal information while respecting students' confidentiality. Students also stressed the importance of teachers listening to them when they had problems, something that gifted students viewed as going beyond their teachers' responsibilities. Students with EBD made comments expressing that they wanted to talk to their teachers "like friends", have conversations on a "person to person" level, and see their teachers as human.

Students with EBD agreed with gifted students that informational support was key to developing positive relationships, and was part of the key theme of helping students with their work. The students expressed the importance of teachers delivering direct instruction to explain how to complete tasks step-by-step. Students with EBD also put a stronger emphasis on instrumental support than their gifted counterparts. Students with EBD stressed the importance of teachers offering their time and help and assigning work with favourable deadlines, whereas gifted students put an emphasis on creating engaging work, enthusiastic teachers, and assigning work that was challenging and fair. The two groups of students had similar views regarding appraisal support, desiring feedback that was encouraging, constructive, and delivered

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in a nice, polite fashion. Students with EBD emphasised the importance of receiving feedback privately, something that was not as important with gifted students.

Analysis of differences between teachers of gifted students and teachers of students with EBD

Teachers of students with EBD rated 66 of the 70 survey items higher than teachers of gifted students, with 33 of those items receiving statistically significantly higher scores according to a MANOVA ($F = 1214.71$; $DF = 1$; $P = 0.02$). None of the four items rated higher by gifted teachers were found to have a statistically significant difference with scores for their counterparts. Similarly, teachers of students with EBD had higher overall support type mean scores for each of the four support types, with emotional, instructional, and appraisal support receiving statistically significantly higher scores, according to a MANOVA ($F = 2816.46$; $DF = 67$; $P = 0.00$). This suggested that teachers of students with EBD placed a higher value on nearly all behaviours, and implied that teachers of students with EBD placed a greater value on positive relationships with their students, compared to teachers of gifted students.

An analysis of the top 15 ranked behaviours for each group revealed that eight behaviours were ranked in the top 15 by both groups. Teachers found common ground on behaviours that could be employed in developing positive relationships with either group of students, and could be classified as primary essential behaviours, then diverged slightly when it came to secondary essential behaviours. Table 46 shows the similar views of both groups of teachers regarding the most important behaviours for developing relationships.

Table 46

Primary Behaviours Essential for Developing Positive Relationships with Both Groups of Students According to Teachers

Behaviour	Teachers of Gifted Student Mean	Teachers of Students with EBD Mean	Teachers of Gifted Student Rank	Teachers of Students with EBD Rank
Treat students with respect	5.73	5.96	T-1	T-1
Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	5.73	5.96	T-1	T-1
Be patient with them	5.63	5.83	T-3	T-4
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	5.59	5.74	T-3	T-8
Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	5.59	5.74	T-3	T-8
Provide feedback and encouragement	5.50	5.83	9	T-4
Be considerate	5.49	5.83	T-10	T-4
Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)	5.43	5.83	13	T-4

The first five primary behaviours were all ranked within the top eight behaviours for each group of teachers, indicating their high level of importance to both groups. These primary behaviours form a foundation from which positive relationships may develop with either type of student. Further analysis of the top 15 behaviours for each group showed that among the remaining most important behaviours, teachers of gifted students and teachers students with EBD diverged slightly on the type of behaviours that were most important for developing positive relationships with their particular group. These secondary behaviours represent the most important behaviours for

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developing a positive relationship with each particular type of student and are listed in Table 47.

Table 47

Secondary Behaviours Essential for Developing Positive Relationships with either Group of Students According to Teachers

Teachers of Gifted Students			Teachers of Students with EBD		
Behaviour	Mean	Rank	Behaviour	Mean	Rank
Encourage them to do their best work	5.59	3	Talk with them about their goals and interests	5.91	3
Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	5.55	7	Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)	5.74	8
Listen if they have something to say	5.51	8	Listen if they are upset or have a problem	5.74	8
Be willing to explain things again	5.49	10	Spend time with students when they need help	5.74	8
Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them	5.47	12	Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	5.74	8
Respect students' feelings	5.39	14	Be proud of students	5.74	8
Explain things students don't understand	5.39	14	Encourage them to participate in activities	5.74	8

The secondary essential behaviours showed that teachers of students with EBD emphasised the importance of talking and spending time with students, as well as encouraging students and being proud of them. Teachers of gifted students emphasised treating students with respect, explaining things to students, and allowing questions. These slight differences attend to the most prominent needs of each group (affective needs for students with EBD, and academic support for gifted students), indicating that the teachers of both groups understood the needs of their students and tried to address those needs when developing relationships with them.

Comments made by teachers responding to the open-ended survey questions were coded into categories. Table 48 displays the categories commented on by each group of students, and the percentage of total comments for each category.

Table 48

Open-ended Survey Responses by Category for Differing Teacher Groups

Teachers of Gifted Students Category	Comments	% of total comments	Teachers of Students with EBD Category	Comments	% of total comments
Flexibility in curriculum and assignments to meet needs of individual students	14	25.0	Be gentle and understanding	12	28.6
Be professional	10	17.9	Ensure learning is geared to students' needs	9	21.4
Have a positive demeanour/Sense of humour	9	16.1	Show your human side	7	16.7
Be approachable	7	12.5	Show an interest in students as individuals	7	16.7
Be consistent	6	10.7	Be patient and take time to develop relationships	5	11.9
Have an individual relationship	5	8.9	Give students ownership	2	4.8
Respect and trust students	3	5.3			
Involve parents	2	3.8			

Responses to the open-ended survey question revealed that both groups of teachers identified similar types of behaviours for developing relationships with their students. However, comments from teachers of students with EBD were more heavily weighted

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towards affective teacher behaviours, while comments from teachers of gifted students focused more on addressing their academic needs. In terms of affective behaviours, both groups emphasised common behaviours such as “smile and laugh,” “sense of humour is important,” “calmness” and taking a personal interest in students as important. Teachers of students with EBD listed more affective behaviours which included “empathy,” “patience” and “show you have genuine concern.”

Both groups also noted the importance of ensuring that learning was designed to meet the needs of individual students, with teachers of gifted students putting more emphasis on this point than their counterparts. The comments also revealed that since the students had different types of needs, they required different behaviours to address those needs. Teachers of gifted students made comments that emphasised attending to the gifted students high abilities and high engagement with learning, such as: “open ended, challenging questions and trying to solve problems in their own way,” “be a facilitator so students may extend themselves,” “be an expert in your subject area” and “let students use talents to make their own discoveries.” Teachers of students with EBD made comments focusing on promoting student engagement such as: “Hands on/experiential learning,” “Do things to build intrinsic motivation” and “We don’t give homework.” The responses to the open-ended survey question further supported the notion that both groups of teachers agreed on the general behaviours that were most important for developing positive relationships with their students, but each group emphasised different specific behaviours as being particularly important to address the unique needs of their students.

The teacher interviews conducted in this study also revealed that the two groups of teachers generally agreed on the behaviours that helped develop positive relationships, with variation according to the needs of each student group. Table 49 lists the different themes that emerged from the interviews with both groups of teachers, in order of importance.

Table 49*Teacher Interview Themes in Order of Importance for Both Groups of Teachers*

Teachers of Gifted Student Themes	Teachers of Students with EBD Themes
Being approachable	Creating a safe, warm environment
Supporting students in academic extension	Get to know students at an individual level
Acknowledging student Individuality	Encouraging students in a respectful, constructive manner
Creating an individual identity for the teacher	Being flexible with curriculum to meet students' needs
Having a Sense of Humour	Showing flexibility and understanding when dealing with misbehaviour
Giving feedback	Be aware of physical space and positioning
Respecting Students' Boundaries	Being on the same side as students
Involving parents and other staff	

Most themes were discussed by both groups as important. Similar behaviours were identified for 'Being Approachable' (teachers of gifted students) and 'Creating a warm, safe environment' (teachers of students with EBD) and were the most discussed themes by both groups. Behaviours that were identified by both groups included:

- smiling;
- laughing;
- joking with students;
- greeting students at the door;
- making eye contact with students when talking with students;
- leaving the classroom door open; and
- having non-school related conversations with students.

This implied that having a generally positive and open demeanour provided the foundation for developing relationships with both types of students. Both groups also stressed the importance of supporting students in their learning needs, which meant

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using different behaviours for the different groups. For gifted students, teachers described increasing the pace, breadth, and depth of learning, and letting the students direct their learning. Ms. Stirling, a teacher and gifted coordinator, explained:

...with gifted kids, you've got to kind of let go of control and say 'Here, this is what we need to study, how should we do it?' and let them come up with it. Or 'We gotta evaluate this, how would you like to be evaluated? What would seem fair?' So, you know, letting go of the control...

For students with EBD, supporting their learning needs was linked not only to their abilities, but also to their emotional states. Mr. Clarke, a teacher at an alternate program explained:

You have to be a lot more empathetic and a lot more willing to be flexible in how you – how they show you learning. So that's not to say that they don't do reading, writing, the same things that everyone else does, but it may take them much longer, or they may have to come back and do it at a different time when they're in a better mood. So a lot of the time, you know, if the student comes in at 9 in the morning and he's furious, you know you might have a math exam scheduled for that morning, but a math exam's not going to happen that morning. So that's really important. You need to be flexible in when learning takes place and realize that there's other priorities too.

Regarding teacher views on support type, both groups had similar views, with teachers of gifted students putting a greater emphasis on informational support, and teachers of students with EBD putting a greater emphasis on emotional support (Table 50).

Table 50

Support Type Rankings for Teachers of Gifted Students and Teachers of Students with EBD

Rank	Teachers of Gifted Students		Teachers of Students with EBD	
	Support Type	Mean	Support Type	Mean
1	Informational	5.26	Emotional	5.57
2	Emotional	5.23	Informational	5.49
3	Instrumental	4.99	Appraisal	5.36
4	Appraisal	4.95	Instrumental	5.35

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Both groups ranked informational support and emotional support as the most important support types, and ANOVAs found that both emotional and informational support had no statistically significant difference for teachers of students with EBD ($F = 8.45$, $DF = 3$; $P = 0.78$) or teachers of gifted students ($F = 26.37$, $DF = 3$; $P = 0.95$). This implied that emotional and informational support were most important support types for both groups. A MANOVA revealed that teachers of students with EBD scored each support type statistically significantly higher than teachers of gifted students with the exception of informational support ($F = 2816.46$; $DF = 67$, $P = 0.10$). All support types received average mean scores of at least 4.95 (overall rating 'agree'), indicating that both groups of teachers found all support types to be important for the development of positive relationships.

Analysis of the top 15 teacher behaviours revealed that both groups ranked emotional support behaviours as the most crucial for developing positive relationships. Teachers of students with EBD ranked nine emotional support behaviours in the top 15 for a total score of 103 points (Table 36), while teachers of gifted students ranked 10 emotional support behaviours in the top 10 for a total of 87 points (Table 24). Appraisal support received the second highest point total for both groups, with 36 points for teachers of students with EBD and 19 points for teachers of gifted students. Despite having the one of the top two highest overall mean score, informational support had only two behaviours listed in the top 15 for teachers of gifted students, and only one in the top 15 for teachers of students with EBD. This indicated that as a whole support type, teachers held informational support in high regard, but that the individual behaviours that show informational support were not viewed as being particularly vital to developing positive relationships. Top 15 analysis showed that teachers held similar views regarding support types, and showed an emphasis on emotional support as being critical for the development of positive relationships with either group of students.

Teachers made 97 comments in response to the open-ended survey question. 55 comments were made by teachers of gifted students, while teachers of students with EBD made 42 comments. Table 51 displays the number of comments given by students in both locations for each category.

Table 51

Open-Ended Survey Question Responses by Exceptionality and Support Type - Teachers

Support Type	Number of Comments	Teachers of Gifted Students Comments	Teachers of Students with EBD Comments
Emotional	56	31	25
Instrumental	25	16	9
Informational	12	6	6
Appraisal	5	2	3

Comments relating to specific types of support were relatively balanced between both groups of teachers, with emotional support being the most discussed and emphasised support type. While both groups emphasised emotional support, teachers of gifted students emphasised behaviours that made them appear friendly and professional (“laugh at yourself with them,” “maintain a professional approach,” “being friendly and welcoming is essential” and “be honest, you are not their buddy”), whereas teachers of students with EBD emphasised behaviours that demonstrated understanding (“Be kind and gentle,” “Empathy” and “Patience”). This demonstrated that when teacher views did deviate, they did so slightly and according to the needs of their students.

The interviews conducted in this study revealed slightly different views between the two groups of teachers. Both groups of teachers stressed that emotional support and academic support were both very important for the development of positive relationships. When asked which type of support was more important, teachers of gifted students made replies to the effect of “They’re complimentary,” “50-50,” “The emotional support is tied to the academic support because they have a desire to do well.” Teachers of gifted students also indicated that emotional support should be provided first, and from there a relationship could blossom, as Ms. Stirling explained:

Stirling I would start with [emotional support], developing that part first and then you can push the envelope a little bit more.

Researcher So that one comes first, but they’re both equally important in the long

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run?

Stirling Yeah, in the long run they are.

Researcher It's just the order in which you implement it?

Stirling Yes.

Teachers of students with EBD put a stronger emphasis on emotional support when it came to developing positive relationships with their students. These teachers repeatedly mentioned that if they did not connect with their students emotionally, the students would not attend or engage in learning. Comments included: "If they don't emotionally connect with us, they're not going to listen to much of anything we have to say" (Mr. Larson, BC) and:

These kids need to know that we genuinely care for them, that we have their back. They need to know that you are on their side. I tell my staff - that's more important to them sometimes than the academic support we give. From that relationship, we can build.
(Ms. Apple, WA)

Teachers in both groups identified emotional support as the foundation of positive relationships with their students, but the ways in which they expressed emotional support were attentive to the needs of their particular students. Instrumental support and appraisal support were viewed with similar importance for both groups, but were expressed slightly differently to attend to the needs of students. For appraisal support, gifted teachers emphasised positive, constructive feedback, as did their counterparts, but teachers of students with EBD put a greater emphasis on including positivity and praise as forms of encouragement. They also stressed the importance of being more tolerant of student behaviours and providing feedback in private manners. For instrumental support, teachers of gifted students expressed the importance of non-directivity and giving students freedom to make their own choices in completing tasks, but ensuring that students that they were there to help, whereas teachers of students with EBD emphasised allowing for more time to complete tasks and adjusting expectations according to ability and emotional needs. Teachers of gifted students put a greater emphasis on informational support by increasing the breadth, depth, and pace of learning for their students. Teachers of students with EBD also

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placed a high value on informational support, but emphasised the importance of direct instruction that showed students how to complete tasks step-by-step

5.12 Answers to the Research Questions

The results discussed above were analysed to establish answers to each research question, and are presented below.

Answers to Research Question 1(a)

What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students in Western Australia and Canada, according to gifted secondary students?

Survey data and student focus groups provided a clear picture of the most important teacher behaviours identified by gifted students as contributing to the development of positive relationships with their teachers. On the student survey, the 15 behaviours receiving the highest mean scores represented the most important behaviours and are presented below:

1. Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests
2. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
3. Treat me with respect
4. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
5. Have a pleasant or humorous nature
6. Be able to take a joke
7. Allow students to get help from other students
8. Explain things I don't understand
9. Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests
10. Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)
11. Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed
12. Be friendly to me
13. Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments

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14. Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)

15. Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me

Student responses to the open-ended survey question and behaviours most commonly identified in focus groups were combined and are listed below in Figure 14:

Allow students to work at their own pace and give appropriate time for assignments	Allow students to talk in class and help each other	Have fun activities in class, but keep students on task	Show passion and enthusiasm for the subject
Be available to help students catch up on work and prepare for exams	Extend students through extra-curricular activities and using external resources	Avoid giving repetitive work	Be knowledgeable about the subject
Say “Hi” to me	Smile	Teach to level of students	Act happy to see me
Do not give too much/too little time to complete assignments	Let students know you will help them and they can ask questions	Know and use student names	Does not yell or get angry
Does not make fun of students for making mistakes	Gives the same amount of attention to each student	Be polite when giving feedback	Show students how to improve
Consistency in marking for all students	Listens to everyone’s questions	Listens to what everyone has to say	Gives all students equal opportunities to participate
Give same amount of attention to every student	Get to know student interests in the subject and encourage students based upon interests	Discuss common interests with students	Give work according to students’ abilities
Display a sense of humour, including anecdotes	Able to laugh at jokes	Able to laugh at self	Give class time to work on homework
Encourage students to pursue their interests	Trust students to do their work without constantly redirecting them	When a student notices a teacher error, allow for discussion regarding the error	Do not ask too many personal questions

Figure 14 - *Most Important Teacher Behaviours Identified in Focus Groups – Gifted Students*

Answers to Research Question 1(b)

What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students in Western Australia and Canada, according to teachers of gifted secondary students?

Survey data and teacher interviews provided a clear picture of the most important teacher behaviours identified by teachers of gifted students as contributing to the development of positive relationships with their students. On the teacher survey, the 15 behaviours receiving the highest mean scores represented the most important behaviours and are presented below:

1. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
2. Treat students with respect
3. Be patient with them
4. Have a pleasant or humorous nature
5. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
6. Encourage them to do their best work
7. Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed
8. Listen if they have something to say
9. Provide feedback and encouragement
10. Be willing to explain things again
11. Be considerate
12. Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them
13. Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)
14. Respect students' feelings
15. Explain things students don't understand

Teacher responses to the open-ended survey question and behaviours most commonly identified in interviews were combined and are listed below in Figure 15:

Exceptional Connections

Listen to what students have to say	Smile	Greet students at the door	Leave office/classroom door open
Say hi to students outside of class (ie. at recess, lunch, in the hall, when on duty)	Be polite to students	Verbally state to come for extra help after class	Discuss common interests
Encourage asking questions	Do not talk too much	Allow for interaction with peers	Do not hassle students about completing their work
Incorporate student interests into material being taught	Extension beyond curriculum (eg. excursions to universities, guest speakers, discuss real-life issues not included in curriculum)	Allow students freedom to decide how to complete assignments and proceed with learning	Be confident and well versed in subject matter
Be passionate about subject matter	Share own learning with students	Get to know student names as soon as possible and use them	Show that teachers notice little details about students (eg. 'New haircut?', 'You changed your fingernail colour')
Use anecdotes for humour / relate to curriculum	Be yourself (ie. do not try to be a disciplinarian if you are not comfortable doing so)	Have a sense of humour (e.g. tell jokes, wear funny ties, have funny props to use in class, cartoons on tests)	Self-deprecation (willingness to poke fun at self)
Able to laugh at student jokes	Acknowledge effort	Acknowledge achievement	Give honest, prompt, specific, and ongoing feedback
Include positivity, but also tell students how to improve	Let students know it is okay to struggle	Do not admonish students	Let them reveal private information when they are comfortable (Be there to listen, but do not pry)

Figure 15 - *Most Important Teacher Behaviours Identified in Focus Groups – Teachers of Gifted Students*

Answers to Research Question 2(a)

What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada, according to secondary students with EBD?

Survey data and student focus groups provided a clear picture of the most important teacher behaviours identified by students with EBD as contributing to the development of positive relationships with their teachers. On the student survey, the 15 behaviours receiving the highest mean scores represented the most important behaviours and are presented below:

1. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
2. Treat me with respect
3. Tell me nicely when I make mistakes
4. Be able to take a joke
5. Listen if I have something to say
6. Be willing to explain things again
7. Give me a chance to explain myself
8. Explain things I don't understand
9. Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me
10. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
11. Give equal attention and praise among students
12. Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing
13. Be patient with me
14. Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work
15. Respect my feelings

Student responses to the open-ended survey question and behaviours most commonly identified in the focus groups were combined and are listed below in Figure 16:

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Smile	Laugh	Be polite	Don't get angry or yell
Use teachers' first names	Be in a good mood / be cheerful	Be able to laugh at self / don't be easily offended	Greet students
Have relaxed, inviting body language	Be patient with students	Talk with students about their personal interests and common interests	Have casual conversations (eg. 'How's your day going?', 'How are you doing?')
Tell students about yourself	Respect students' privacy / keep their confidentiality	Listen if a student is having a bad day	Make eye contact when talking with students
Show students step-by-step how to do something	Circulate class and ask individual students if they need help, don't wait for students to ask	Sit with students one-on-one and walk them through their work	Don't get frustrated at a student for getting an answer wrong
Help all students, not just a select few	Treat students the way teachers want to be treated	Avoid talking down' to students; talk to them as equals	Keep students' results private
Be happy when students do well	Be nice when correcting/redirecting students	Give feedback privately	Don't be dictatorial
Understand that students may need more leeway	Forgive students for misbehaviour (don't hold grudges)	Give a generous amount of time to complete assignments (or no deadline at all)	Allow students space and time if they are having an emotional episode
Treat students equally (similar consequences for similar actions)	Don't assign homework	Do activities in class that are fun (eg. field trips)	Give students responsibility

Figure 16 - *Most important teacher behaviours identified in interviews – Students with EBD*

Answers to Research Question 2(b)

What are the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia and Canada, according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?

Survey data and teacher interviews provided a clear picture of the most important teacher behaviours identified by teachers of students with EBD as contributing to the development of positive relationships with their students. On the teacher survey, the 15 behaviours receiving the highest mean scores represented the most important behaviours and are presented below:

1. Treat students with respect
2. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.
3. Talk with them about their goals and interests
4. Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)
5. Be patient with them
6. Provide feedback and encouragement
7. Be considerate
8. Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)
9. Have a pleasant or humorous nature
10. Listen if they are upset or have a problem
11. Spend time with students when they need help
12. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories
13. Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)
14. Be proud of students
15. Encourage them to participate in activities

Teacher responses to the open-ended survey question and behaviours most commonly identified in interviews were combined and are listed below in Figure 17:

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Smile	Greet students at the door and in the hallway	Have fun and joke with students on their terms	Laugh at yourself
Laugh at student jokes	Have clear expectations and enforce them fairly to create a sense of safety	Listen if a student has something to say, but don't pry into their personal lives	Keep a calm, low voice
Give students eye contact and full attention when they speak with you	Have non-school related conversations with students	Be kind and polite with students (ie. use 'please' and 'thank you')	Keep classroom door open before/after school and between classes
Allow students to hang out in your class before/after school	Talk with students about their interests	Share a bit about yourself, but don't be boastful	Learn how students react in different situations
Provide praise that is relevant	Address negative behaviour, but always include something positive in the feedback	Give feedback privately	Give students more time to complete work
Give students extra chances	Adjust expectations of student production when students are upset	Show students how to do things step-by-step	Try to read student moods as they come into class and adjust expectations accordingly
Avoid authoritarian enforcement of rules	Don't try to address behaviour while students are upset	Avoid getting angry, take a walk to cool off if necessary	Don't react to every minor misbehaviour (ie. language, humour)
Give students time to cool off if they are upset	Avoid standing at the front of the room all of the time, move around the class	Avoid standing over students	Speak with students at their level (crouch or sit)
Treat students as equals	Show concern and care for students when they misbehave (ie. 'Are you okay?', 'What's going on?')	Collaborate with students to find a plan that will work for them	Tell students you are on their side / want them to do well

Figure 17 - *Most Important Teacher Behaviours Identified in Focus Groups – Teachers of Students with EBD*

Answers to Research Question 3(a)

Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with gifted secondary students according to gifted secondary students?

Analysis of survey data and focus group data revealed that gifted students viewed informational support as the most important support type. Students indicated that teachers had to fulfil their role as educational facilitators first and foremost, and that positive relationships could develop from there. While certain emotional support behaviours were identified as being very important, students indicated that they did not view teachers showing concern for their emotional states as important, as this could cross boundary lines that they wanted respected. All support types were identified as being important by gifted students, however, the data revealed that informational support was viewed by gifted students as forming the foundation for positive relationships.

Answers to Research Question 3(b)

Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with gifted secondary students according to teachers of gifted secondary students?

Teachers of gifted students placed the strongest emphasis on emotional support. Teachers indicated that a balance was required between informational support and emotional support to address the needs of their students. Informational support was related to the need to provide academic extension for gifted students, but teachers suggested that without positive, cordial interactions, relationships could not develop properly. The other support types were also identified as being important, however, emotional support was acknowledged to be the starting point from which relationships developed and was complemented soon thereafter by informational support.

Answers to Research Question 4(a)

Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with secondary students with EBD according to secondary students with EBD?

Analysis of survey data and focus group data revealed that students with EBD viewed emotional support as the most important support type. Students indicated that they needed to view their teachers as ‘human’ in order to feel comfortable and welcome at school. Students emphasised the importance of teachers who were cheerful, patient, and understanding, as well as the importance of teachers who talked with them and got to know them as individuals. These personal characteristics allowed students to view their teachers as people, rather than authoritarian figures. Students indicated that if they did not feel that their teachers cared for and respected them as people, then they would not engage in their learning. The other support types were all identified as being important, however, students made it clear that emotional support formed the foundation for positive relationships with their teachers.

Answers to Research Question 4(b)

Which type of social support identified by Tardy (1985) – emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal – is considered to be the most important in developing relationships with secondary students with EBD according to teachers of secondary students with EBD?

Teachers of students with EBD agreed with their students and identified emotional support as the most important support type for developing positive relationships. Teachers cited the unique needs of their students as requiring emotional support to form the foundation from which positive relationships could develop. Data from the teacher surveys and interviews revealed that teachers needed to be warm, friendly, polite, and understanding to help them connect with their students. Teachers indicated in interviews that without emotional support, their students would be less likely to attend, let alone engage in their learning. The other support types were identified as being essential for developing positive relationships, but were secondary in importance to emotional support.

6. Discussion

This cross-cultural study attempted to identify the teacher behaviours that most strongly contributed to positive relationships with gifted secondary school students and secondary students with EBD, and also attempted to identify which types of social support (emotional, instrumental, informational, appraisal) were most important in the development of positive relationships with gifted students and students with EBD. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to identify the behaviours and support types, which helped increase the reliability and validity of the study. The quantitative component of the study consisted of close-ended surveys completed by gifted students, students with EBD, and their respective teachers, while the qualitative component consisted of one open-ended survey question, teacher interviews, and student focus groups. Close-ended survey questions were examined through descriptive statistical analysis, while open-ended survey questions, teacher interviews, and student focus groups were all coded for teacher behaviours and support type themes. The data were triangulated by the use of these different methodologies.

Participants were drawn from Western Australian secondary schools with state recognised Gifted and Talented programs, Ontario (Canada) secondary schools with Enrichment programs, Senior Behaviour Centres in Western Australia, secondary school behaviour programs in Western Australia, and alternate programs in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, Canada. Purposeful sampling was used to select interview and focus group participants to ensure that respondents could use relevant, detailed personal experiences to discuss the research questions, which served to increase the study's validity. Reliability was established through the use of statistical analysis for the quantitative data, as well as full transcription of the teacher interviews and student focus group, and inclusion of verbatim quotes in the results to support the researcher's analysis.

The following discussion examines the results of the study and discusses the findings of the study with regards to positive student-teacher relationships with secondary gifted students, positive student-teacher relationships with secondary students with EBD, and a comparison of different participant groups.

6.1 Positive Relationships with Gifted Secondary Students

The different methodologies used in this study generated consistent findings for developing positive relationships with gifted secondary students. Both gifted students and their teachers emphasised behaviours that showed respect for students, treated them with fairness, allowed for positive and cordial interactions between teachers and students, supported student understanding of material, and provided academic extension. It was found that gifted students emphasised teacher behaviours that supported them academically, and behaviours that contributed to teachers being seen as friendly and easy going. These findings were consistent with the conclusions drawn from Gentry et al.'s (2007) study comparing talented students and students in mainstream classes. It was found that for the talented students, the major themes that emerged were high levels of respect, a sense of professionalism on the part of the instructors, and an upbeat and positive discourse that all contributed to a positive atmosphere. In comparison, teachers displayed high regard for behaviours that showed teachers to be patient and empathetic towards students, as well as behaviours that provided students with feedback and encouragement. This indicated that gifted students placed a greater value on academic support in the development of relationships, while their teachers placed a greater value on emotional support. Separating teacher functions into instructional-academic and affective-nonacademic categories represents a false dichotomy that ignores the complexity that exists within the classroom (Pianta, 1999). Indeed, both students and teachers acknowledged in interviews and the focus groups that academic support and emotional support were not mutually exclusive, and that each type of support contributed to the development of the other. For example, making students feel comfortable in class (emotional support) was identified by both groups as contributing to student academic success, whereas making an effort to make sure that students understood material (academic support) was identified by both groups as displaying teacher care (emotional support). However, as the survey items in this study represented specific teacher behaviours, they could be classified as affective or academic according to which type of need each behaviour was most directly addressing.

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The teachers interviewed had all been successful in developing positive relationships with gifted students, having either been nominated by their pupils, or through their role as gifted coordinator. These teachers seemed to have a keen insight into the types of behaviours that gifted students appreciated, including: non-directivity, getting to know students beyond the student-teacher dynamic, and respecting the personal boundaries of students. The respecting of boundaries was viewed by gifted students as highly important, and has been shown to be a concern for teachers of gifted students in other studies (Greene, 2003). This indicated that these teachers had high levels of teacher self-awareness, which involves "...a more accurate understanding of how students affect [teachers'] own emotional processes and behaviors [*sic*] and how [teachers] affect students, as well" (Richardson & Shupe, 2003). These teachers also were able to describe the behaviours that they employed to develop positive relationships in greater detail than students were, indicating that teachers were more aware of their behaviours than students.

The gifted students in this study displayed a unique view regarding emotional support. While certain emotionally supportive behaviours were held in high regard, others were viewed as being intrusive and counterproductive to developing positive relationships. The emotional support behaviours that were highly rated centred around showing respect for students by treating them with fairness, having a sense of humour and pleasant disposition, and allowing students to feel comfortable in asking questions or interacting with the teacher. These findings are similar to the findings of Dorhout's (1983) study of preferred teacher behaviours of academically gifted students, which found that positive personal-social characteristics and a sense of humour were among the most consistently high-ranked behaviours. This can also be connected with other studies that found students desired relationships with teachers in which they were respected (Poplin & Weeres, 1994; Wilkins, 2006). The emotional support behaviours that students held in low regard involved teachers expressing care and concern for students' feelings and emotional states. This suggested that while gifted students do value emotionally supportive behaviours, a fine line exists and they do not want their teachers to intrude into their personal lives. Students viewed teachers as having a role to fulfil, which consisted primarily of providing students with the information they needed to succeed academically. This was confirmed by the high rating of informational support behaviours, which had the highest support type mean score (\bar{x} =

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5.04) for students, as well as four of the top 15 ranked behaviours. The student focus group further confirmed this view of the role of teachers, where Jen stated:

[B]ecause they are a teacher, the caring stuff is more from your friends, but when it comes to academics, your friends don't normally know everything and the teachers are teaching a subject so they're meant to know, so they can help you with that stuff. But you don't expect a teacher to care for you and stuff on a really personal level, like, that's not what they're meant to do.

Even though gifted students viewed teachers as having a primarily functional role, they still valued interactions with their teachers that were professional, friendly, and cordial, which is consistent with the findings of other studies of gifted students' preferred teacher behaviours (Dorhout, 1983). Students ranked seven emotionally supportive behaviours in the top 15 and also repeatedly mentioned behaviours that displayed a sense of humour (e.g. tells jokes, able to laugh at jokes, smiles) in the open-ended survey question. In the focus groups, students described how being warm and friendly and having a sense of humour allowed them to see their teacher as a person, rather than just a teacher.

The teacher interviews and student focus group discussions revealed that teachers and students agreed that the student-teacher barrier needed to be overcome to have positive relationships. Teachers indicated that establishing individual identity – for both students and teachers – was essential to breaking down that barrier, and could be done while still respecting students' personal boundaries. These findings were consistent with the conclusions drawn by Wilkins (2006) in her study of student-teacher relationships in large urban high schools in the United States. She found that both students and teachers wanted to be recognised as individuals within a positive relationship. This sentiment was echoed by Turley's (1994) finding that students wanted to feel that their teachers had an interest in them as individuals. Turley conducted surveys with 87 students and interviewed eight of those students to explore how teachers promoted effective learning. He found that, "Openness, authenticity, humour, fairness, patience, a real interest in students as people and a willingness to listen to them are characteristics students appreciate in teachers" (p.14). Dorhout (1983) found that gifted students preferred teacher behaviours that displayed creativity, enthusiasm for teaching, and a sense of humour. These behaviours were

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similar to the behaviours identified in this study as contributing to the establishment of individual identity. Figure 18 illustrates the behaviours teachers employ to establish their own identity, as well as the behaviours that allow students to feel that the teachers see them as individuals.

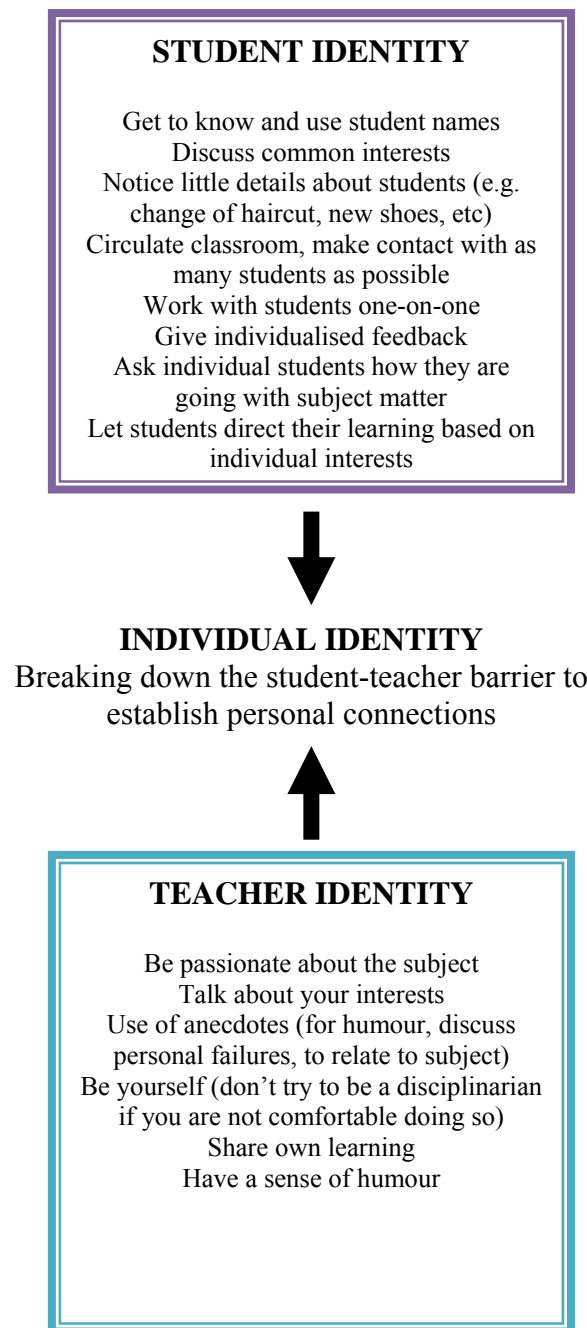


Figure 18 - How Teachers Break Down Barriers by Establishing Individual Identity

The establishment of teacher identity also contributed to teachers making themselves approachable. This theme of approachability emerged during teacher interviews as a

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key component of establishing positive student-teacher relationships. Students confirmed that they had better relationships with teachers who were approachable. For students, being approachable meant that they felt comfortable in the classroom, and comfortable approaching their teacher for help. Behaviours identified as contributing to a sense of approachability included: teachers verbally stating that students could/should ask questions and come for extra help, welcoming the class, smiling, and refraining from admonishing students. Jen emphasised how she felt her favourite teacher was approachable, and why it contributed to a positive relationship with her:

Dr. Garnett's just really friendly on a teacher level, like, he's always there to help us, whether it's with the work we're doing in class or the excursions he takes us on, or just helping us in general, he's always thinking and he's always there for us, and you know that he'll be able to help you whenever and he never gets angry at you because – it's like, he seems the only teacher that can relate to us, like he sort of acts like a student as well, like he knows we want to talk and everything and make this more fun...

Figure 19 illustrates how teachers made themselves appear approachable to their students. Both students and teachers noted the importance of a sense of humour (behaviours included telling jokes, being able to laugh at jokes, using funny anecdotes, etc.), which helped contribute to a teacher's individual identity. Both groups also stressed the importance of friendly, positive interactions and noted that positive feedback comprised a large component of positive interactions. In McCabe's (1995) study, students identified characteristics of teachers who were successful in reaching them academically. These characteristics were similar to the behaviours identified in this study as contributing to approachability of teachers: sense of humour, enthusiasm, and interest in students as individuals.

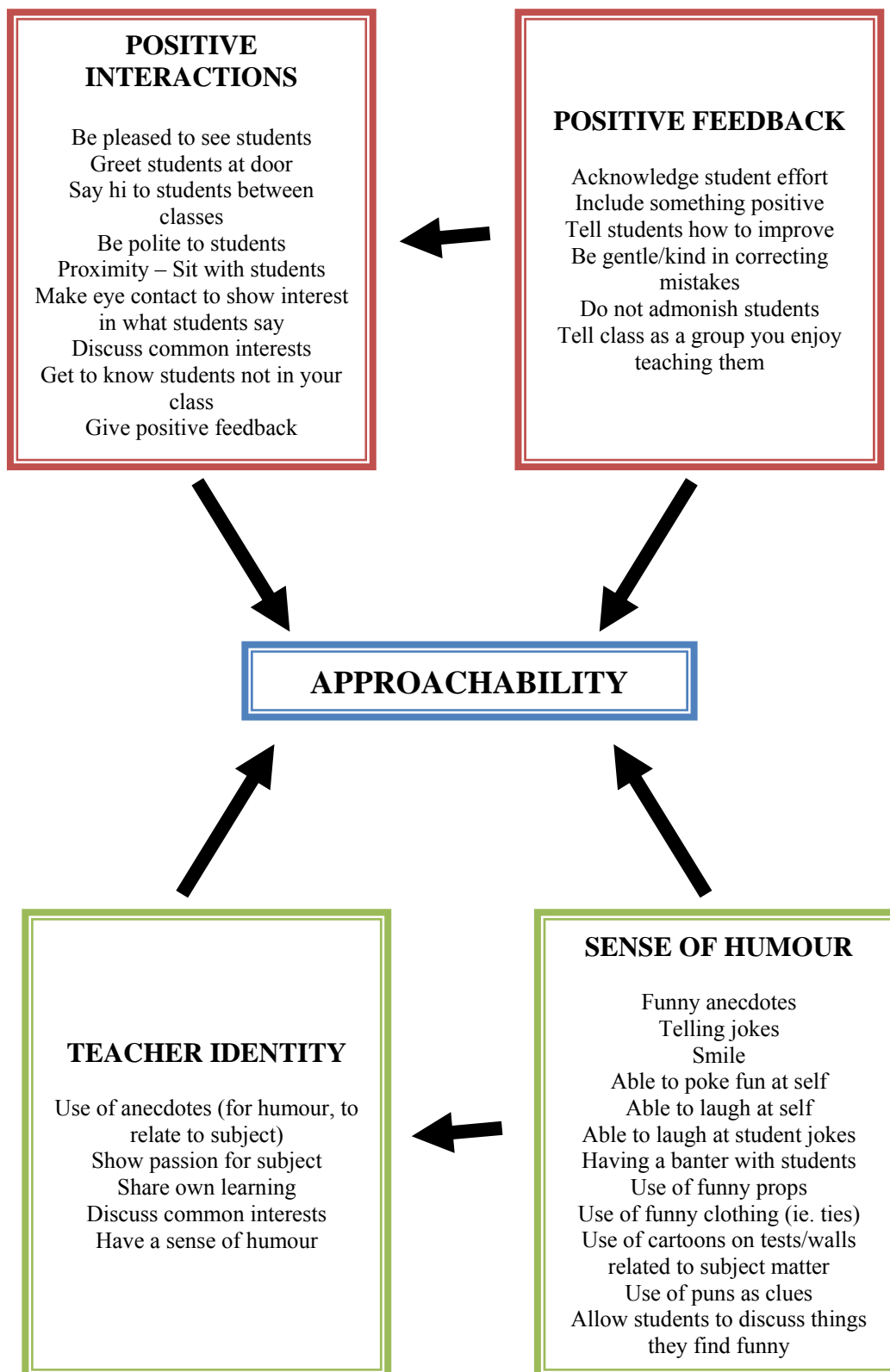


Figure 19 - How Teachers Make Themselves Approachable

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The data revealed that teachers valued informational support and emotional support the most of all support type categories, with a particular emphasis on emotional support. Teachers also scored all support types at statistically significant higher levels than their students. For teachers, emotional support and informational support were the two highest ranked support types and received very similar mean scores ($\bar{x} = 5.23$ and $\bar{x} = 5.26$, respectively). Teachers indicated that a balance was important between the two, with teacher interview responses of “50-50” and “They’re complimentary” when asked which type of support was most important. However, an analysis of the top 15 behaviours ranked by teachers showed that emotional support dominated, accounting for 10 of the 15 most important teacher behaviours. This indicated that teachers viewed emotional support as the foundation for positive relationships with their students, as well as essential for fulfilling their roles as educators. These findings are consistent with Moon et al.’s (1997) needs assessment survey on the counselling concerns of gifted students which found that school personnel (including teachers) considered academic concerns less important than social and emotional needs such as peer relationships, emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and stress management. Similarly, Hargreaves’ (2000) study of 60 Canadian high school teachers found that meaningful relationships between teachers and students often developed outside of class, but within the classroom, teachers indicated the need to address students’ emotions so that they did not interfere with their academics. The sentiment of getting students ‘on board’ as the basis of the relationship was echoed in teacher interviews.

In Ms. Campbell’s words:

[I]f I think that they feel safe and they like me and they like the work we’re doing, I can actually get them to do what they’re supposed to do...my job’s a lot easier if I can scan around the room and feel that everyone is okay where they are. They’re happy to be in there – they may not be happy to do the work necessarily – but if they feel that they’re with a teacher who’s going to listen to them if they want to tell me x, y, z, about whatever’s happening in their life at the time, or issues that they’ve got, I can feel the difference if it’s a negative vibe in the classroom...

Mr. Armstrong agreed, saying “[I]f they don’t like you as a teacher, then I think you have an uphill battle to win them over.”

Figure 20 illustrates the teacher perspective of emotional support as the basis for positive relationships with their students, with emotional support and informational support acting as the primary support types in developing positive relationships with students.

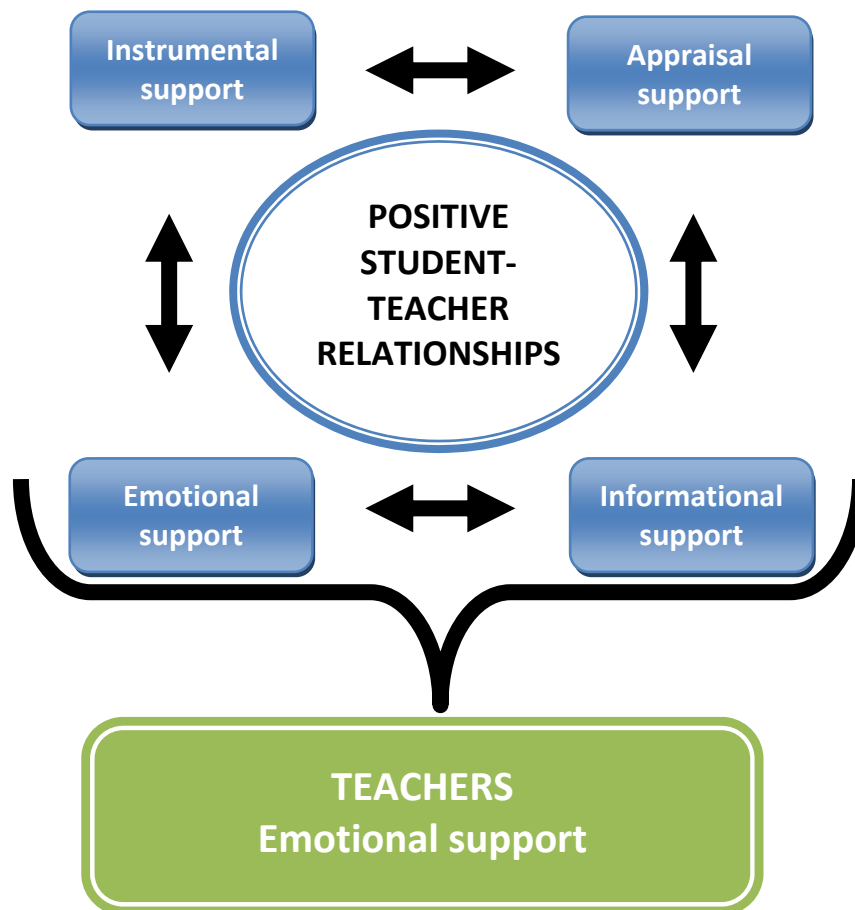


Figure 20 – *Teachers of Gifted Students Views about Foundations of Positive Relationships*

Students indicated that, for them, informational support was the most important support type in developing positive relationships with their teachers. Informational support received the highest mean score of all support categories ($\bar{x} = 5.04$) and was the only support type to achieve a mean score above 5.0 (strongly agree). This connected the idea that the gifted students viewed their teacher as having a role to fulfil; that role being the facilitator for their educational success. It further indicated that students viewed informational support as the foundation for positive relationships with their teachers, illustrated in Figure 21. These findings support the conclusions of

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Mills' (2003) study of characteristics of effective teachers of gifted students. Mills found that aside from certain personality characteristics, the most effective teachers of gifted students had a strong background in the academic discipline being taught and had a passion for the subject matter, characteristics that would address the informational support needs of gifted students. Similarly, Suk-Un Jin and Moon (2006) found that gifted Korean high school science students reported particular appreciation for high teacher competence and teacher expertise.

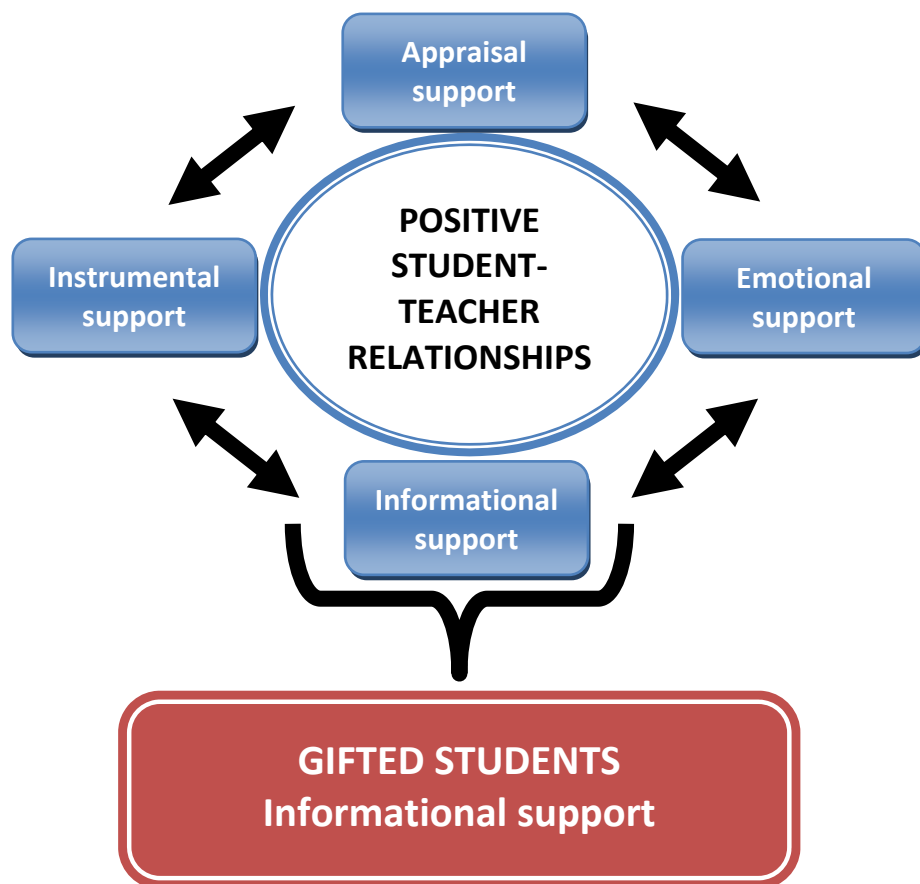


Figure 21 - *Gifted Student Views about Foundations of Positive Relationships*

In the focus group, students confirmed their view that teachers had a role to play in facilitating student learning, and that positive relationships would develop if teachers fulfilled that role. Kim and Jen explained:

Kim [F]irst and foremost, they are the teacher like Connor said. And your relationship with your teacher naturally will develop from a professional one – so student-teacher – to something more than that. You become friends, you find that you have something in common or

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you really like the teacher because you can remember that ‘Oh, he taught me this and this and this’ ...

Jen Yeah, because they’re a teacher and that’s their job. Like when you start with them, they’re teaching you stuff and when you develop that relationship where you feel happy and comfortable with them, it’s sort of from their teaching and how they do it. That’s where it sort of originates from.

The other student support type categories (emotional, instrumental, appraisal) all had similar mean scores, with a range between the three of just 0.06. This indicated that students held the three support types in similar regard, but not as importantly as informational support. Gifted students still valued all three support types (all three had mean scores above $\bar{x} = 4.67$, overall rating of ‘agree’) as important to developing positive relationships with their teachers.

However, emotional support behaviours accounted for seven of the top 15 student ranked behaviours, indicating that certain emotionally supportive behaviours were very important to gifted students, as long as they did not cross personal boundary lines or go beyond the perceived role of the teacher. These behaviours were ones that treated students respectfully and equally, and allowed for friendly interactions with teachers. The main difference with teachers in the view of emotional support was that students viewed showing concern for their emotional states and interest in their personal lives as intrusive, whereas teachers saw them as important. Teachers placed a higher value on emotional support behaviours that expressed concern for students’ emotional well-being and provided personal support, but teachers and students agreed upon the importance of behaviours that centred on treating students equally and with respect, and having a pleasant demeanour and sense of humour.

While instrumental support and appraisal support were regarded as important by both groups, informational support and emotional support were the two support types identified as most crucial to developing positive relationships with gifted students. In comparison, Suldo et al.’s (2009) study of 401 middle school students in the south-eastern United States found that

[T]he types of teacher support most related to students’ life satisfaction are emotional support (students’ perceptions of how often teachers care about them, treat them fairly, and make it okay

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to ask questions) and instrumental support (the extent to which students perceive teachers make sure they have what they need for school, take time to help them learn to do something well, and spend time with them when they need help). (p.79)

The themes that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions suggested that gifted students preferred non-directivity and freedom to be allowed to get on with their work, which have been found to be essential practices for effective teaching of gifted students (Dorhout, 1983; Wendel & Heiser, 1989). This may explain why gifted students placed a higher value on receiving rich information and guidance, rather than teachers spending excessive time delivering instruction and support.

The teachers interviewed in this study indicated that they generally treated gifted students the same as they treated other students, with the exception that gifted students required academic extension, confidence in the teacher's knowledge, and non-directivity, all due to their high ability. These observations are supported by literature that suggests independent study, enrichment, and acceleration have been shown to increase gifted students' engagement and enjoyment of learning (Renzulli, 1977; Renzulli & Reis, 1985, 1997). The observations also support the conclusions found in other studies (Mills, 2003; Gentry et al., 2007) that to develop positive relationships with gifted students, teachers must address their academic needs to lay a foundation from which the relationship can grow.

In summary, both gifted students and their teachers in this study valued the role all support types played in developing relationships. Teachers put a greater value on all support types than did students, and were more elaborate in their descriptions of the behaviours they employed, indicating that teachers are more aware than students of the subtle behaviours that develop positive relationships. Teachers also placed a stronger emphasis on emotionally supportive behaviours, whereas gifted students emphasised informational support behaviours as the most important, and the foundation from which positive relationships develop. Gifted students felt that teachers needed to fulfil their role as educational facilitators first and foremost, but also needed to break down student-teacher barriers through behaviours that made them seem approachable. Teachers also stressed the importance of being approachable through behaviours that made them seem warm and friendly, and put a

stronger emphasis on emotional support behaviours as a whole. Overall, the study revealed that there are a number of specific teacher behaviours that can be categorised and employed to develop positive relationships with gifted secondary school students.

6.2 Positive Relationships with Secondary Students with EBD

The different methodologies used in this study generated consistent findings for developing positive relationships with secondary students with EBD. It was found that both students with EBD and their teachers highly regarded teacher behaviours that showed respect for students, patience with students, and supported them in their learning. Students with EBD preferred behaviours where their teachers listened to them, were patient with them in supporting them in their learning, were nice to them, and treated them equally. These findings were consistent with other studies involving students with EBD that found students appreciated teachers who showed them understanding and supported them in their learning and social development (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; Konkol & Owens, 2004; McIntyre & Battle, 1998). Teachers of students with EBD emphasised taking time to get to know students, encouraging students, listening to students, being pleasant with students, and supporting them in their learning. While the specific behaviours identified as the most important varied between students and teachers, overarching themes of respect, listening, patience, and support were shared, indicating high agreement and a mutual understanding of what was important for having positive relationships. These attributes have also been identified as common universal needs for youth (Deci et al., 1995).

The majority of the behaviours mentioned in interviews and focus groups were agreed upon by both groups, indicating that students with EBD, and their teachers largely agreed upon what was necessary to form positive relationships. This stands in contrast to Cefai's (1995) study in which students with EBD and their teachers displayed vastly different views on the causes of behaviour problems, often citing the shortcomings of the other party. However, all of the students with EBD and the teachers who participated in this study were selected from alternate or behaviour programs that were designed to meet the needs of students by being student-centred, relationally based, and containing low student to teacher ratios – environments that act

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as incubators for positive student-teacher relationships. All of the students participating in focus groups expressed that they had experienced positive relationships with teachers, particularly with the teachers at their current schools.

Students and teachers both emphasised behaviours that were warm, welcoming, understanding, and supportive of student learning. Teachers identified several subtle behaviours that they employed that their students may not have been aware of, such as leaving doors open, reading student moods as they entered class, and positioning themselves around the classroom in a strategic manner. This indicated that teachers were more aware of the behaviours that they employed to develop positive relationships than their students were. Students emphasised behaviours that demonstrated understanding, fairness, and provided academic support, which were consistent with the experiences of other students with EBD enrolled in alternate education programs (Konkol & Owens, 2004).

The teacher interviews and student focus group discussions revealed that it was important for teachers to engage in behaviours that enabled students to see them as human. This is consistent with research that has found that students in alternate settings appreciated having ‘human’ teachers, an experience that often eluded them in their previous schooling experiences (McDonald, 2001). According to the participants, two major factors contributed to a teacher being viewed as human: the presentation of the teacher as a person and the interaction of the teacher with the students. The presentation of the teacher as a person involved teachers displaying warm, positive demeanours where they were cheerful, smiled, and displayed a sense of humour. Teacher presentation also involved sharing bits of personal information with students, but being careful not to appear boastful or revealing too much about their personal lives. Teachers also displayed their humanity when they interacted with students in ways that were welcoming, polite, encouraging, helpful, and understanding of student emotions and circumstances. The humanizing factors identified in this study were consistent with strategies recommended for connecting with students (McDonald, 2010). Figure 22 gives a visual representation of how teachers come to be viewed by their students as being human.

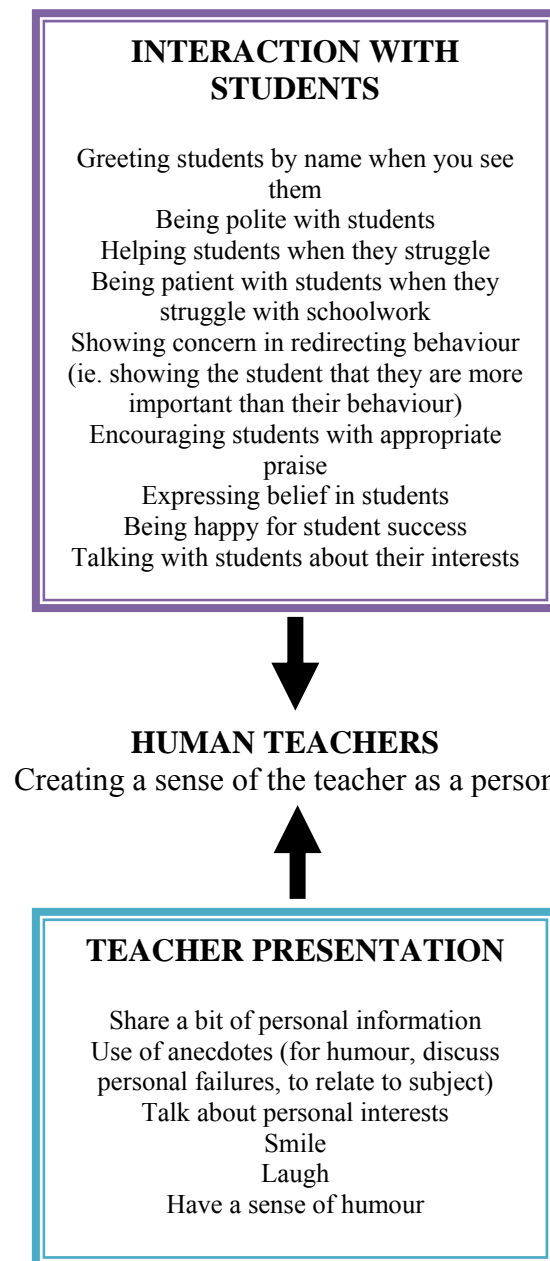


Figure 22 - How Teachers Make Themselves Appear Human

Students and teachers also put a strong emphasis on supporting students in their academics. Students indicated that when their teachers helped them with their schoolwork, it eased their anxieties and allowed them to see that their teacher cared. Teachers expressed that students appreciated their support, which helped them to connect with their students. This is consistent with findings in other studies in which students with EBD expressed frustration when their teachers did not ‘explain’ things, and often led to frustration and a loss of self-esteem (Dalli & Dimech, 2005; Magri,

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2009). Participants described how students with EBD preferred to receive support, identifying four important factors: instruction, timing, physical spacing, and patience and encouragement. Participants indicated that students with EBD preferred direct instruction that showed them how to complete tasks step-by-step. This is consistent with an empirical history of direct instruction being particularly effective in increasing academic achievement for struggling learners (Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003), and the view that “direct instruction has a number of features that are particularly suitable for meeting [the] challenging needs [of students with EBD]” (Walker et al., 1995, p. 101). Timing was also identified as important for supporting students with EBD in their schoolwork. For the participants in this study, timing consisted of teachers checking with students individually to ensure their comprehension, rather than waiting for students to ask for help, as this prevented students from getting frustrated and giving up. Timing also involved providing students with plenty of time to complete assignments, with favourable deadlines, or no deadlines at all. This is consistent with the findings of Konkol and Owens (2004), who found that students with EBD in alternate programs reported an appreciation for being able to work at their own pace. According to participants, physical spacing was also important for supporting students in their academics. This involved teachers circulating the room, rather than remaining at the front of the room or at their desk, and teachers sitting with students in one-on-one encounters. Finally, students with EBD and their teachers both stressed the importance of their teachers encouraging them and being patient with their learning. This involved teachers being willing to explain things more than once, avoiding frustration when students were having difficulty, adjusting expectations to the needs of the individual student, and providing relevant praise, which has been “shown to be effective for increasing desired academic and social outcomes for students with EBD” (Sutherland, 2000, p. 114). Figure 23 gives a visual representation of how teachers supported students with EBD in their learning.

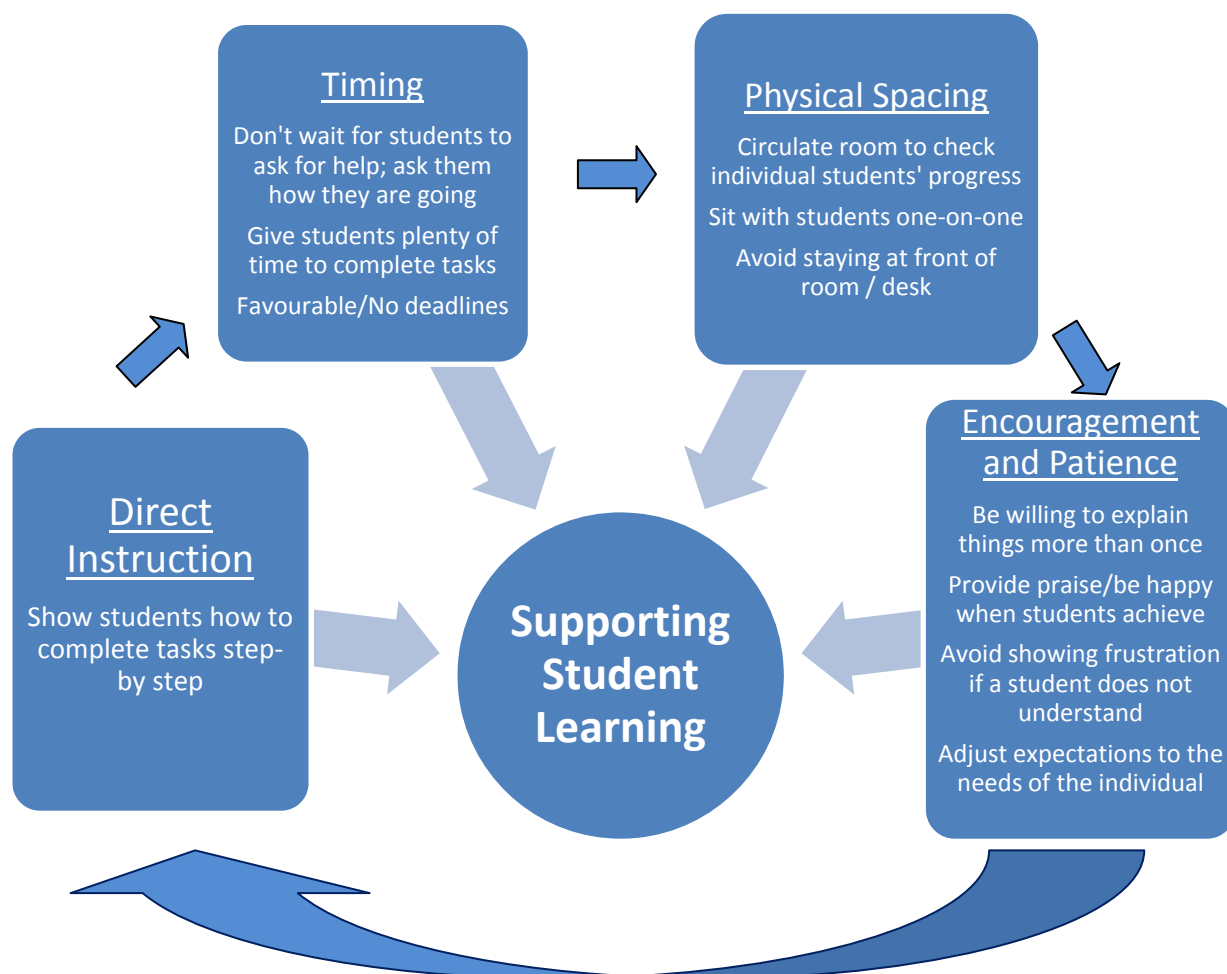


Figure 23 - Supporting Students with EBD in their Learning

With regards to support type, the data revealed that students with EBD valued emotional support as the most important support type for developing positive relationships. This is consistent with the findings of McIntyre and Battle's (1998) study in which students with EBD identified effective teachers as those who possess personal and professional attributes that include "Likes kids," "Is a nice person," "Is friendly," "Cares about you," "Listens to you," and "Respects your opinion." Malecki and Demaray (2003) also found that emotional support was found to be the greatest predictor of students' academic and social competence. Survey data revealed that students highly valued informational support as a complete group of behaviours, however, it was emotionally supportive behaviours that were most critical in the development of positive relationships. Open-ended survey responses and focus groups

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solidified that students viewed emotional support as the most important support type. Students claimed that academic support was important, but if their teachers were not warm, kind, polite, and welcoming, then students would be disinclined to even come to school, let alone engage in their learning. Students expressed that supporting their learning needs was important, and could be addressed through a combination of instrumental, informational, and appraisal support, indicating that all support types were important for developing positive relationships with their teachers.

Teacher survey data and teacher interviews revealed that teachers also regarded emotional support as the most important, as comments and themes that emerged were dominated by emotionally supportive behaviours. Teachers generally acknowledged that while academic support was important, they had to first address students' emotional well-being before they would be able to address their learning needs, as Mr. Larson explained:

They're so angry and frustrated, generally speaking, by so many things in their background that without a positive relationship I don't think they'll give us the time of day emotionally. And that's important for them emotionally to give us the time of day because if they don't emotionally connect with us, they're not going to listen to much of anything we have to say.

Teachers did note that academic support was very important for students, and that it consisted of a balance of informational, instrumental and appraisal support, indicating that all support types were important for developing positive relationships with their students.

The similar nature of the data revealed that teachers and students agreed upon the way in which positive relationships were developed. Figure 24 provides a visual representation of how positive relationships can be developed with students with EBD.

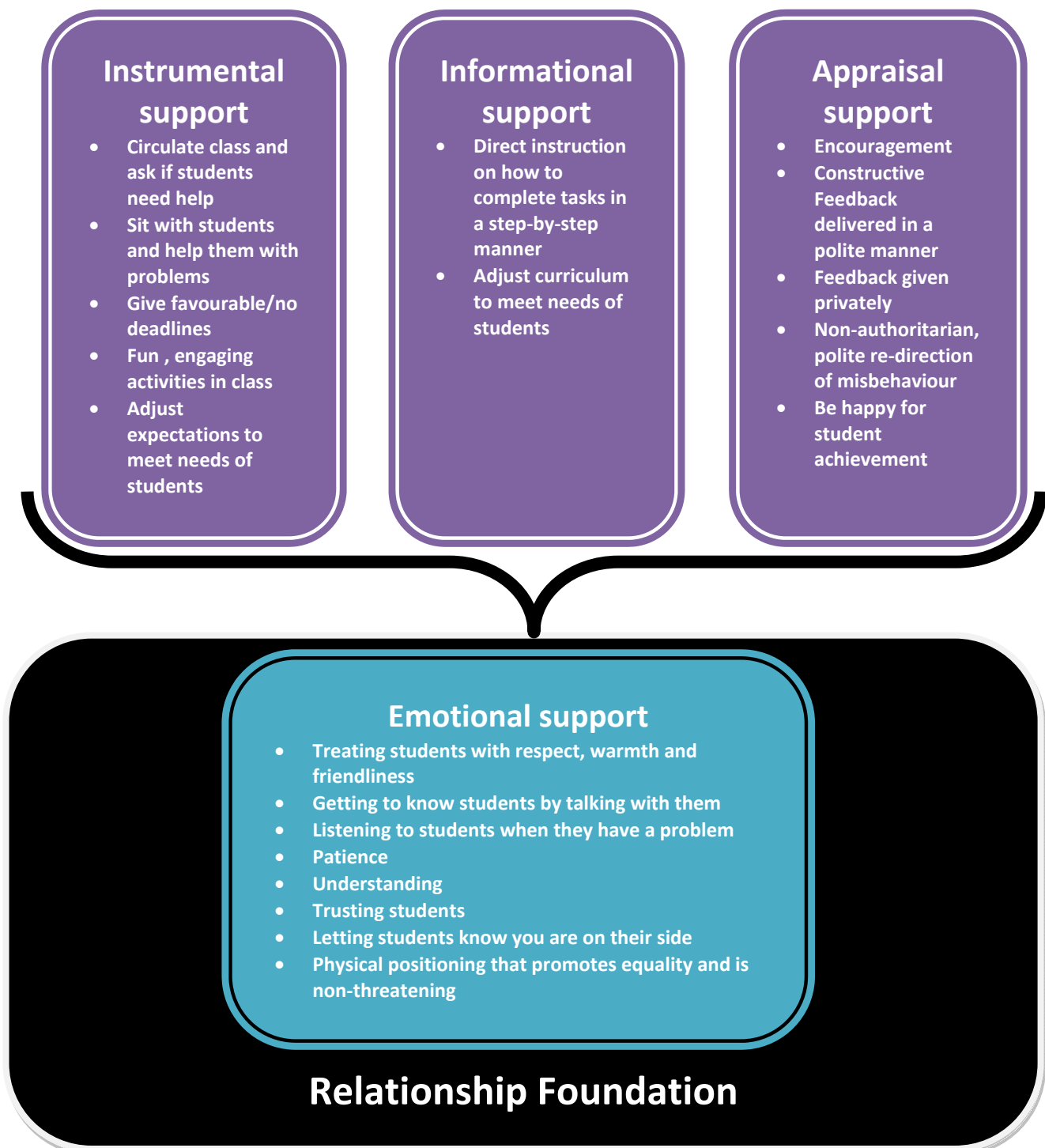


Figure 24- *Positive Relationships with Students with EBD*

In summary, students with EBD and their teachers had similar perspectives on how positive relationships could be developed. Both groups emphasised the importance of creating a warm, friendly environment to create a foundation of respect and trust, and

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the importance of supporting students in their learning through flexibility, patience, and understanding. Teachers placed a greater value on individual behaviours, as well as support types, indicating that teachers were more aware than students of the importance of positive relationships and the behaviours that contributed to them. Overall, the findings of the study identified a number of specific teacher behaviours that may be employed in order to develop positive relationships with secondary students with EBD.

6.3 Cross-Exceptionality Comparisons between Participant Groups

This study involved participants in two different countries who were identified as - or worked with - students with one of two different exceptionalities. This discussion will focus upon the similarities and differences in the results from the differing participant groups. Participant groups will be compared according to their category of exceptionality (ie. gifted and EBD).

6.3.1 Perspective Comparison of Gifted Secondary Students and Secondary Students with EBD

This study involved secondary students who had been identified as gifted or as having EBD. Participating gifted students were located in Western Australia, and Ontario, Canada. Participating students with EBD were located in Western Australia, and British Columbia and Nova Scotia, Canada.

Results of the study found that gifted students (N=133) and students with EBD (N=89) held moderately different views as to which behaviours were most important for developing positive relationships with their teachers. Gifted students put a greater emphasis on behaviours that would help them achieve academically, and allowed for cordial interactions with their teachers, whereas students with EBD emphasised the importance of teacher behaviours that showed caring and understanding, and demonstrated patience and support for their learning. Although these views did diverge, there was general agreement on behaviours that formed the foundations of positive relationships. Students found common ground on primary behaviours that were effective for developing positive relationships with either group, but then

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diverged when it came to secondary essential behaviours. The secondary essential behaviours revealed that gifted students preferred teacher behaviours that contributed to academic success and cordial interactions with their teachers, and that students with EBD preferred teacher behaviours that displayed understanding, patience, and multiple opportunities to learn. Figure 25 presents a visual representation of the most important teacher behaviours for developing positive relationships with both groups of students.

Both groups emphasised the importance of teachers treating them with respect, being warm and friendly, and helping them with their schoolwork, universally recognised characteristics that have been found to be desired by students from a multitude of backgrounds (Alder, 2002; Deci et al., 1991; Johnson, 2008; Phelan, Davidson & Cao, 1992; Poplin & Weeres, 1994; Turley, 1994). Gifted students put a greater emphasis on teacher behaviours that promoted academic success and advancement, which has been found to be true for gifted students in other studies (Gentry, Peters, & Mann, 2007; Suk-Un Jin & Moon, 2006). Students with EBD placed a greater emphasis on affective teacher behaviours that promoted personal relationships with their teachers and included listening, patience, and understanding. These findings are consistent with findings in other studies involving students with EBD (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; Daniels et al., 2003; Kroeger et al., 2004; Lowenthal, 2001; McIntyre & Battle, 1998; Wise, 2000). While both groups of students agreed on the basic foundations of relationships, it was evident that gifted students and students with EBD had their own unique set of needs and required a unique set of teacher behaviours in order to develop positive relationships with their teachers.

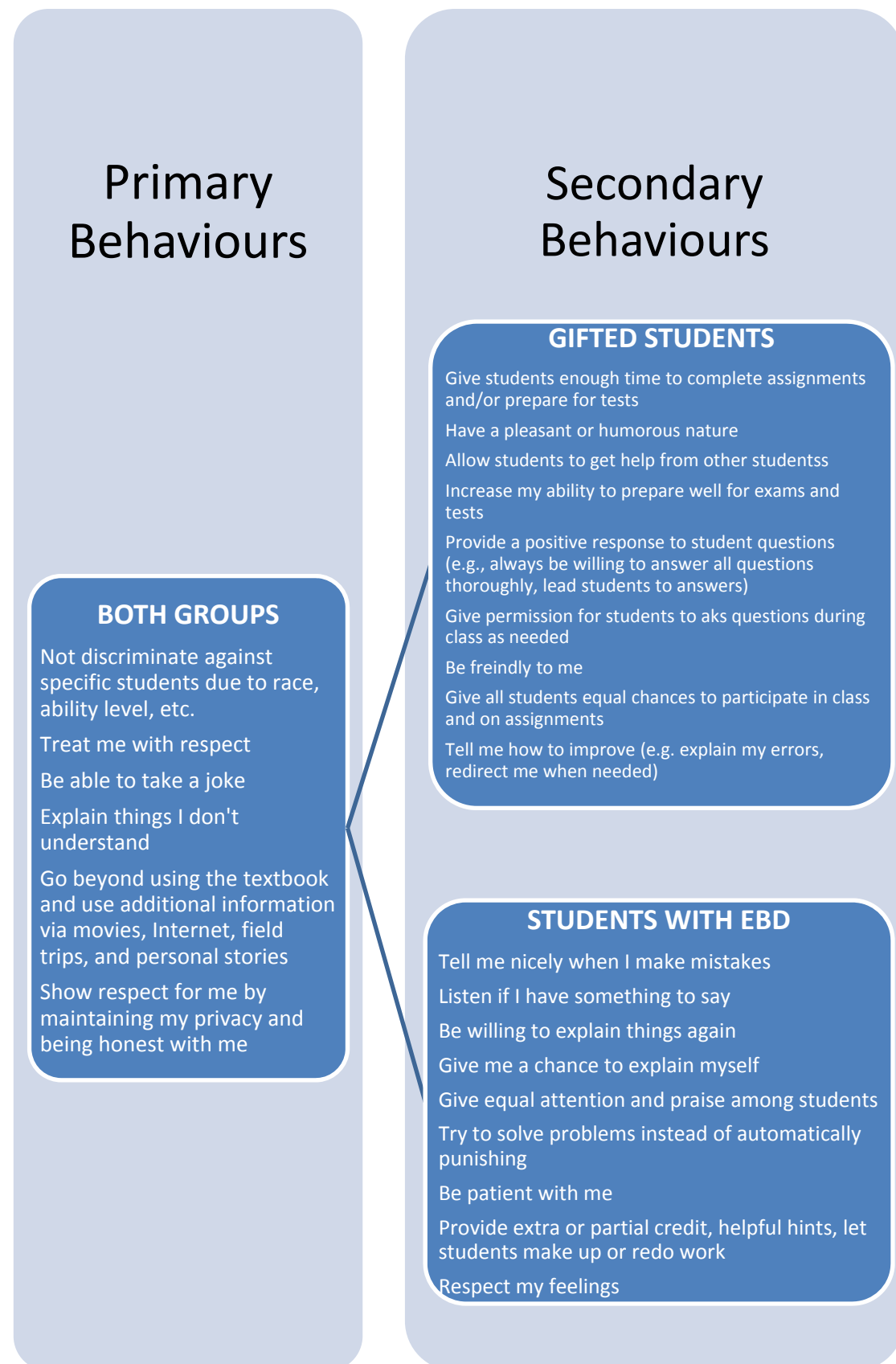


Figure 25 - *Most Important Behaviours for Developing Positive Relationships – Gifted Students and Students with EBD*

Regarding support types, students with EBD placed a greater emphasis on the importance of emotional support than their gifted peers. Emotional support behaviours accounted for seven of the top 15 behaviours on the surveys, and was repeatedly referred to during student focus groups as forming the foundation for positive relationships. Students with EBD indicated that they wanted to get to know their teachers at a personal level and feel that their teachers cared about their emotional states and circumstances. These findings are consistent with findings from other studies with students with EBD (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; McIntyre & Battle, 1998; Konkol & Owens, 2004), as well as studies involving other types of students (Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Suldo et al., 2009). Students with EBD also stressed that it was important for them to feel supported in their learning, and that a combination of informational, instrumental, and appraisal support was necessary, with a slight emphasis on informational support. Figure 26 provides a visual representation of the development of positive relationships according to students with EBD.

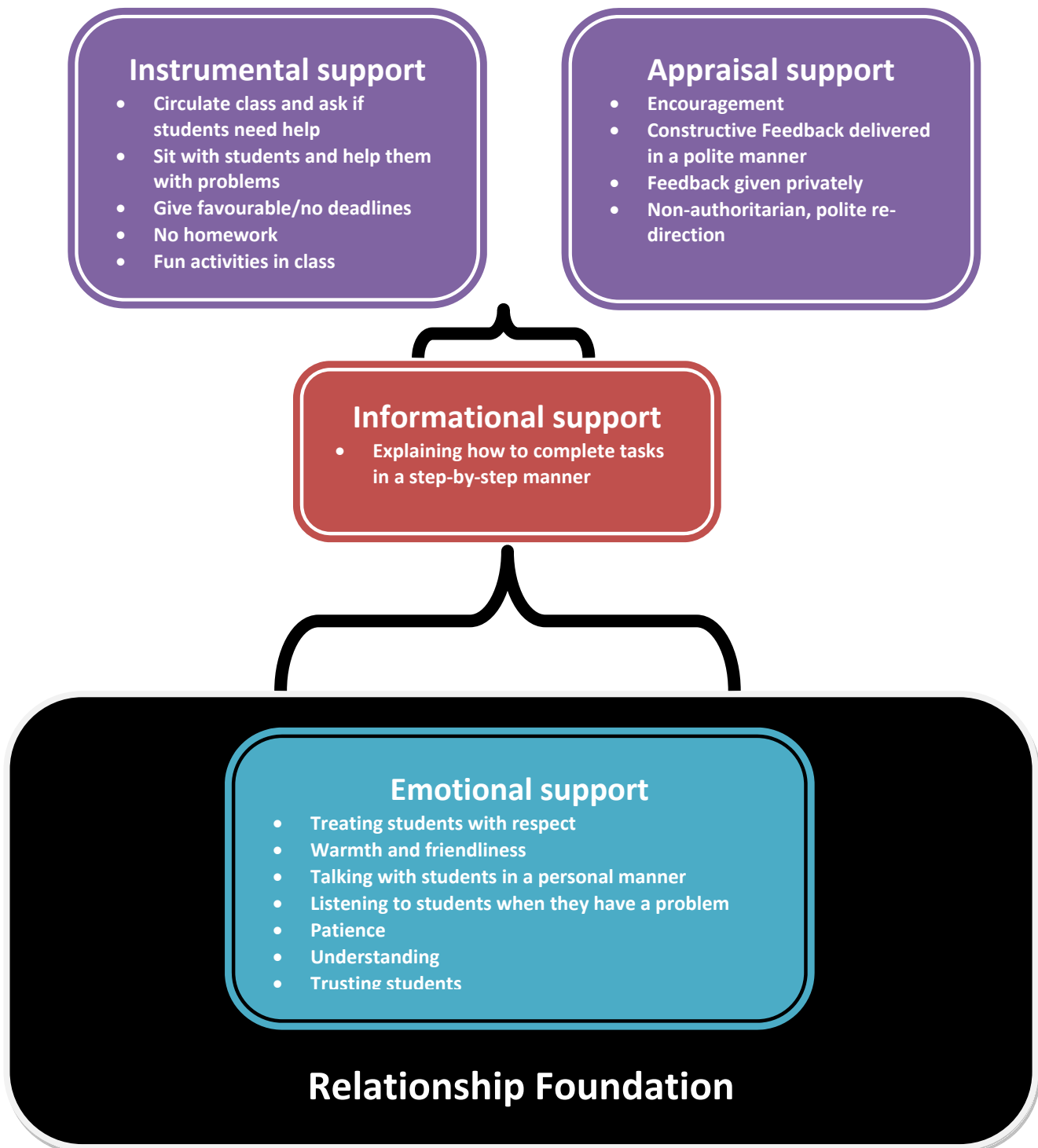


Figure 26 - *Students with EBD Perspective of Positive Student-Teacher Relationships*

Gifted students agreed with students with EBD that emotional and informational support were the two most important support types, but put a much larger emphasis on informational support. While certain emotional support behaviours were considered

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crucial, the majority of emotional support behaviours were held in low regard. Gifted students wanted their teachers to be polite, friendly, and display a sense of humour, but to respect their personal boundaries. Gifted students viewed informational support as the foundation for positive relationships, as they felt that informational support behaviours allowed teachers to fulfil their primary role of educational facilitators. These findings were consistent with findings from other studies involving gifted students (Gentry et al., 2007; Mills, 2003; Suk-Un Jin & Moon, 2006). Figure 27 provides a visual representation of the development of positive relationships according to gifted students.

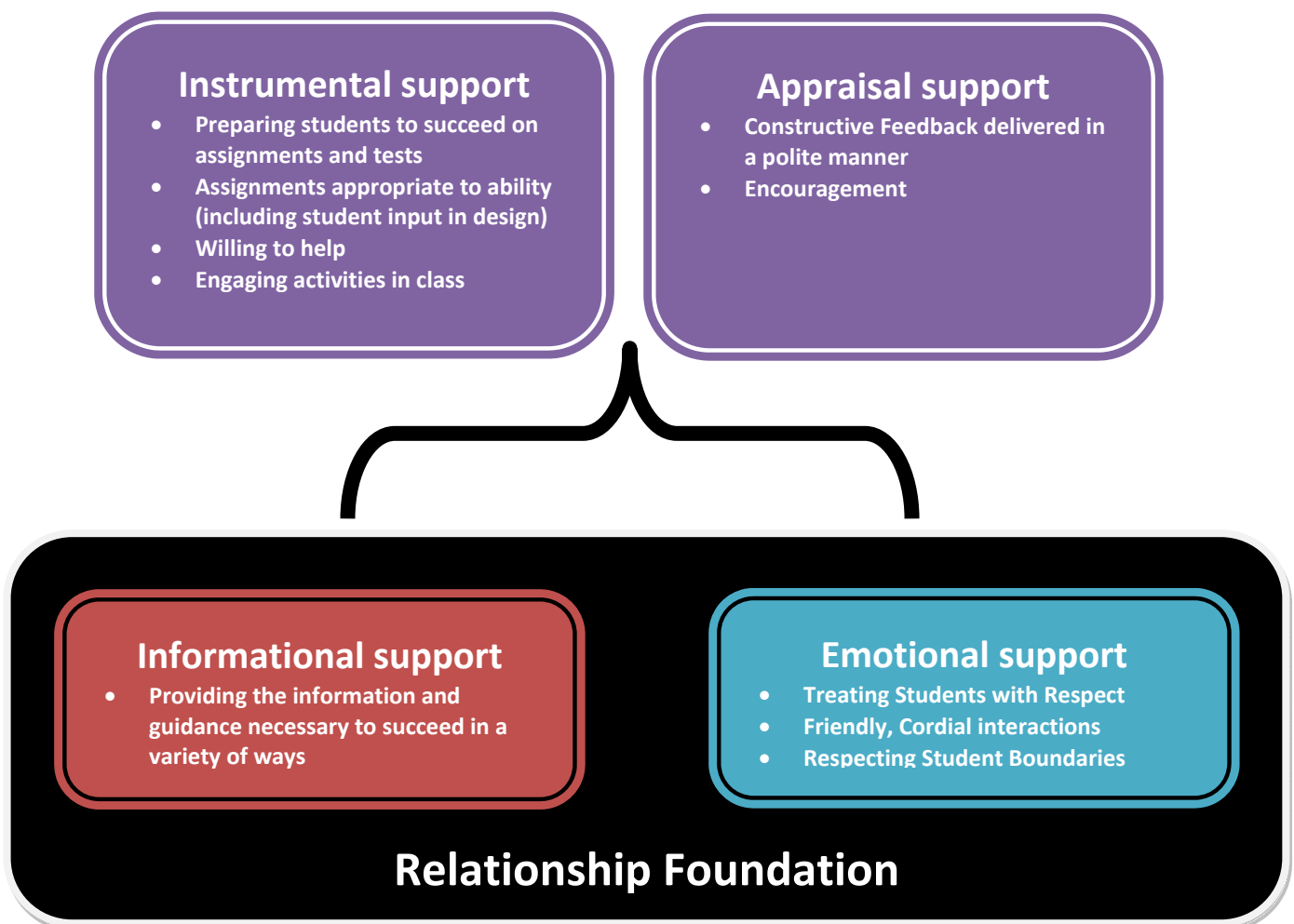


Figure 27- *Gifted Student Perspective of Positive Student-Teacher Relationships*

Gifted students and students with EBD generally agreed on the teacher behaviours and support types that were most important for developing positive relationships with

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their instructors, with moderate differences that attended to the unique needs of each group. The types of behaviours that were important for displaying the different support types differed between the two groups, indicating that each group of students required a unique behaviour set to address their unique needs. The behaviours enacted to develop positive relationships with each group specifically attended to the unique needs that have been identified in the literature for each group of students (Baker, 2005; Cooper, 2006; Gresham & MacMillan, 1997; Lane et al., 2006; Lovecky, 1992; Mendaglio, 2003; Piechowski, 1999; Van Tassel-Baska, MacFarlane, & Feng, 2008). This displayed that these different types of students required slightly different types of interactions with their teachers in order to form positive relationships.

6.3.2 Perspective Comparison of Teachers of Gifted Secondary Students and Teachers of Secondary Students with EBD

Results of the study found that teachers of gifted students (N=49) and teachers of students with EBD (N=23) held similar views as to which behaviours were most important for developing positive relationships with their students, with slight variations. Teachers with EBD emphasised creating warm, safe environments for their students through personal interactions and helping students with their schoolwork, while teachers of gifted students emphasised the importance of making themselves approachable and supporting students in academic extension. Both groups agreed on behaviours that formed the basis of relationships with their students, but had slight variations on secondary behaviours that would meet the differing needs of their particular students, displaying that both groups of teachers understood their students and their unique characteristics and needs.

The teacher surveys revealed that teachers of students with EBD put a stronger emphasis on nearly all behaviours and support types, suggesting that positive relationships were viewed as more important for teachers of students with EBD. This may have been due to the fact that all participating teachers of students with EBD worked in alternate or behaviour programs that were student-centred and relationally based, with small student to teacher ratios, whereas participating gifted teachers worked in gifted programs within large, traditional secondary schools with large class

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sizes. Indeed, it has been found that students with low ability who require more attention from their teachers are more likely to receive it in smaller classes (Folmer-Annevelink, Doolaard, Mascareno, & Bosker, 2009). These environments allow for more individualised interaction between teacher and student (Blatchford, Baines, Kutnick, & Martin, 2001; Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2008), which results in more emotional and instructional support for students and a larger sense of closeness for teachers (NIHCD Early Child Care Research Network, 2004). In an examination of the perspectives of students with EBD and their experiences in traditional and alternative educational settings, Konkol and Owens (2004) found that the main themes that emerged were the desire for authentic relationships with teachers and to be enrolled in classrooms with a small number of students, characteristics that students identified as being prominent in their alternate schools, and largely absent in traditional schools. Whereas teachers of gifted students in this study identified positive relationships with their students as important, teachers of students with EBD emphasised that relationship-building formed the philosophical basis for their programs and was central to everything they did in their practice. Teachers of students with EBD repeatedly emphasised in interviews that without positive relationships with their students, nothing could be accomplished. Ms. Apple, a coordinator of a secondary school behaviour program in Western Australia, had this response when asked about why positive relationships were important with her students:

Have you met these kids? I love them but the class out there [motions to the classroom outside her office] are crazy...If we don't have a positive relationship with these students we would not get anything done. We have it all out there: self mutilators, depression, bi-polar and one who we cannot leave alone because she has attempted suicide twice this year. Can you imagine what they'd be like if we did not get along with them? That's what we do in here, build relationships.

With regards to how the teachers went about developing positive relationships with their respective groups of students, there was agreement about the majority of behaviours identified as important. Both groups of teachers indicated that they needed to treat students with respect, have positive and polite demeanours, let their students know that they cared about them, use resources that went beyond the textbook, and provide their students with encouragement. Teachers found common ground on these primary behaviours, but diverged slightly when it came to secondary essential

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behaviours. The secondary essential behaviours identified by teachers of gifted students centred on showing respect for students and encouraging them in their learning by being willing to explain concepts and answer questions, whereas the secondary essential behaviours identified by teachers of students with EBD centred on spending time with students, getting to know them, and providing students with praise and encouragement. Figure 28 gives a visual representation of the most important teacher behaviours for developing positive relationships with both groups of students.

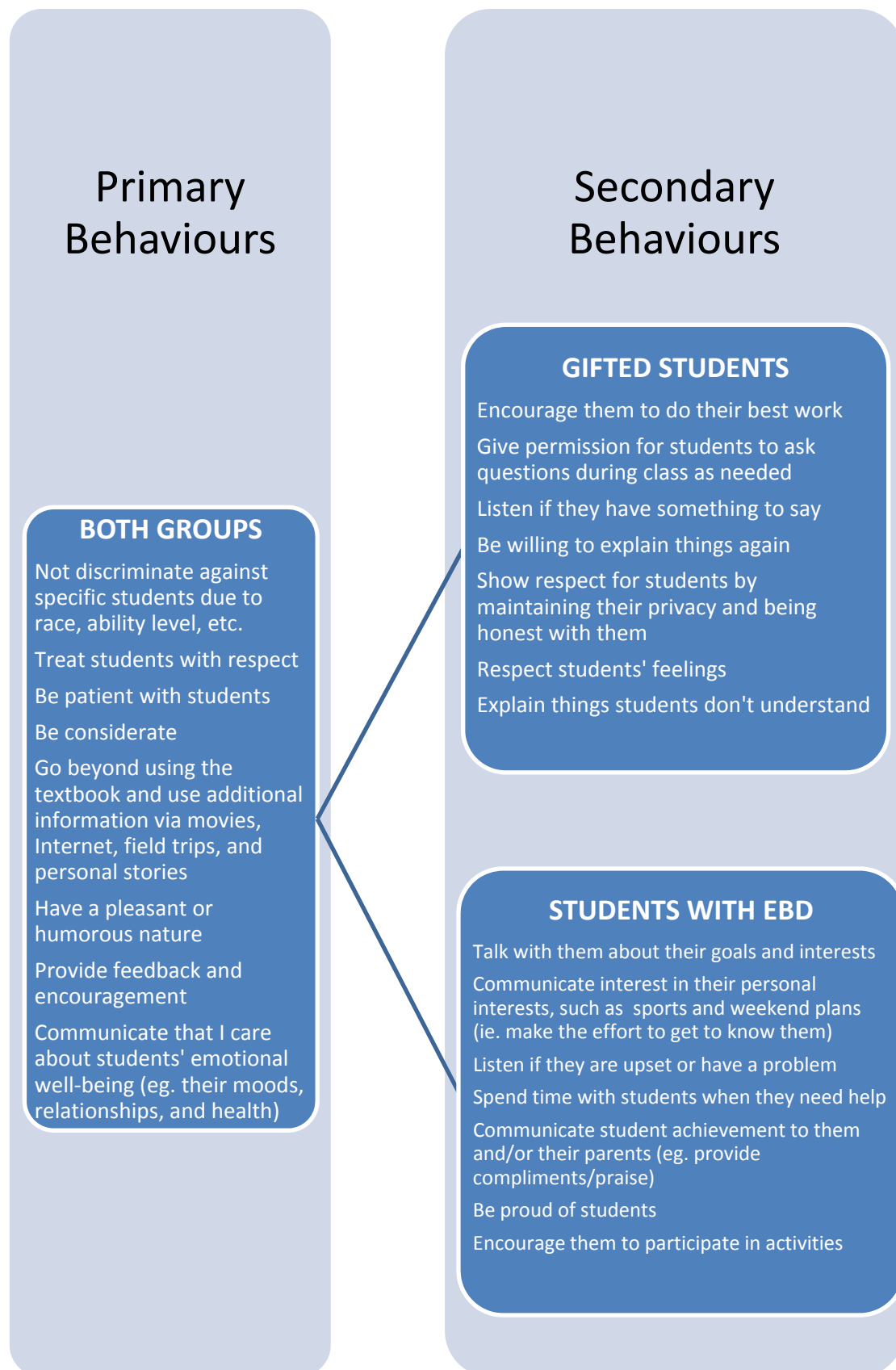


Figure 28 - *Most Important Behaviours for Developing Positive Relationships – Teachers of Gifted Students and Teachers of Students with EBD*

The primary behaviours identified by both groups attend to needs that have been identified as common universal needs for youth (Deci et al., 1995), whereas the secondary essential behaviours attend the unique needs of each particular type of student identified in the literature (Baker, 2005; Cooper, 2006; Gresham & MacMillan, 1997; Lane et al., 2006; Lovecky, 1992; Mendaglio, 2003; Piechowski, 1999; Van Tassel-Baska, MacFarlane, & Feng, 2008).

Regarding support types, teachers of students with EBD placed a greater emphasis on the importance of emotional support compared to their peers. Emotional support behaviours were emphasised by teachers in interviews, with a common theme emerging that without emotional support, students would disengage from learning. Figure 29 provides a visual representation of the perspective on positive relationships for teachers of students with EBD.

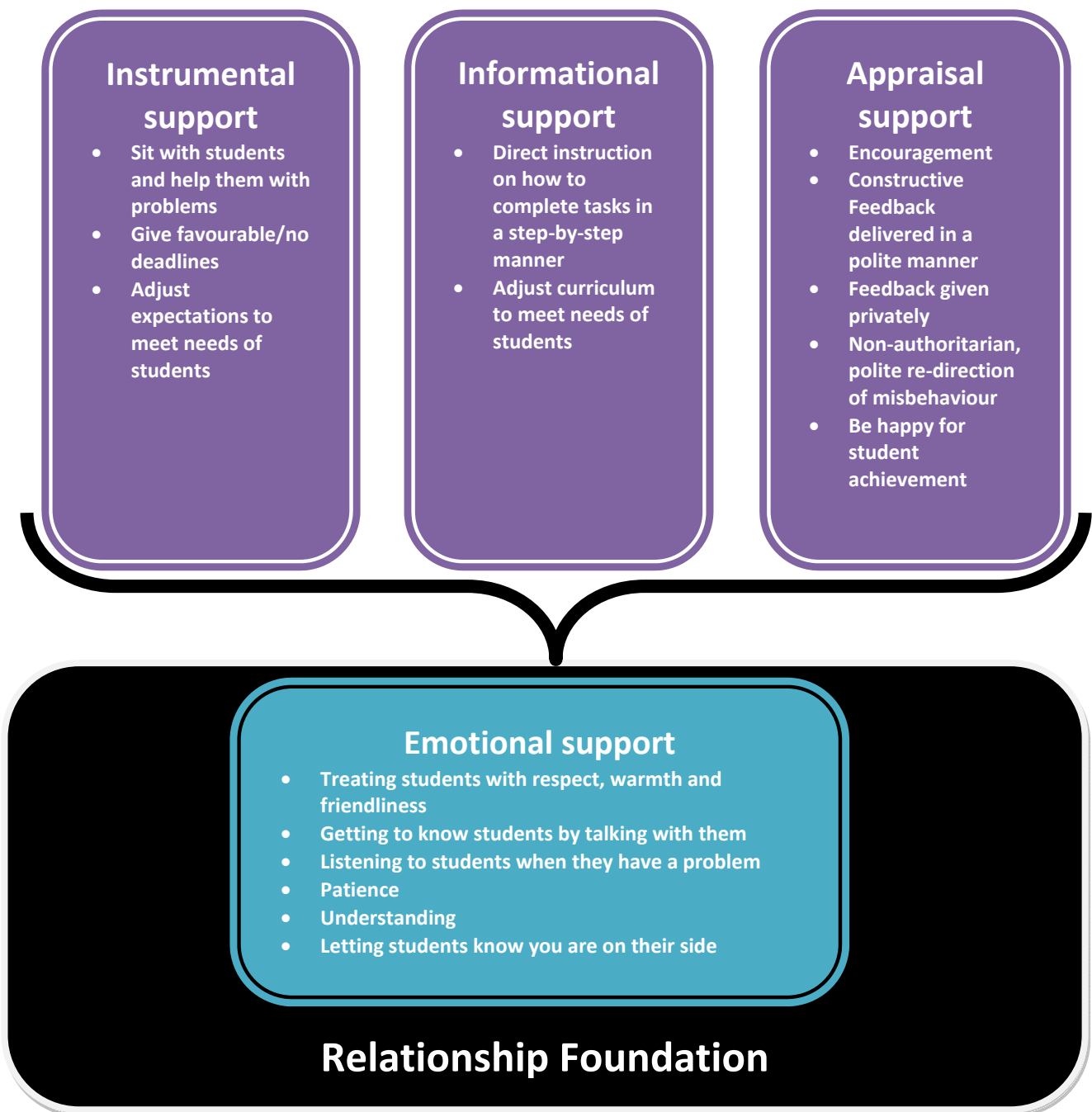


Figure 29 - *Teachers of Students with EBD Perspective of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships*

Teachers of gifted students also emphasised that emotional support was essential for developing relationships with students, but stressed that it was balanced with academic support. The view of teachers that addressing the emotional needs of students helps aid students in their academic pursuits is consistent with perspectives of teachers in other studies (Hargreaves, 2000; Moon et al., 1997). Figure 30 provides a visual representation of the perspective on positive relationships for teachers of gifted students.

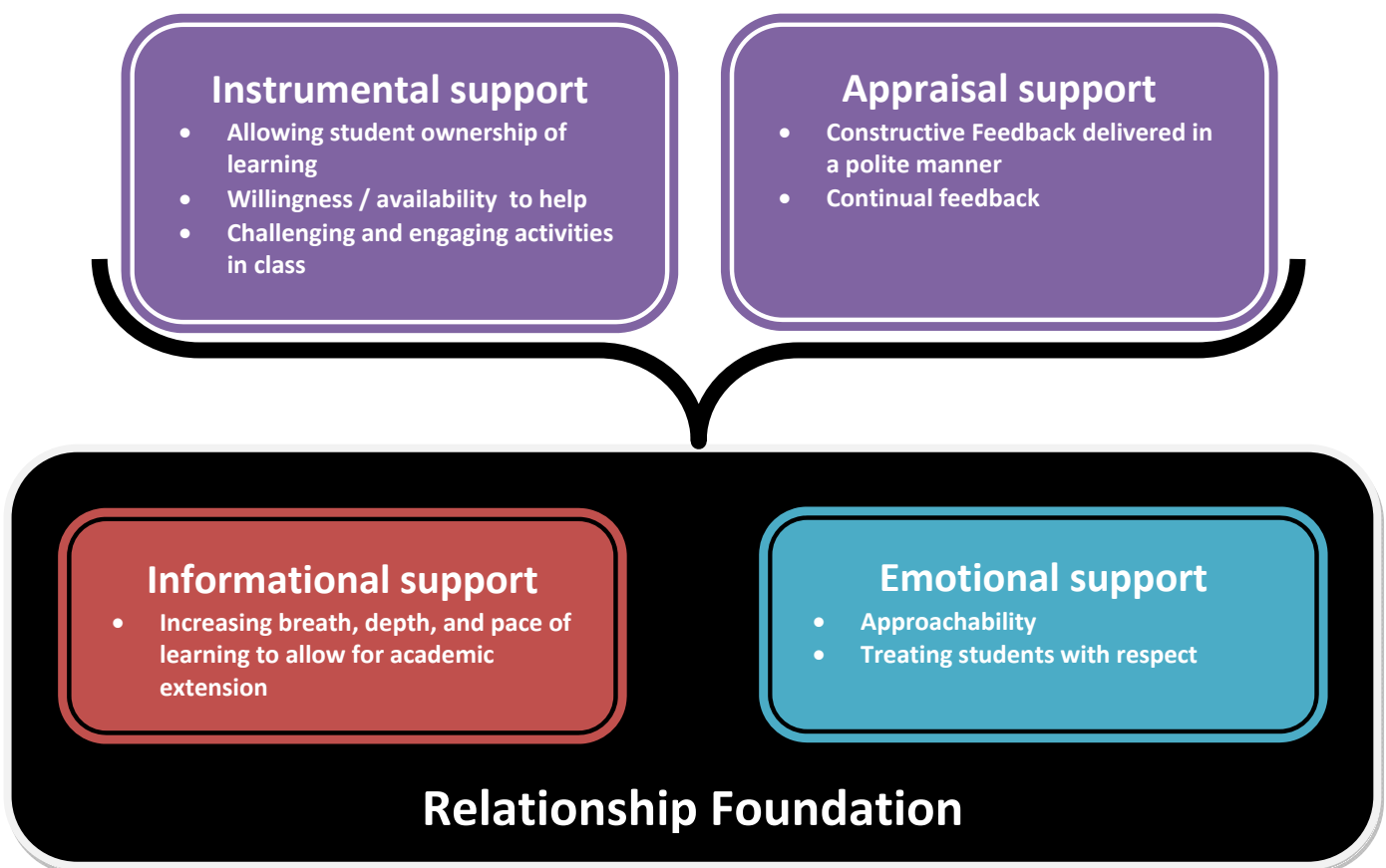


Figure 30 - Teachers of Gifted Students Perspective of Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

While the different groups held mostly similar views on support types, both groups identified specific behaviours that provided support to meet the needs of their particular students. For teachers of students with EBD, emotional support consisted of getting to know students and displaying warmth, patience, and understanding. Teachers of gifted students perceived emotional support to consist of behaviours that

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made them appear approachable and treated students with respect. Informational support for teachers of students with EBD consisted of providing direct instruction and being willing to explain concepts, whereas informational support for teachers of gifted students centred on academic extension. Instrumental support and appraisal support were also described as being constructed with different behaviours by the two groups of teachers. The awareness of the unique needs of their particular students by teachers participating in this study is encouraging, given that teachers of both types of students have previously expressed concern over a lack of training and awareness of the major issues for working with their particular type of students (Greene, 2003; Fuchs, Fuchs, Fernstrom, & Hohn, 1991). Ms. Ettinger, who had experience working with both groups of students, summarised the difference between the two groups, saying:

[T]he high achieving group - they just want you to give it. They don't want the fluffy bits around the outside, they just want you to give [them] the information. They just want to suck it up like big sponges, and that's it. Suck the life out of you, and that's great. They don't really want the other bits around the edges. Where it's completely opposite [with students with EBD]; you need to give them the bits around the edges for them to be able to accept...the knowledge you are trying to give them.

In summary, teachers of gifted students and teachers of students with EBD generally agreed on the teacher behaviours and support types that were most important for developing positive relationships with their instructors, with slight differences that attended to the unique needs of each group. Both groups emphasised the importance of treating students with respect, being warm and friendly, and attending to their unique set of learning needs. These basic foundations of positive relationships have been identified as essential for working with gifted students (Van Tassel-Baska et al., 2008; Gentry, Peters, & Mann, 2007; Suk-Un Jin & Moon, 2006) and for students with EBD (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; Daniels et al., 2003; Kroeger et al., 2004; Lowenthal, 2001; McIntyre & Battle, 1998; Wise, 2000). The teachers of students with EBD in this study indicated that positive relationships were more central to their practice than gifted teachers did, which is contrary to findings that teachers of students with EBD often reject their students (Kauffman, 2001). However, the teachers participating in this study all worked in student-centred, relationally based

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alternate/behaviour programs with low student-teacher ratios, which have been found to be conducive to the development of positive student-teacher relationships (Konkol & Owens, 2004). While both groups agreed on the basic foundations of positive relationships, it was evident that teachers of gifted students and students with EBD understood the unique needs of their particular students, and employed an appropriate and unique behaviour set in order to develop positive relationships with them.

6.4 Cross-Cultural Comparisons between Participant Groups

This study drew participants from Western Australia and Canada. Participating gifted students and their teachers were located in Western Australia and Ontario, Canada. Participating students with EBD and their teachers were located in Western Australia, and British Columbia and Nova Scotia, Canada.

6.4.1 Gifted Students in Western Australia and Gifted Students in Canada

Results of the study revealed that gifted secondary students in Western Australia (N = 58) held similar views with gifted secondary students in Canada (N = 75). Data from student surveys and focus groups revealed only slight differences in the perspectives of students in the different locations. Although there was some variation in the data, students in both locations emphasised the importance of similar behaviours – mostly involving supporting students academically and treating students amicably and with respect – and emphasised the same support types as being the most important – informational support as the foundation, along with certain emotional support behaviours. The similarities in views between the two groups coincide with Hofstede's (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) five-dimensional model of cultural differences. According to the model, Australian and Canadian societies were classified in the same categories for all five dimensions (Small Power Distance/High Individualism, Weak Uncertainty Avoidance/Masculine, and Short-Term Orientation), which implies that the two cultures are very similar. However, the Canadian and Australian index scores differed in all dimensions, indicating there was some variance in cultural values. The Hofstede model assumes mostly similar cultural values, with slight variances between the two locations, which was similar to what the data

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revealed for gifted students in the two countries. Gifted students' views on their interactions with their teachers reflected many of Hofstede's potential characteristics of student/teacher interactions, based on the categorisation of the locations in the 5-D model. The predicted interactions that were confirmed by gifted students included:

- Students try to make themselves visible (p. 315, Table 6);
- Student-centred education (premium on initiative);
- Teachers should respect the independence of their students;
- Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial (p. 312, Table 3);
- Students expect to learn how to learn;
- Individuals will speak up in class;
- Students may speak up spontaneously;
- Students are not given gifts as rewards for academic achievements;
- Students are rewarded for innovative approaches to problem solving; and
- Teachers and students are expected to suppress emotions (p. 314, Table 5).

However, some of Hofstede's potential interactions were contradicted by the gifted students in this study. Particularly, the prediction that "Teachers are allowed to say 'I don't know'" was contradicted by gifted students in both locations. Teacher expertise was significantly important to the gifted students in this study, as students wanted their teachers to be well versed in their subject so that their learning would not be impeded. These findings were similar to the findings of Suk-Un Jin and Moon's (2006) study, which found that gifted Korean secondary students had a particular appreciation for high teacher competence and expertise. This suggested that the value gifted students place upon teacher expertise and competence transcends borders and cultures.

Another potential interaction identified by Hofstede that was contradicted by gifted students was "Outside of class teachers are treated as equals". Gifted students in both locations indicated that they wanted their boundaries respected by teachers, and did not want their teachers to become overly involved in their lives. While gifted students in both locations agreed that it was important to see teachers as people with their own individual identity, they were still 'The Teacher' and had a role to fill – a role that was contained within the classroom.

The predicted interaction “Teachers openly praise good students” was viewed sceptically by students in both locations. While students did want to be recognised for their achievements, they felt that it was more important that teachers give equal praise and attention throughout the classroom.

The Canadian gifted students in this study emphasised that they desired the following predicted interactions:

- Confrontation in learning situations can be salutary; conflicts can be brought into the open;
- Students are allowed to contradict or criticize teacher; and
- Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as a stimulating exercise.

However, the Canadian students indicated that their teachers often would get angry or upset at students who contradicted or corrected them. Previous studies have found that some teachers have demonstrated irritation, hostility, and resentment toward gifted students (AAGC, 1978; Colangelo & Kelly, 1983; Coleman, 1985; Freeman, 1979; Whitmore, 1980). However, this issue was not mentioned by West Australian gifted students, which suggested that the interactions in the Ontario classrooms may be different from those in the West Australian ones.

While many of Hofstede’s predicted interactions were validated by the gifted students in both locations, some interactions were directly contradicted by students in both countries. This suggested that gifted students have a unique set of needs and cultural values that may transcend their socio-political culture. Despite this, the 5-D model accurately predicted that students in Western Australia and Canada would hold mostly similar values with only slight variations.

6.4.2 Teachers of Gifted Students in Western Australia and Teachers of Gifted Students in Canada

Results of the study revealed that teachers of gifted secondary students in Western Australia (N = 33) held similar views with teachers of gifted secondary students in Canada (N = 16). While Canadian teachers of gifted students placed a slightly higher value on instrumental support than their contemporaries in WA, there was strong

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convergence of the data that indicated teachers in WA and Canada held comparable views to developing positive relationships with gifted students. Although there was some variation in the data, teachers in both locations generally emphasised the importance of similar behaviours – treating students with respect, extending students according to their abilities, providing students with encouragement, and having a pleasant demeanour – and emphasised the same support types as being the most important – emotional support as the most important, followed closely by informational support. Similar to gifted students in WA and Canada, the views of the teachers in the two locations coincided with Hofstede (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) 5-D model of cultural differences. Teacher's views on their interactions with students reflected many of the model's potential characteristics of student/teacher interactions, including:

- Students expect to learn how to learn;
- Individuals will speak up in class;
- Confrontation in learning situations can be salutary; conflicts can be brought into the open;
- Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial (p. 312, Table 3);
- Teachers should respect the independence of their students;
- Student-centred education (premium on initiative);
- Students may speak up spontaneously;
- Students are allowed to contradict or criticize teacher;
- Outside of class teachers are treated as equals;
- Students are rewarded for innovative approaches to problem solving;
- Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as a stimulating exercise;
- Teachers and students are expected to suppress emotions (p. 314, Table 5);
- Students are not given gifts as rewards for academic achievements;
- Teachers openly praise good students; and
- Students try to make themselves visible (p. 315, Table 6).

Only one of Hofstede's predicted interactions was contradicted by teachers of gifted students: 'Teachers are allowed to say "I don't know"'. Teachers in both locations stressed the importance of expertise in their subject matter when teaching gifted students. Teachers believed that having expertise in their subject helped to extend their gifted students beyond the curriculum according to their abilities, and could ease

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student anxiety over their learning. The teachers in this study seemed to understand that saying “I don’t know” to gifted students could cause a loss of respect from students and heightened anxiety amongst their pupils. This coincides with findings in other studies involving gifted students in other countries (Suk-Un Jin & Moon, 2006; Gentry et al., 2007) and suggests that teachers of gifted students understand the value of teacher expertise in a way that transcends cultural expectations.

6.4.3 Students with EBD in Western Australia and Students with EBD in Canada

Results of the study revealed that secondary students with EBD in Canada (N=49) held similar views with secondary students with EBD in Western Australia (N=40). Students with EBD in both locations generally agreed upon the most important behaviours for developing positive relationships with their teachers, but West Australian students put a greater emphasis on behaviours that displayed fairness and understanding, while Canadian students put a greater emphasis on teacher behaviours that supported their learning. Although there was some variation in the data, students in both locations emphasised similar behaviours – mostly involving teachers being warm, friendly, understanding, patient, and helpful – and emphasised emotional support as being the most important support type. The similarities in views between the two groups coincided with Hofstede (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede’s five-dimensional model of cultural differences, which assumes mostly similar cultural values, with slight variances between the two locations. The views of students with EBD in this study regarding interactions with their teachers reflected many of the Hofstede and Hofstede’s potential characteristics of student/teacher interactions, based on the categorisation of the countries in the 5-D model. The predicted interactions that were confirmed by students with EBD included:

- Students expect to learn how to learn;
- Individuals will speak up in class;
- Confrontation in learning situations can be salutary; conflicts can be brought into the open;
- Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial (p. 312, Table 3);
- Teachers should respect the independence of their students;
- Student-centred education (premium on initiative);
- Students may speak up spontaneously;

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- Students are allowed to contradict or criticize teacher;
- Students are not given gifts as rewards for academic achievements;
- Outside of class teachers are treated as equals; and
- A good teacher uses plain language.

However, some of Hofstede's potential interactions were contradicted by the students with EBD who participated in this study. Two predicted potential interactions, "Teachers openly praise good students" and "Students try to make themselves visible", were opposite to what the students in this study reported. The majority of students with EBD in this study indicated that they very much appreciated being recognised and encouraged for their accomplishments, but they preferred to receive feedback in a private manner, as opposed to being singled out in front of their classmates. Students recounted previous experiences in school where their teacher would openly praise "good" students for results, which often left them feeling excluded and embarrassed. These reflections are consistent with findings that students with EBD experience low rates of praise (Van Acker, Grant, & Henry, 1996; Wehby, Symons, & Shores, 1995) and reprimand to praise ratios as high as 4:1 (Van Acker et al., 1996). This may explain why they could empathize and did not want to be placed above their classmates. Students in this study stressed the importance of fairness, which they said could be achieved by not singling students out, a theme that has been expressed by students with EBD in other countries (Cefai & Cooper, 2010).

Students with EBD also contradicted the prediction "Teachers and students are expected to suppress emotions". Students in this study indicated that while they did not want their teachers to get angry, they appreciated when their teachers were cheerful and expressed happiness for student success. Students also indicated that when they were having a bad day, they wanted to talk with their teachers to explain to them what was going on and how they were feeling, so long as they trusted that teacher. In return, students expected their teachers to listen, empathize, and maintain their confidentiality. This is consistent with the findings in Cefai and Cooper's 2010 study of Maltese students with EBD, who "warmed up to teachers who showed them care and understanding, listened to their concerns and supported them in their social and learning needs" (p. 193), as well as the findings of studies with their peers in

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other cultural contexts (Daniels et al., 2003; Kroeger et al., 2004; Lowenthal, 2001; McIntyre & Battle, 1998; Wise, 2000).

While many of Hofstede's predicted interactions were validated by the participating students with EBD in both locations, some interactions were directly contradicted. This suggests that students with EBD have a unique set of needs and cultural values that may transcend socio-political cultures. However, in general, the 5-D model accurately predicted that students in Western Australia and Canada would hold mostly similar values with only slight variations.

6.4.4 Teachers of Students with EBD in Western Australia and Teachers of Students with EBD in Canada

Results of the study revealed that teachers of secondary students with EBD in Western Australia (N = 12) held similar views with teachers of secondary students with EBD in Canada (N = 11). Survey data and interview data revealed very high agreement between the two groups, indicating that teachers in WA and Canada held comparable views regarding the development of positive relationships with gifted students. Although there was some slight variation in the data, teachers in both locations stressed the importance of providing affective support for their students through the creation of warm, safe environments, as well as being flexible and supportive in students' learning and in behaviour redirection. Similar to students with EBD in WA and Canada, the views of the teachers in the two locations coincided with Hofstede's (1986) and Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) 5-D model of cultural differences. Teacher's views on their interactions with students reflected many of the model's potential characteristics of student/teacher interactions, including:

- Students expect to learn how to learn;
- Individuals will speak up in class;
- Confrontation in learning situations can be salutary; conflicts can be brought into the open;
- Teachers are expected to be strictly impartial (p. 312, Table 3);
- Teachers should respect the independence of their students;
- Student-centred education (premium on initiative);
- Students may speak up spontaneously;

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- Students are allowed to contradict or criticize teacher;
- Outside of class teachers are treated as equals;
- Teachers are allowed to say “I don’t know”;
- Students are not given gifts as rewards for academic achievements;
- A good teacher uses plain language; and
- Teachers interpret intellectual disagreement as a stimulating exercise.

Only two of Hofstede’s predicted interactions were contradicted by teachers in this study: ‘Teachers openly praise good students’ and ‘Students try to make themselves visible’. Teachers in both locations indicated that it was important for them not to single students out. While teachers in both locations stressed the importance of providing praise and encouragement, both groups stressed that positive and negative feedback should be delivered to their students in private. This coincides with the views of students in this study, and also with other studies involving students with EBD which found that these students were often singled out by teachers, leading to a sense of victimisation (Cefai & Cooper, 2010). The recognition of this dynamic by teachers in both locations suggests that teachers of students with EBD understand the needs of their students in a way that transcends cultural expectations.

7. Limitations

This study partially relied on a survey containing self-report measures from voluntary participants, an innate problem with survey research. While results from the survey may present evidence, no survey can be completely free of factors that introduce bias and therefore conclusions cannot be drawn with absolute certainty (Alreck & Settle, 1985). The small sample size in this study may also limit the ability to draw generalisations regarding the target population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The dissemination of the surveys may have also resulted in bias, as those who are more involved with the topic are more likely to respond (Alreck & Settle, 1985) and therefore generalisations might not be able to be drawn because respondents and non-respondents are different (Walker & Burnhill, 1988). The rate of return also varied from very high (above 80%) to very low (below 20%) depending on location (eg. country, province, school) and participant group (eg. gifted students, students with EBD, teachers of gifted students, teachers of students with EBD), although final sample sizes were similar for participants within grouping (ie. gifted, EBD) and location categories.

The participating gifted students and teachers of gifted students in Western Australia were drawn from the same programs, and therefore their responses reflected the same relationships. However, in Ontario, the gifted students and teachers were drawn from different programs in neighbouring school boards, due low teacher participation in the participating students' school board. These programs both operated in similar fashions under the guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education, and were contained in secondary schools with similar demographics (ie. geographical location, size, student population, types of courses offered, class size), however, the relationships that teachers and students reported on were not with each other, and therefore could not be verified.

Another challenge presented in this study was that parental/guardian consent was difficult to obtain for students with EBD, which reduced the sample size for this group. Although the majority of students invited to participate were willing, consent forms were returned at a rate of less than 20%. Future studies might explore different

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methods of obtaining parental consent (e.g. oral consent, email) with this particular group of students to increase participation and sample sizes.

The study also relied on one-on-one interviews with teachers and focus groups with gifted students. Any interview may be limited by perceived inequalities due to various participant/facilitator factors such as race, gender, or age (Siedman, 1998), although this did not appear to be an issue. Because the surveys were used to identify volunteers for interviews and focus groups, participants had already completed the survey, which may have influenced participant responses. Future studies might attempt to reverse the order of data collection.

Students participating in the focus groups volunteered to do so and were selected at random, therefore, the researcher was unaware of the particular interpersonal relationships between the participating students. This may have affected the degree to which students spoke openly and honestly, as “Focus groups work best when participants feel comfortable, respected and free to give their opinion without being judged” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p.4).

In order to establish how positive student-teacher relationships were developed, this study sought to interview teachers who had experienced positive relationships with their students. Gifted students in WA identified teachers with whom they currently had the best relationships with and those teachers were contacted for interviews. In Ontario, the gifted students and teachers came from separate programs, so student nomination was not an option. Coordinators of gifted programs were contacted regarding interviews, due to their experience working closely with gifted students as classroom teachers and advisors, but it was impossible to verify whether their students agreed that they had positive relationships. Participating students with EBD and their teachers came from small programs that had low staff numbers (five or less in each program) and were student-centred and relationally based, which often promotes positive relationships. Due to the low staff numbers, student nomination was not used, and all teachers in each program were invited to participate. However, each teacher who participated in an interview was verified to have had a positive relationship with students during the student focus groups, thus validating their participation.

There are a number of different gifted programs in Western Australia and Canada that are designed to cater to students with various types of gifts and talents (e.g. arts programs, academic programs, language programs). All gifted students and their teachers participating in this study were selected from academic programs. As such, the limited sample reduced the ability of the study to draw generalisations, as students with certain types of gifts - including creatively gifted students (Neihart & Olenchak, 2002) and emotionally gifted students (Passow, 1998; Piechowski, 1991) – were not necessarily included. In addition, this study examined positive relationships with gifted students and students with EBD as two different groups and did not take into account the existence of twice exceptional students – gifted students with EBD (Neu, 1993; Reid & McGuire, 1995). None of the students participating in this study were identified as being twice exceptional in this manner, as gifted students with EBD are often not referred to gifted programs, or are removed from them because of their behaviour (Reid & McGuire).

The gifted students participating in this study were all drawn from Years 9 and 10 due to school principals' concerns over the academic strain of gifted students in upper year classes, which affected the study's ability to generalise. Students with EBD were drawn from Years 9 through 12, which may have reduced the reliability of comparisons between the two groups. Despite these differences, the majority of participants (62%, $N = 139$) in this study were drawn from Year 10, with 69% of gifted students being in Year 10 ($N = 92$), and 53% of students with EBD being in Year 10 ($N = 47$).

Although participants were not required to identify their race, it was noted that a significant number of the participating students with EBD were of Aboriginal descent. Aboriginal communities have been found to have their own unique belief systems regarding education (Kirkness, 1999). This may not have limited Aboriginal students' ability to express their beliefs during focus groups, however, the survey items were all derived from instruments developed in, and for, Western education systems. As such, there may have been different behaviours that Aboriginal students felt were important for developing positive relationships that may not have been included on the survey.

The timing of the data collection may have affected student responses to the survey items and focus group questions, particularly for students with EBD. Data was collected from gifted students in Canada during February, which coincides with the beginning of the second semester. As such, the students may not have had time to establish relationships with their current teachers. However, the survey items and focus group questions were not limited to relationships with current teachers, and therefore students could draw on their past relationships with teachers, which they often did during focus groups. For students with EBD in Canada, data was collected from alternate schools in March, approximately one month after the February intake of new students. As students with EBD often have negative experiences interacting with their teachers (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; Whitley, Lupart & Beran, 2009), new intake students may have had a different perspective than previously enrolled students due to lack of time to develop positive relationships with their new teachers. Data in Western Australia was collected towards the end of the second term (June) for students with EBD and the end of the third term (October) for gifted students, giving students a reasonable amount of time to establish relationships with their current teachers.

The survey used in this study had 70 questions and took students approximately 20 minutes to complete. This may have presented difficulty for students who struggle with literacy, which is a common concern for students with EBD (Coutinho, 1986; Greenbaum et al., 1996; Lane, Carter, Pierson, & Glaeser, 2006; Nelson, Babyak, Gonzalez, & Benner, 2003). Students may not have interpreted survey items correctly, which may have caused an inaccurate representation of their actual beliefs. Surveys were conducted during class time, with the researcher, classroom teacher(s), and educational assistants present to assist students in reading and interpreting the survey items. Teachers were asked to identify students with reading difficulties and, where available, a qualified adult was assigned to help those students complete their survey.

This study relied on one model for constructs of similarity between Canadian and Australian culture: Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) five-dimensional model of cultural differences. The model has been used in other cross-cultural educational studies (Chang and Chin, 1999; Paulus et al., 2005; Pritchard and Skinner, 2002), although it

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has also been critiqued for its limitations in creating a construct of cultural interactions in educational settings (Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009). Using this one model may have limited the ability to compare the educational cultures of the two countries participating in the study.

8. Implications for Future Research

This study filled a gap in the literature by identifying teacher behaviours that contributed to positive student-teacher relationships with gifted secondary students and secondary students with EBD in cross-cultural settings, and by comparing and contrasting the behaviours that were most effective with each group of students. Many of the behaviours identified for both groups were consistent with behaviours identified in other studies (Wilkins, 2006; Suldo et al., 2009) with moderate variations for each group. This suggests that there are teacher behaviours that are universally effective for developing positive relationships with all students, but that unique students require unique behaviour sets to fully develop a positive relationship. It would be worthy of future research to investigate the teacher behaviours that most strongly contribute to positive relationships with students with other exceptionalities, including, but not limited to: intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, physically dependent, deaf-blind, chronic health impairments, deaf or hard of hearing, visual impairments and Autism Spectrum Disorder. It would also be worthwhile to research which behaviours are most important for developing positive relationships with mainstream students with no exceptionalities, and to compare those behaviours across geographical, social, and cultural contexts.

The gifted students and teachers participating in this study were all drawn from academic programs suited to meet the needs of intellectually gifted students in traditional core subject areas. Students gifted in other areas, such as creatively gifted students (Neihart & Olenchak, 2002) and emotionally gifted students (Passow, 1998; Piechowski, 1991), were not identified in the sample, however, it has been found that gifted students' social and emotional well being is related to their type of giftedness (Neihart, 1999). In particular, creatively gifted students have been found to be more vulnerable to psychological, social, and emotional difficulties than students gifted in other domains (Coleman & Cross, 2001; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Lovecky, 1992). As such, these students would have their own unique set of needs that would require a unique set of behaviours to form positive relationships with them. It would be worthwhile to investigate which behaviours are most important for developing positive relationships for students gifted in different domains.

This study examined positive relationships with gifted students and students with EBD as two different groups and did not take into account the existence of twice exceptional students – gifted students with EBD. No students in this study were identified as being twice exceptional, as gifted students with EBD are often not referred to, or have been removed from, gifted programs due to their behaviour (Reid & McGuire, 1995). These students have been found to have their behaviour problems linked mostly with boredom, as they waited for further instruction while their peers finished their work (Neu, 1993). These issues were not generally described by students with EBD in this study, indicating that twice exceptional students would have needs that might be different from both gifted students and students with EBD. Further research with this population would be valuable, and has been called for (Reis & McCoach, 2002).

Teachers of students with EBD participating in this study were all drawn from alternate or behaviour programs that were student-centred, relationally based, and had low student-to-teacher ratios. As such, all the teachers who participated expressed that they had experienced positive relationships with students with EBD, and had come to show affection and empathy for their students in spite of their often challenging behaviour. This perspective directly contradicts a large base of literature that suggests teachers find students with EBD difficult to teach (Shores & Wehby, 1999; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008) and often reject these students (Cefai & Cooper, 2010; Kauffman, 2001). These findings are predominantly related to students' experiences in mainstream schools that did not have the same structural or philosophical supports that the alternate and behaviour programs participating in this study did. It would be worthwhile to investigate the perspective of mainstream teachers regarding the development of positive relationships with students with EBD, as the current situation "...can only further inhibit the development of supportive relationships between teachers and students with EBD" (Mihalas et al., 2009, p. 115).

The cross-cultural component of this study involved students and teachers in Australia and Canada; two very similar cultures (Hofstede, 1986; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). As would be expected, participants in both locations had very similar views regarding

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the behaviours that most strongly contributed to positive student-teacher relationships. Further research would be useful to examine whether these perspectives transcend borders with cultures that are vastly different from Canada and Australia, classified as individualist/masculine, small power distance/weak uncertainty avoidance, and short-term oriented (Hofstede, 1986; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Countries classified as collectivist/feminine, large power distance/strong uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation, including Russia, Korea, and Chile would provide a fascinating contrast. Interestingly, gifted student perspectives in this study were similar to the perspectives of gifted students in Korea (Suk-Un Jin & Moon, 2006), suggesting that students with exceptionalities may share characteristics that transcend large cultural differences. More research regarding cross-cultural relationships with exceptional students would be valuable.

The students participating in this study represented a diverse and multi-cultural population. When broken down into exceptionality groups, however, certain dynamics were revealed that would be worthy of further research. Caucasian students were represented in relatively equal proportions among gifted students and students with EBD. However, the gifted group saw a large representation of students with Asian and South-Asian cultural backgrounds, whereas these students had almost no representation in the EBD group. Similarly, aboriginal students from Australia, New Zealand, and Canada had a relatively large representation in the EBD group, but virtually none in the gifted group. Students of different cultural backgrounds have been found to have different perspectives regarding interactions with their teachers. McIntyre and Battle's (1998) study of perceived traits of effective teachers found that African American students with EBD rated caring higher than Caucasian students with EBD. It would be worthwhile to investigate the teacher behaviours that are most effective for developing positive relationships with students with different exceptionalities and cultural backgrounds (e.g. African American gifted students, Aboriginal gifted students, Asian students with EBD, Asian gifted students, etc.).

In the same study, McIntyre and Battle (1998) also found that female students with EBD rated caring higher than their male peers. Although most teachers in this study indicated that they did not treat their female students very differently to their male

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students, some teachers noted general characteristics about the two genders that had guided their behaviour when interacting with their students. Student focus groups revealed that students did not feel that their gender or their teacher's gender made a difference in how positive relationships were developed. However, student survey responses indicated that female and male students emphasised the importance of different behaviours in developing positive relationships. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether teachers actually do treat males and females the same, or if different behaviours are more effective with one gender group or the other.

This study focused upon the teacher behaviours that most strongly contributed to positive relationships with exceptional secondary students, as teachers have a greater impact on determining the quality of the relationship (Pianta, 1999; Doll, Zucker, & Brehm, 2004). However, students also have their part to play in the development of positive relationships (Pianta, 1999). Some research has been able to identify student behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with teachers (Wilkins, 2006), however, there is a dearth of research regarding the behaviours exceptional students employ to develop positive relationships, and whether they are different from the behaviours of other students.

The topic of interest in this study was positive student-teacher relationships. As such, discussions of effective teachers were not thoroughly explored. It would be valuable to examine students' perceptions of the effectiveness of teachers with whom they had positive relationships, as well as the teacher behaviours that contribute to being an effective teacher. It may also be interesting to explore whether having an effective teacher results in similar positive student outcomes as having positive relationships with teachers, or whether having an effective teacher is more conducive to having a positive relationship with that teacher.

While the focus of this study was positive student-teacher relationships, it would be beneficial to view student and teacher perspectives from the opposite standpoint. Investigating the teacher behaviours that contribute to negative student-teacher relationships may provide insight into the teacher behaviours that contribute to students' negative school experiences and lead to lower achievement, failure, and

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dropout. This information would be valuable to the field of educational study, and is worthy of further exploration.

The results of this study also have implications for teacher training institutions and professional development for in-service teachers. The behaviours identified in this study are practical, employable behaviours that may be taught to pre-service and in-service teachers to help them improve relationships with students who are gifted or who have EBD. Positive relationships improve academic and affective development for students (Hattie, 2009), and therefore teachers who know how to create positive relationships with their students will be more effective than those who do not. Further studies may examine video and audio recording classrooms where teachers employ these behaviours, so that pre-service and in-service teachers may have a visual reference as to how to properly enact these behaviours. While some survey items might be difficult to teach (i.e. having a sense of humour), the qualitative data provides more specific behaviours that are easily understood (i.e. the use of subject-related cartoons on a test displays a sense of humour). Special Education courses and Behaviour Management courses offered by teacher training institutions may include the findings of this study to present practical instruction on how to work with the two unique groups of students, as the practice of teaching consists of personal interaction as much as pedagogical practice. Pre-service teacher practicum evaluation should include a component of student-teacher interaction assessment. The behaviours identified in this study can provide a checklist that may be used for giving pre-service teachers specific feedback as to what actions they may take to improve their practice when working with these unique groups of students.

The rise in the number of public independent schools in WA and charter schools in Canada also means that school administrators will have more discretion in hiring practices. Administrators at schools with gifted programs and/or high numbers of students with EBD could include classroom observation as part of the interview process and use the behaviours identified in this study as a guide to determine whether or not a candidate would be a good fit with their potential students. Interview questions could also ask candidates to name behaviours that they believe help develop

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positive relationships, use the behaviours identified in this study as a guide based on empirical evidence.

9. Conclusion

This cross-cultural study identified the teacher behaviours that most strongly contributed to positive relationships with gifted secondary school students and secondary students with EBD, and also identified which types of social support (emotional, instrumental, informational, appraisal) were most important in the development of positive relationships with gifted students and students with EBD. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to identify the behaviours and support types, which helped increase the reliability and validity of the study. The quantitative component of the study consisted of close-ended surveys completed by gifted students, students with EBD, and their respective teachers, while the qualitative component consisted of one open-ended survey question, teacher interviews, and student focus groups. Close-ended survey questions were examined through descriptive statistical analysis, while open-ended survey questions, teacher interviews, and student focus groups were all coded for teacher behaviours and support type themes. The data were triangulated by the use of these different methodologies.

Participants were drawn from Western Australian secondary schools with state recognised Gifted and Talented programs, Ontario (Canada) secondary schools with Enrichment programs, Senior Behaviour Centres in Western Australia, behaviour programs in secondary schools in Western Australia, and alternate programs in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, Canada. Purposeful sampling was used to select interview and focus group participants to ensure that respondents could use relevant, detailed personal experiences to discuss the research questions, which served to increase the study's validity. Reliability was established through the use of statistical analysis for the quantitative data, as well as full transcription of the teacher interviews and student focus group, and inclusion of verbatim quotes in the results to support the researcher's analysis.

Unique sets of behaviours were identified for each participant group, and a framework for developing positive relationships with gifted students and students with EBD was established. The types of social support that were most important for developing positive relationships were also identified for each participant group, and reflected the

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unique needs of each particular type of student. Cross-cultural comparisons revealed that participants in both locations held similar views, with minor variations. Comparisons between the different types of students revealed that gifted students and students with EBD each required a unique set of behaviours and social supports to address their unique set of needs. Many of the findings of the study generally concurred with findings of other related studies, with some divergences that would be worthy of further investigation.

The findings of this study are important for educators, as they may be used to improve relationships with particular types of students and increase the effectiveness of their practice. These findings hold value to teachers, students, administrators, and educational training institutions, as they may help to bridge the gap between educational theory and practice. The frameworks established for developing positive relationships with these exceptional students may be employed to improve social and academic outcomes for students, increase job satisfaction for teachers, and contribute to more positive learning environments, and therefore are important to the field of educational research.

APPENDIX A
Information Letter and Consent Form - Principals

INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive
relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

Dear Principal,

I am a PhD candidate from the School of Education, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. I am engaging in research that studies the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with gifted secondary school students and students with emotional/behavioural difficulties (EBD). I am writing to you to tell you about the research I am planning and what the students and teachers at your school will be doing if you agree to take part.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive professional relationships with gifted secondary school students and secondary students with EBD. The results of this study should help to further our understanding of the nature of student-teacher relationships, particularly with respect to exceptional secondary students. This knowledge will help teachers understand the importance of developing positive relationships with their students and what behaviours they can employ to enhance those relationships. It will also provide information about the teacher behaviours that students desire. This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD study at Edith Cowan University and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee. Permission to undertake the study is being sought from the Department of Education.

Participation

Teachers and students will be asked to complete a survey ranking the importance of 70 teacher behaviours to relationships with students. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, teachers are asked if they would be willing to participate, at a later date, in an interview to discuss student-teacher relationships. Students are asked if they would be willing to participate, at a later date, in a focus group discussion with approximately five other students from their program to discuss student-teacher relationships. Teacher interviews will take approximately 15-30 minutes and will be recorded on a digital voice recorder. Interviews will be scheduled for a time that is mutually convenient for teachers, your school, and the researcher. The student focus group will take approximately 30-60 minutes and will be scheduled during the school day at a time that is convenient for students and your school. The discussion will be moderated by the researcher and will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

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Please note, participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw your school from the study at any time, with no explanation necessary. Deciding not to participate or withdraw will have no effect on the education provided to your students.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this research. The time commitments of 30 minutes for the survey, 15-30 minutes for the teacher interviews, and 30-60 minutes for the focus group discussion may cause a scheduling inconvenience, but all attempts to schedule participation will be made to minimise disruption to your school. The benefits of the study are that teachers will be made aware of the behaviours that students desire to develop better professional relationships. It is hoped that teachers will be able to use this knowledge to improve their relationships with students, and therefore improve students' academic achievement and social/emotional development.

Confidentiality of information

The information gathered in this project will be confidential. No student, teacher, school or family will be identified by name in this project, as all information will be coded. All data collected during the study will be stored securely and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. The results of this study may be reported at conferences and in publications, however, at no time will participants or schools be identified. This information will not be provided to any other agencies and will be collected solely for the purpose of this research. Results of this study will be made available to you upon completion of the study.

If you would be willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached Informed Consent Document and return it to the researcher. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Capern
Chief Investigator
PhD Candidate
School of Education, Faculty of Education
and Arts
Edith Cowan University
2 Bradford Street
MOUNT LAWLEY 6050
xxxx xxxx
xxxx@our.ecu.edu.au

Dr Lorraine Hammond
Supervisor
Senior Lecturer
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2 Bradford Street
MOUNT LAWLEY 6050
xxxxxx
xxxx@ecu.edu.au

Should you wish to contact a person independent of the project to discuss any matter to do with the project then please contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
100 Joondalup Drive

Exceptional Connections

JOONDALUP WA 6027

Phone: xx xxxx xxxx

Email: xxxx@ecu.edu.au

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with exceptional secondary school students

I _____,

(Principal) (Please print full name)

of (School Name)

have read the accompanying information sheet concerning the study and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand the nature and intent of the study and agree to my school's participation in this activity, realising that my school's participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my school from participation at any time, without prejudice in any way. In such cases, my school's records will be destroyed, unless I have otherwise agreed for them to be used.

I realise that as part of this commitment students and teachers at my school are required to complete one survey, and may participate in one focus group (students), or one interview (teachers), provided they volunteer to do so and are selected. I realise that interviews and focus group discussions will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

I understand that all information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my school's name or other identifying information is not used.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B**Information Letter and Consent Form – Parents and Guardians****INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS****Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am a PhD candidate from the School of Education, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. I am engaging in research that studies the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with gifted secondary school students and students with emotional/behavioural difficulties. I am writing to you to tell you about the research I am planning and what your child will be doing if you agree to them taking part.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive professional relationships with gifted secondary school students and students with emotional/behavioural difficulties. The results of this study should help to further our understanding of the nature of student-teacher relationships, particularly with respect to exceptional secondary students. This knowledge will help teachers understand the importance of developing positive relationships with their students and what behaviours they can employ to enhance those relationships. It will also provide information about the teacher behaviours that students desire.

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee.

Participation

Students will be asked to complete a survey ranking the importance of 70 teacher behaviours to relationships with students. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, students are asked if they would be willing to participate, at a later date, in a focus group discussion with approximately five other students from their program to discuss student-teacher relationships. If your child volunteers to participate in the focus group and is selected at random, they will partake in a group discussion with approximately five peers from their program for approximately 30-60 minutes during the school day. The discussion will be moderated by the researcher and will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

Please note, participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw your child from the study at any time, with no explanation necessary. Deciding not to participate or withdraw will have no effect on the education provided to your child.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this research. The time commitment of 30 minutes for the survey and 30-60 minutes for the focus group discussion may cause an inconvenience for your child, but all attempts to schedule participation will

Exceptional Connections

be made to minimise disruption to your child's studies. The benefits of the study are that teachers will be made aware of the behaviours that students desire to develop better professional relationships. It is hoped that teachers will be able to use this knowledge to improve their relationships with students, and therefore improve students' academic achievement and social/emotional development.

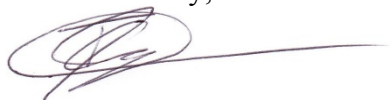
Confidentiality of information

The information gathered in this project will be confidential. No child, school or family will be identified by name in this project, as all information will be coded. All data collected during the study will be stored securely and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. The results of this study may be reported at conferences and in publications, however, at no time will participants or schools be identified. This information will not be provided to any other agencies and will be collected solely for the purpose of this research.

Results of this study will be made available to the principal of your child's school and will also be available to you upon your request.

If you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study, please sign the attached Informed Consent Document and return it to the researcher. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Capern
Chief Investigator
PhD Candidate
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and Arts
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2 Bradford Street
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Should you wish to contact a person independent of the project to discuss any matter to do with the project then please contact:

Research Ethics Officer

Edith Cowan University

100 Joondalup Drive

JOONDALUP WA 6027

Phone: xx xxxx xxxx

Email: xxxx@ecu.edu.au

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

I _____,

(Parent/Guardian) (Please print full name)

Parent/Guardian of (Child's Name)

have read the accompanying information sheet concerning the study and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand the nature and intent of the study and agree to my child's participation in this activity, realising that my child's participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw my child from participation at any time, without prejudice in any way. In such cases, my child's records will be destroyed, unless I have otherwise agreed for them to be used.

I realise that as part of this commitment my child is required to complete one survey, and may participate in one focus group, provided they volunteer to do so and are selected at random. I am aware that the focus group discussion will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

I understand that all information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my child's name or other identifying information is not used.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C
Information Letter and Consent Form - Students

INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive
relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

Dear Student,

I am a PhD candidate from the School of Education, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. I am starting research that studies the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with gifted secondary school students and students with emotional/behavioural difficulties (EBD). I am writing to you to tell you about the research I am planning and what you will be doing if you agree to take part.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive professional relationships with gifted secondary school students and secondary students with EBD. The results of this study should help increase understanding of the nature of student-teacher relationships, especially with respect to exceptional secondary students. This knowledge will help teachers understand the importance of developing positive relationships with their students and what behaviours can help them improve those relationships. It will also provide information about the teacher behaviours that students desire. This research project is being conducted as part of the requirements of a PhD study at Edith Cowan University and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee.

Participation

Students will be asked to complete a survey ranking the importance of 70 teacher behaviours to relationships with students. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. When you finish the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to participate, at a later date, in a focus group discussion with approximately five other students from your program to discuss student-teacher relationships. If you volunteer to participate in the focus group and are randomly selected, you will join in a group discussion with approximately five peers from your program for approximately 30-60 minutes during the school day. The discussion will be guided by the researcher and will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

Please note, participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time, with no explanation necessary. Deciding not to participate or withdraw will have no effect on the education provided to you.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this research. The time commitment of 30 minutes for the survey and 30-60 minutes for the focus group discussion may cause a small inconvenience to you, but all attempts to schedule the discussion will be made so as not to disrupt your studies. The benefits of the study are that teachers will be made aware of the behaviours that students desire to develop better professional

Exceptional Connections

relationships. It is hoped that teachers will be able to use this knowledge to improve their relationships with students, and therefore improve students' academic achievement and social/emotional development.

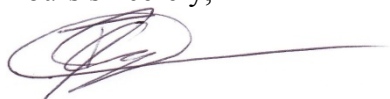
Confidentiality of information

The information gathered in this project will be confidential. No child, school or family will be identified by name in this project, as all identities will be coded. All data collected during the study will be stored securely and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. The results of this study may be reported at conferences and in publications, however, at no time will you or your school be identified. This information will not be provided to any other agencies and will be collected solely for the purpose of this research.

Results of this study will be made available to the principal of your school and will also be available to you upon your request.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached Informed Consent Document and return it to the researcher. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Capern
Chief Investigator
PhD Candidate
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and Arts
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xxxx xxxx
xxxx@our.ecu.edu.au

Dr Lorraine Hammond
Supervisor
Senior Lecturer
School of Education, Faculty of
Education and Arts
Edith Cowan University
2 Bradford Street
MOUNT LAWLEY 6050
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xxxx@ecu.edu.au

Should you wish to contact a person independent of the project to discuss any matter to do with the project then please contact:

Research Ethics Officer

Edith Cowan University

100 Joondalup Drive

JOONDALUP WA 6027

Phone: xx xxxx xxxx

Email: xxxx@ecu.edu.au

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS**Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

I _____,

(Student – Please print full name)

have read the accompanying information sheet concerning the study and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand the nature and intent of the study and agree to my participation in this activity, realising that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw from participation at any time, without prejudice in any way. In such cases, my records will be destroyed, unless I have otherwise agreed for them to be used.

I realise that as part of this commitment I am required to complete one survey, and may participate in one focus group, provided I volunteer to do so and am selected at random. I am aware that the focus group discussion will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

I understand that all information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my name or other identifying information is not used.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D
Information Letter and Consent Form - Teachers

INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive
relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

Dear Teacher,

I am a PhD candidate from the School of Education, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. I am engaging in research that studies the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with gifted secondary school students and students with emotional/behavioural difficulties (EBD). I am writing to you to tell you about the research I am planning and what you will be doing if you agree to take part.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify the teacher behaviours that contribute to positive professional relationships with gifted secondary school students and students with EBD. The results of this study should help to further our understanding of the nature of student-teacher relationships, particularly with respect to exceptional secondary students. This knowledge will help teachers understand the importance of developing positive relationships with their students and what behaviours they can employ to enhance those relationships. It will also provide information about the teacher behaviours that students desire. This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a PhD study at Edith Cowan University and has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee.

Participation

Teachers will be asked to complete a survey ranking the importance of 70 teacher behaviours to relationships with students. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, teachers are asked if they would be willing to participate, at a later date, in an interview to discuss student-teacher relationships. If you volunteer to participate in the interview and are selected, you will partake in an interview for approximately 15-30 minutes at a time that is convenient for you. Interviews will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

Please note, participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time, with no explanation necessary. Deciding not to participate or withdraw will have no effect on the education provided to your students.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks to participating in this research. The time commitment of 30 minutes for the survey and 15-30 minutes for the interview may cause an inconvenience, but all attempts to schedule participation will be made to minimise disruption to you. The benefits of the study are that teachers will be made aware of the behaviours that students desire to develop better professional relationships. It is hoped that teachers will be able to use this knowledge to improve their relationships

Exceptional Connections

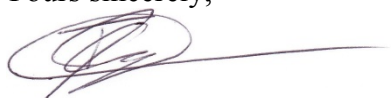
with students, and therefore improve students' academic achievement and social/emotional development.

Confidentiality of information

The information gathered in this project will be confidential. No student, teacher, school or family will be identified by name in this project, as all information will be coded. All data collected during the study will be stored securely and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project. The results of this study may be reported at conferences and in publications, however, at no time will participants or schools be identified. This information will not be provided to any other agencies and will be collected solely for the purpose of this research. Results of this study will be made available to the principal of your school and will also be available to you upon your request.

If you would be willing to participate in this study, please sign the attached Informed Consent Document and return it to the researcher. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Capern
Chief Investigator
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Should you wish to contact a person independent of the project to discuss any matter to do with the project then please contact:

Research Ethics Officer

Edith Cowan University
100 Joondalup Drive
JOONDALUP WA 6027

Phone: xx xxxx xxxx

Email: xxxx@ecu.edu.au

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**Exploring the Teacher Behaviours that contribute to positive relationships with exceptional secondary school students**

I _____,

(Please print full name)

have read the accompanying information sheet concerning the study and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand the nature and intent of the study and agree to my participation in this activity, realising that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without prejudice in any way. In such cases, my records will be destroyed, unless I have otherwise agreed for them to be used.

I realise that as part of this commitment I am required to complete one survey, and may participate in one interview, provided I volunteer to do so and am selected. I am aware that the interview will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

I understand that all information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will not be released by the investigator unless required to do so by law.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published, provided my name or other identifying information is not used.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX E**Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Student Version**

This survey contains 70 teacher behaviours. For each statement, please tick the box that most appropriately describes your feelings about how important that behaviour is in developing good relationships with your teachers. For example:

	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
Teachers should be patient with me						

If you think that it is very important for teachers to be patient with you in order to develop a good relationship with you, tick “Very Strongly Agree”. If you think that it is not that important for teachers to be patient with you in order to have a good relationship with you, tick “Disagree”.

Background Information

Before answering the survey questions, please answer the following questions about yourself by circling the appropriate response.

1. Name of your current school: _____

2. What is your gender?

Male Female

3. What is your age?

13 14 15 16 17 18

4. What year/grade are you in?

8 9 10 11 12

5. How many years have you been at your current school? This is my:

1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year 5th year

Exceptional Connections

In order for me to have good relationships with teachers, teachers should:

	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
1. Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (e.g., my moods, relationships, and health)						
2. Communicate interest in my personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know me)						
3. Have a pleasant or humorous nature						
4. Talk with me about my goals and interests						
5. Talk to me outside of the classroom						
6. Sympathize with me						
7. Be friendly to me						
8. Make me feel important						
9. Be considerate						
10. Be able to take a joke						
11. Be patient with me						
12. Be fond of everyone						
13. Trust me						
14. Try to ease my personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce my academic stress, help me problem solve personal situations)						
15. Be someone I can count on when I have a problem						
16. Treat me with respect						
17. Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me						
18. Listen if I have something to say						
19. Listen if I'm upset or have a problem						
20. Know when I am bored						
21. Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)						
22. Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously						

Exceptional Connections

23. Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed						
	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
24. Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident						
25. Enforce rules fairly						
26. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.						
27. Be concerned if I have not understood						
28. Respect my feelings						
29. Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)						
30. Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)						
31. Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)						
32. Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style						
33. Let me talk about things if I don't agree with them.						
34. Take time to help me learn to do something better.						
35. Make sure I have what I need for school						
36. Spend time with me when I need help						
37. Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions						
38. Let me decide some things in class						
39. In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help						
40. Give me a chance to explain myself						
41. Be willing to explain things again						
42. Help me catch up on work I miss						
43. Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help						
44. Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)						
45. Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)						
46. Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning						

Exceptional Connections

47. Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)						
48. Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests						
	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
49. Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests						
50. Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments						
51. Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing						
52. Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)						
53. Explain things I don't understand						
54. Show me how to do things						
55. Allow students to get help from other students						
56. Help me solve problems by giving me information						
57. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories						
58. Help me when I get in trouble by providing guidance						
59. Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)						
60. Communicate my achievement to me and/or my parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)						
61. Be proud of me						
62. Provide feedback and encouragement						
63. Encourage me to participate in activities						
64. Encourage me to do my best work						
65. Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work						
66. Give equal attention and praise among students						
67. Be strict if necessary						

Exceptional Connections

68. Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)						
69. Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me when needed)						
70. Tell me nicely when I make mistakes						

71. If there are any other teacher behaviours that you feel are important for you to have good relationships with teachers, please write them in the space provided below:

72. Would you be willing to be part of a focus group of 4-5 students that will discuss student-teacher relationships with the researcher for approximately 30-60 minutes during school time? Please circle:

Yes

No

If you circled 'Yes' please provide: Name:

Grade/Year:

School:

APPENDIX F**Student-Teacher Relationship Survey – Teacher Version**

This survey contains 70 teacher behaviours. For each statement, please tick the box that most appropriately describes your feelings about how important that behaviour is in developing good relationships with your students. For example:

	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
Be patient with students.						

If you think that it is very important for you to be patient with your students in order to develop a good relationship with them, tick “Very Strongly Agree”. If you think that it is not that important to be patient with your students in order to have a good relationship with them, tick “Disagree”.

Background Information

Before answering the survey questions, please answer the following questions about yourself by circling the appropriate response.

1. Name of current school: _____

2. What is your gender?

Male Female

3. What is your age?

21-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 55 or above

4. How many years have you been teaching?

1-5 6-9 10-15 16-20 21-30 31 or more

5. How many years have you been at your current school?

Less than 5 5-10 11-20 More than 20

Exceptional Connections

6. In what years/grades are the students you currently teach (Circle all that apply)?

8

9

10

11

12

7. What is the subject area in which you currently teach most classes?

English

The Arts

Mathematics

Science

Society and Environment (Social studies/History)

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

Technology and Enterprise

Health and Physical Education

8. Do you currently teach students who have been designated as gifted?

Yes

No

9. Do you currently teach students who have emotional/behavioural disorders?

Yes

No

10. Do you think it is important to have good relationships with students?

Yes

No

Exceptional Connections

In order for me to have good relationships with my students, I should/do:

	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
1. Communicate that I care about students' emotional well-being (e.g., their moods, relationships, and health)						
2. Communicate interest in their personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know them)						
3. Have a pleasant or humorous nature						
4. Talk with them about their goals and interests						
5. Talk to them outside of the classroom						
6. Sympathize with them						
7. Be friendly to them						
8. Make them feel important						
9. Be considerate						
10. Be able to take a joke						
11. Be patient with them						
12. Be fond of all students						
13. Trust them						
14. Try to ease students' personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce their academic stress, help them problem solve personal situations)						
15. Be someone students can count on when they have a problem						
16. Treat students with respect						
17. Show respect for students by maintaining their privacy and being honest with them						
18. Listen if they have something to say						
19. Listen if they are upset or have a problem						
20. Know when students are bored						
21. Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)						
22. Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously						

Exceptional Connections

23. Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed						
	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
24. Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident						
25. Enforce rules fairly						
26. Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.						
27. Be concerned if students have not understood						
28. Respect students' feelings						
29. Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)						
30. Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)						
31. Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)						
32. Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style						
33. Let students talk about things if they don't agree with me.						
34. Take time to help students learn to do something better.						
35. Make sure students have what they need for school						
36. Spend time with students when they need help						
37. Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions						
38. Let students decide some things in class						
39. In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help						
40. Give students a chance to explain themselves						
41. Be willing to explain things again						
42. Help students catch up on work they miss						
43. Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help						
44. Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)						
45. Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)						
46. Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning						

Exceptional Connections

47. Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)						
48. Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests						
	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very Strongly Disagree
49. Increase students' ability to prepare well for exams and tests						
50. Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments						
51. Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing						
52. Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)						
53. Explain things students don't understand						
54. Show students how to do things						
55. Allow students to get help from other students						
56. Help students solve problems by giving them information						
57. Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories						
58. Help students when they get in trouble by providing guidance						
59. Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)						
60. Communicate student achievement to them and/or their parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)						
61. Be proud of students						
62. Provide feedback and encouragement						
63. Encourage them to participate in activities						
64. Encourage them to do their best work						
65. Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work						
66. Give equal attention and praise among students						
67. Be strict if necessary						
68. Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)						

71. If there are any other teacher behaviours that you feel are important for you to have good relationships with your students, please write them in the space provided below:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

School:

E-mail address:

APPENDIX G**Behaviour Mean Score Comparison – Behaviours Agreed Upon by Gifted Students and their Teachers (Ranked by Order of Largest Mean Difference)**

Behaviour	Support Type	Gifted Student Mean	Gifted Teacher Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.	Gifted Student Rank	Gifted Teacher Rank
Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)	Instrumental	4.92	5.22	0.30	0.07	29	33
Go beyond using the textbook and use additional information via movies, Internet, field trips, and personal stories	Informational	5.29	5.59	0.30	0.06*	4	5
Take time to help me learn to do something better.	Instrumental	4.77	5.04	0.27	0.08*	37	48
Ask for student feedback about class and teaching style	Instrumental	4.34	4.57	0.23	0.19	58	62
Help me solve problems by giving me information	Informational	4.95	5.18	0.23	0.13	27	38
Show me how to do things	Informational	4.98	5.20	0.22	0.14	24	35
Give all students equal chances to participate in class and on assignments	Instrumental	5.14	5.35	0.21	0.12	13	18
Tell me how to improve (e.g. explain my errors, redirect me	Appraisal	5.14	5.33	0.19	0.39*	14	22

Exceptional Connections

when needed)

Not discriminate against specific students due to race, ability level, etc.	Emotional	5.55	5.73	0.19	0.17*	2	1
Explain things I don't understand	Informational	5.23	5.39	0.16	0.21	8	15
Give me a chance to explain myself	Instrumental	5.08	5.22	0.15	0.30*	17	30
Let me talk about things if I don't agree with them.	Instrumental	4.83	4.94	0.11	0.51	35	56
Provide a positive response to student questions (e.g., always be willing to answer all questions thoroughly, lead students to answers)	Informational	5.20	5.29	0.09	0.51	10	26
Check for entire class' understanding and arrange for mastery experiences during class (e.g., explain and clarify concepts, provide enrichment activities, be flexible with class agenda/schedule)	Instrumental	4.90	4.98	0.08	0.63	30	54
Try to solve problems instead of automatically punishing	Informational	5.05	5.13	0.07	0.89*	20	41
Give equal attention and praise among students	Appraisal	4.96	5.00	0.04	0.83	26	52

Exceptional Connections

Allow students to get help from other students	Informational	5.23	5.27	0.03	0.66*	7	27
Be able to take a joke	Emotional	5.26	5.29	0.03	0.85	6	24
Be friendly to me	Emotional	5.16	5.18	0.03	0.85	12	37
Increase my ability to prepare well for exams and tests	Instrumental	5.20	5.22	0.02	0.83*	9	31
Be fond of everyone	Emotional	4.52	4.53	0.01	0.97	46	64
Help me catch up on work I miss	Instrumental	4.86	4.86	-0.01	0.75*	34	59
Tell me nicely when I make mistakes	Appraisal	5.03	5.00	-0.03	0.49*	22	50
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	Instrumental	5.07	4.98	-0.09	0.11*	18	53
Trust me	Emotional	4.98	4.88	-0.10	0.49	25	58

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

APPENDIX H**Behaviour Mean Score Comparison – Behaviours Ranked Significantly Higher by Teachers of Gifted Students Compared to Gifted Students (Ranked by Order of Largest Mean Difference)**

Behaviour	Support Type	Gifted Student Mean	Gifted Teacher Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.	Gifted Student Rank	Gifted Teacher Rank
Talk to me outside of the classroom	Emotional	3.86	5.12	1.27	0.00	68	42
Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (e.g., my moods, relationships, and health)	Emotional	4.18	5.43	1.25	0.00	64	13
Communicate interest in my personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know me)	Emotional	3.99	5.22	1.23	0.00	66	32
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	Emotional	3.87	4.96	1.09	0.00	67	55
Be proud of me	Appraisal	4.33	5.35	1.03	0.00*	59	16
Listen if I'm upset or have a problem	Emotional	4.36	5.35	0.99	0.00*	57	21
Communicate my achievement to me and/or my parents (e.g. provide compliments/praise)	Appraisal	4.32	5.29	0.97	0.00*	60	25

Exceptional Connections

Talk with me about my goals and interests	Emotional	4.38	5.31	0.92	0.00*	54	23
Sympathize with me	Emotional	4.11	5.00	0.89	0.00	65	51
Make me feel important	Emotional	4.38	5.25	0.87	0.00*	56	28
Be patient with me	Emotional	4.80	5.63	0.84	0.00*	36	3
Encourage me to participate in activities	Appraisal	4.51	5.35	0.84	0.00*	47	20
Be someone I can count on when I have a problem	Emotional	4.22	5.04	0.82	0.00	62	47
Know when I am bored	Emotional	4.38	5.15	0.76	0.00*	55	39
Spend time with me when I need help	Instrumental	4.39	5.12	0.73	0.00*	53	44
Set aside time in class or after class to answer questions	Instrumental	4.43	5.12	0.69	0.00*	49	43
Be concerned if I have not understood	Emotional	4.68	5.35	0.67	0.00*	42	19
Help me when I get in trouble by providing guidance	Informational	4.40	5.06	0.66	0.00*	52	46
Encourage me to do my best work	Appraisal	4.94	5.59	0.65	0.00*	28	6
Respect my feelings	Emotional	4.74	5.39	0.65	0.00*	39	14

Exceptional Connections

Provide feedback and encouragement	Appraisal	4.89	5.50	0.61	0.00*	32	9
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	Emotional	4.31	4.92	0.61	0.00*	61	57
Be strict if necessary	Appraisal	4.74	5.35	0.60	0.00*	38	17
Make sure I have what I need for school	Instrumental	3.80	4.40	0.60	0.00	70	67
Outside of classroom, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	Instrumental	3.83	4.40	0.57	0.00	69	66
Try to ease my personal or academic concerns (e.g. reduce my academic stress, help me problem solve personal situations)	Emotional	4.49	5.02	0.53	0.01*	48	49
Listen if I have something to say	Emotional	5.01	5.51	0.50	0.00*	23	8
Use creative teaching strategies (e.g., group work and/or active learning, word searches, crosswords)	Instrumental	4.65	5.14	0.49	0.03*	45	40
In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	Instrumental	4.71	5.18	0.47	0.00*	41	36

Exceptional Connections

Be considerate	Emotional	5.05	5.49	0.44	0.00	21	11
Let me decide some things in class	Instrumental	4.41	4.85	0.44	0.00	51	60
Treat me with respect	Emotional	5.29	5.73	0.44	0.00*	3	2
Provide extra help with school work (e.g., more review of difficult concepts during or after class)	Instrumental	4.66	5.08	0.42	0.03*	44	45
Be willing to explain things again	Instrumental	5.08	5.49	0.41	0.01*	16	10
Try to focus on individual students' preferences for learning	Instrumental	4.42	4.83	0.41	0.02	50	61
Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	Emotional	5.19	5.55	0.36	0.01*	11	7
Show respect for me by maintaining my privacy and being honest with me	Emotional	5.12	5.47	0.35	0.01	15	12
Enforce rules fairly	Emotional	4.89	5.22	0.34	0.01	33	34
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	Emotional	5.29	5.59	0.31	0.01*	5	4

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

APPENDIX I**Behaviour Mean Score Comparison – Behaviours Ranked Significantly Higher by Gifted Students Compared to Teachers (Ranked by Order of Largest Mean Difference)**

Behaviour	Support Type	Gifted Student Mean	Gifted Teacher Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.	Gifted Student Rank	Gifted Teacher Rank
Provide rewards based on performance (e.g., reward individual students or entire class with a party or treat for good performance)	Appraisal	4.68	3.76	0.92	0.00	43	69
Give tangible objects/rewards (e.g., candy, food)	Appraisal	4.20	3.38	0.82	0.00	63	70
Provide fun activities (e.g., free time, sports, field trips)	Instrumental	5.06	4.41	0.65	0.00	19	65
Punish the correct student for each behaviour incident	Emotional	4.74	4.14	0.60	0.00	40	68
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	Instrumental	5.62	5.22	0.40	0.00	1	29
Provide extra or partial credit, helpful hints, let students make up or redo work	Appraisal	4.89	4.54	0.35	0.05	31	63

APPENDIX J**Behaviour Mean Score Comparison – Behaviours Ranked Significantly Higher by Gifted Students Compared to Students with EBD
(Ranked by Order of Largest Mean Difference)**

Behaviour	Support Type	Gifted Student Mean	Students with EBD Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.	Gifted Student Rank	Students with EBD Rank
Give a reasonable amount of homework (not too much, not too little)	Instrumental	5.07	3.83	1.24	0.00	18	70
Give students enough time to complete assignments and/or prepare for tests	Instrumental	5.62	5.00	0.62	0.00*	1	18
Allow students to get help from other students	Informational	5.23	4.63	0.60	0.00	7	44
Be strict if necessary	Appraisal	4.74	4.26	0.49	0.01	38	61
Use directive instruction (e.g., provide concrete examples, tricks to help memorize things)	Instrumental	4.92	4.49	0.43	0.01	29	56
Have a pleasant or humorous nature	Emotional	5.29	4.91	0.38	0.01	5	29
Give permission for students to ask questions during class as needed	Emotional	5.19	4.82	0.37	0.01	11	35
Be considerate	Emotional	5.05	4.76	0.28	0.05	21	40

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

APPENDIX K**Behaviour Mean Score Comparison – Behaviours Ranked Significantly Higher by Students with EBD Compared to Gifted Students
(Ranked by Order of Largest Mean Difference)**

Behaviour	Support Type	Gifted Student Mean	Students with EBD Mean	Mean Difference	Sig.	Gifted Student Rank	Students with EBD Rank
Be proud of me	Appraisal	4.33	4.85	-0.53	0.00	59	34
Communicate that they care about my emotional well-being (e.g., my moods, relationships, and health)	Emotional	4.18	4.58	-0.40	0.00	64	49
Help me when I get in trouble by providing guidance	Informational	4.40	4.80	-0.40	0.01*	52	37
Provide a physical environment that encourages questions (e.g., posters on class walls remind students to ask questions)	Emotional	3.87	4.24	-0.36	0.00	67	62
Make sure I have what I need for school	Instrumental	3.80	4.13	-0.33	0.02	70	66
Respect my feelings	Emotional	4.74	5.06	-0.31	0.00	39	15
Communicate interest in my personal interests, such as sports and weekend plans (ie. make the effort to get to know me)	Emotional	3.99	4.30	-0.31	0.01	66	58

Exceptional Connections

Be patient with me	Emotional	4.80	5.08	-0.28	0.02	36	13
Listen if I'm upset or have a problem	Emotional	4.36	4.64	-0.28	0.01	57	43
In class, check for individual students' understanding and provide help	Instrumental	4.71	4.99	-0.27	0.00	41	19
Provide a way for students to ask questions privately and/or anonymously	Emotional	4.31	4.58	-0.27	0.03	61	48
Tell me nicely when I make mistakes	Appraisal	5.03	5.27	-0.24	0.05	22	3
Take time to help me learn to do something better.	Instrumental	4.77	5.00	-0.23	0.01	37	17
Listen if I have something to say	Emotional	5.01	5.20	-0.20	0.03	23	5

* - Significance value calculated using non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test due to unequal population variances

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