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The Qualities, Formation and Development of Teacher-Pupil Relationships in the Primary School

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Abstract

This article presents selected findings from a small-scale study exploring teacher-pupil relationships in two English primary schools. The data were collected over the period of one school year spent in four Key Stage Two classrooms. The paper describes the observed qualities, as well as elements of the formation and development of teacher-pupil relationships. The study considered aspects of school life such as classroom context and organisation in terms of opportunity for interaction and reinforcement of positive relationships, as well as investigating some of the possible pervasive influences on teacher perceptions and expectations. The findings reported in this paper advocate that the nature of these relationships has great significance when related to their manifestation and use in everyday interactions, and that continuity of positive feedback and shared activities are important as a means of emphasising a sense of reciprocity between teacher and pupil.

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1.0   Introduction

The study of social development in children (Littleton & Ding, 2005, Dowling, 2005) differs from the study of cognitive development in that it does not solely focus on the process of development and acquisition of knowledge, but considers the constraints (situational and interpersonal) that are apparent during this process (Kutnick, 1988). Children entering school already have a long history of social learning, bringing with them perceptions of the self and of their social environment. However, social learning in early years has taken place mainly within the family and supervised play-groups. Through these pre-school experiences, the child becomes aware of forces which constitute culture; through them attitudes toward the social psychological environment are conveyed and cultural standards begin to affect behaviour and personality.

During this process of socialisation, an important component of the culture which the child adopts, and a significant determinant of his/her needs and self-perceptions is the element of grouping. Even while the child's experience is limited within the bounds of the family, values of group interaction enter into his/her world because they are part of the family life and customs. When that experience extends to school, there is greater opportunity for encounter with cultural values of other groups, which widen the child's experience. Schooling covers a broad area of intellectual and social development, much of which takes place under the direction of the main agent in the classroom, the teacher. Evidently interactions between teacher and pupil have profound effects upon the formation of social skills. The teacher mediates between a child and society, while schooling provides the practice arena for the child's social behaviour.

In this paper, I give an overview of a small-scale study of four classrooms in two English primary schools. The study explored teacher-pupil relationships at Key Stage Two[2], focusing on the individual differences and experiences of the participants, and employed both observation and interview techniques with children and teachers in order to provide a description and understanding of teacher-pupil relationships 'in context'. This paper, however, focuses on one particular aspect of the study; that of the qualities, formation and development of the relationships observed, and will illustrate how, if we are to enhance our understanding of teacher-pupil relationships, there is a need to accept that individual pupils are continually part of the process of constructing their identities and, therefore, will be continually negotiating their role within such a relationship.

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[2] This Key Stage covers Year 3 to Year 6 of schooling and represents children between the ages of 7 – 11 years of age.

2.0   Context

2.1   The term 'relationship'

Hinde (1979, 1997) explained the term 'relationship' as an intermittent and meaningful interaction between (at least) two people, which involved interaction over an extended period of time. He went on to suggest that the interactions needed to have some degree of mutuality in the sense that the behaviour of each takes some account of the behaviour of the other, although he warned that mutuality does not necessarily imply 'co-operation'. In addition, he suggested that there was a further implication of a degree of continuity between the successive interactions; each interaction is affected by interactions in the past and potentially having an impact on future interactions.

> *Thus relationships can be seen as narratives, and the self as including, and largely constituted by, the narratives of experienced relationships* (Hinde, 1997: 40).

Hinde (1979) suggested that it is necessary for both participants in a relationship to define that relationship similarly. Most of the difficulties in the early stages of a relationship, even with primarily formal relationships such as that of teacher and pupil, can be seen as involving the reaching of an acceptable agreed definition of the relationship. The definition is usually worked out progressively as the relationship develops. The consequent interactions involve negotiation between two individuals, teacher and pupil. The pupil tries to perceive the character underlying the set of 'role identities' that the teacher displays, and devises a 'role' for him/herself that can best make use of the teacher's role and character. This is a two-way process, and continuation of the interaction demands some mutual accommodation such that each improvises a 'role' roughly in line with that of the other. In this paper, the view is taken that when this process breaks down due to lack of communication or mis-perception of the 'role identities', the relationship begins to suffer.

2.2   The national context

By 1987, the Department for Education and Science (DES)[3] had taken the view that teachers had largely adopted the recommendations of the Plowden Report (1967). Yet long before this date severe criticisms had been levelled at poor academic performance and standards of behaviour in England's secondary schools. The government responded to this criticism by formulating plans for a national curriculum. During the course of the debate, attention focused upon the performance of primary schools, with particular regard to the levels of literacy and numeracy attained in the first six years of schooling. Comparative studies revealed that England's primary schools were behind those of many other industrial nations; they were failing to provide large numbers of children with the preparation

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[3] The Department for Education and Science (DES) has since been renamed The Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

required for the secondary stage. It was within this context, therefore, that the Education Reform Act (1988) was passed.

The implementation of a National Curriculum for pupils aged 5-16, was the most important outcome of the Education Reform Act (1988). Its aim was to bring coherence to the education system and so to raise standards in all schools. The advent of a centrally imposed National Curriculum for all maintained schools in England and Wales represented a marked departure from the traditions of primary schools whose curricula and practice had been formerly embedded in 'localism' (Golby, 1988). 'Localism' was characterised by a high degree of control exercised locally by heads and teachers over curriculum matters and classroom practice in individual schools.

The introduction of a National Curriculum fundamentally changed the educational environment in which schools and teachers operated. A centrally developed and imposed curriculum also had enormous implications for teaching in classrooms. This is especially so for primary teachers, most of whom were initially trained as generalists, and who are now required to teach towards specific attainment targets across a range of subjects in a way which is susceptible to public scrutiny and verification (Pollard, 1994).

So, during the last 20 years there has been an increasing focus on raising standards in England through centralized initiatives in the establishment of 'key stages', core subjects, and national testing of pupil attainment (Day *et al*, 2005). However, relatively little empirically based knowledge exists concerning the ways in which the relationship between teachers and pupils in the classroom is fostered and maintained within the constantly changing context.

2.1 *Overview of previous research*

During the 1990s, several studies revealed the way in which teachers, particularly of the primary age range, felt about the new culture and the potential threat to the quality of interaction with children, which primary teachers valued most highly (Campbell *et al*, 1992; Miles *et al*, 1994). Partly as a result of the National Curriculum, the emphasis had changed to whole class teaching, thus the dominance of instruction had emerged, with less time being spent dealing with individual pupils' needs. Miles *et al* (1994) suggested that the time available for interaction with pupils had decreased due to the continuing pressure on educational resources and the increased prioritising of other activities over teacher-pupil interactions.

A study of teacher-pupil interactions (Primary Assessment Curriculum and Experience (PACE)) attempted to document the affect of the National Curriculum on teachers and pupils as they moved up through the primary school. The PACE project (Pollard *et al*, 1994) was designed to monitor the

impact of the new curricular and assessment structures introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988, for primary schools, teachers and pupils and began by identifying a national sample of infant children from the first cohort of pupils who would experience the new National Curriculum from the outset of their education.

> *We wanted to investigate whether the close personal relationship, to which primary school teachers have been so strongly committed in the past, would be compromised by the impact of external pressures* (Pollard *et al*, 1994: 4).

The data gathered by the PACE team confirmed teachers' positive attitudes concerning the importance of teacher-pupil relationships, but indicated an enforced change in practice due to new pressures. Pollard *et al* (1994) found that teachers had to direct pupils more frequently, imposing more of their authority onto the children. They felt that this was beginning to have subtle effects on the relationships in the classroom and these pressures were attributed to the National Curriculum. Pupils, however, were generally happy, liked their teachers and did not perceive a change in the relationship between themselves and the teacher. Later in the study, it was suggested that teachers were beginning to deal with the implementation processes well, but were still conscious of a feeling of pressure (Croll, 1996), however there were continued doubts as to the quality of teacher-pupil relationships.

Other researchers (Bottery, 1992; Woods, 1995; Osborn, 2000) explored the impact of the new curriculum on classroom relationships and found that the imposition of the new rules was hindering the development of good relationships (Bottery, 1992). Woods (1995) found that many teachers had found it hard to cope with the radical changes and the continuous adjustments they had to face as a result of a curriculum that they considered to be providing both "*opportunity and constraint*" (Woods, 1995: 65). Feelings of frustration and powerlessness among primary teachers were also expressed in Galton and Fogelman's survey (1988) and, more recently, by Osborn *et al* (2000).

There have been a number of other studies regarding elements of classroom activity which doubtless have an impact upon teacher-pupil relationships, such as the creation of productive classroom environments (Hook &Vass, 2000), the role of authority in the classroom (Robertson, 1996; Woods, 1983), and the fact that the basic situation within which pupils operate is one where their activity is almost inevitably a reaction to events (Woods, 1980). Much consideration has also been given to how pupils interact with one another in the classroom, both academically (for example, Kunick & Kington, 2005) and socially (Hartup, 1998; Pollard, 1985). For example, Pollard (1985) discusses the impact of 'crowds' on classroom life, explaining that involvement in a 'crowd' brings with it a sense of security and anonymity which most children enjoy. He observed that when this is disrupted, for instance, if a child is shown up, told off or isolated from peers, this can be interpreted by the child as a threat to the

child's identity in the classroom. More recently, Pelligrini & Baltchford (2000) presented children's social interactive processes as a key dimension of their lives in school.

2.3   The importance of personal experience and individual differences

In addition to the previous research in the related areas mentioned above, the study also considered the importance of personal experience in the development of classroom relationships. For example, Dewey (1938) claimed that experience is not just an event that happens, but an event with meaning. He defined experience as either a particular instance or a process of observing, undergoing or encountering. In addition, he stated that because experience is multi-layered and interwoven with other experiences, it is practically impossible to analyse, and any analysis that does take place inevitably causes that experience to change. Strauss (1965) and Berk (1989) argued that 'experiences' are constituted from moments throughout our lives when something 'dawns' on us and we achieve some sort of insight, these moments are sometimes labelled 'educational episodes' and supposedly lead to some sort of transformation. For example, Woods (1990) believed that pupils were constantly open to status passages and transformational episodes due to the large number of new experiences and phenomena which they are exposed to, but which they have little or no control over, such as individual teachers, classroom organisation, daily activities etc. In addition, he noted that the actual meaning of such experiences can also change over time and the effects of them can become transformed.

Woods (1990) went on to argue that the social class structure, gender divisions and racism can be said to be the most persuasive influences operating on pupils outside of the school. He suggested that individuals do not follow subcultural norms slavishly, but have choices. Similarly, Furlong (1976) in his study of a London comprehensive, found no proof of pupil cultures, but evidence that different pupils took part in different groups at different times, which he claimed "*simply illustrates the point that they do not always agree about what they know. Teachers, subjects and methods of teaching mean different things to different pupils*" (p. 169).

Measor and Woods (1984) found that the majority of pupils who they studied were 'knife-edgers' – those who appear as totally different people to different teachers on different occasions, but all of which combine to constitute their composite identity and, therefore, the identity of which the teacher will form a perception. Weis (1985) claimed that what pupils 'choose' to value represents a creative response to the material conditions of their lives as they experience it in terms of their class, gender and ethnicity. Although the form of these cultures was related, to a certain degree, to what schools did, they were also produced partially as a response to school practices themselves and were tied to the experiences of pupils outside the school (i.e. the material conditions of their lives and the extent to which these conditions are affirmed, denied, or simply ignored within educational institutions). Thus elements of class cultures, gender cultures and ethnic traditions interacted in a complex way.

Furthermore, Woods (1990) suggested each pupil had a multi-faceted personality and that at different times, with different teachers and in different contexts, a given pupil would allow a different facet of this integrated personality to show through.

3.0 An empirical investigation into teacher-pupil relationships

3.1 Research design

An in-depth investigation of the nature and development of teacher-pupil relationships required the observation of actual teacher-pupil relationships in natural settings, further consideration of the context in which they develop, and a description and analysis of the understanding and behaviour within the relationship of pupils and teachers. A framework for the selection of an appropriate methodological approach and of specific methods was developed consisting of the following criteria:

a)   Presentation of a full and detailed account of pupil and teacher interactions in a classroom setting;

b)   Description of how teacher-pupil relationships were promoted in the classroom;

c)   Contrast and comparison between different school contexts and age groups;

d)   Examination of the development of the relationships over a period of time; and,

e)   Description and analysis of children's and teachers' understanding of the teacher-pupil relationship and its micro-developmental changes.

The research design consisted of case studies in two English primary schools. The two schools were contrasting in location, one being in a disadvantaged area within the inner city (St. Stephen's Primary School)[4] and the other in a suburban area of relatively high socio-economic status (Redhill Primary School). Case studies were carried out over a period of three terms (one school year).

3.2 Sample

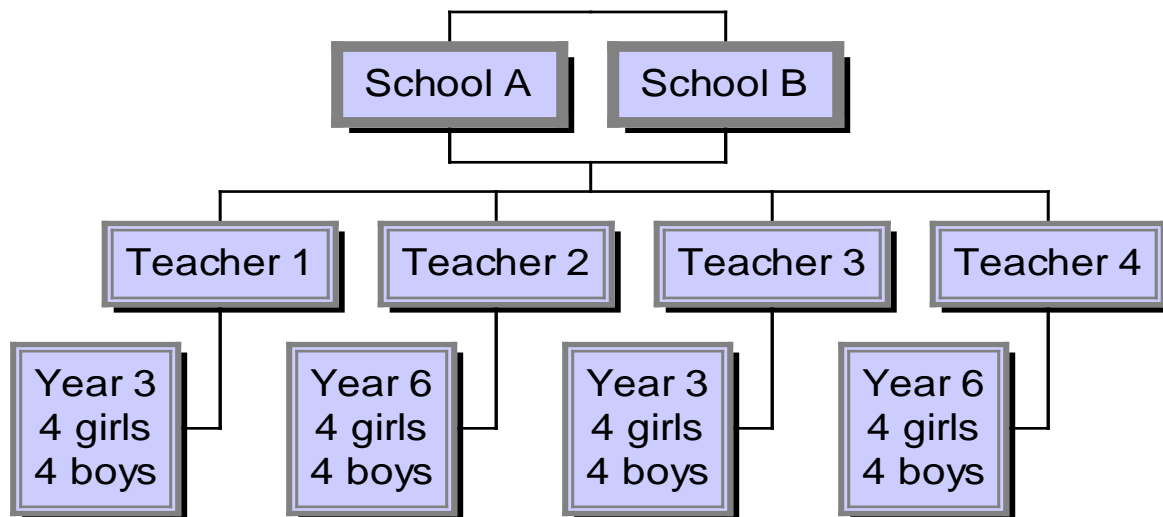The selection procedure for the sample was as follows:

- two schools: in contrasting socio-economic areas
- two teachers in each of the schools: one in a Year 3 class, the other in a Year 6 class
- eight children in each class: four boys and four girls who represented a cross-section of the class.

The main selection procedure was undertaken by either the Head or the Deputy Head in each of the schools. To a certain extent, as with the selection of schools, the choice of classrooms was limited to

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[4] School names have been anonymised.

those whose teachers were willing to partake in the study. All four teachers were female, but did represent a range of ages and years of experience. The selection of participant pupils was initially influenced by preliminary observations in each of the classrooms. Figure 1 illustrates the model for selection of the sample.

Figure 1: Model of selection procedure.

School A	School B

Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4

Year 3 4 girls 4 boys	Year 6 4 girls 4 boys	Year 3 4 girls 4 boys	Year 6 4 girls 4 boys

3.3   Methods

The need for immersion into the classroom culture, and an exploration of the patterns and developments of teacher-pupil interactions / relationships, led to a qualitative analysis of the nature and development of teacher-pupil relationships in the primary school. There is not time here to discuss the various strengths and limitations of techniques of data collection and analysis. However, any limitations of a particular data collection tool were compensated for through the use of an alternative method which was stronger in other areas. This also meant that findings were enhanced where both qualitative and quantitative tools provided '*mutual confirmation*' (Bryman, 1988: 131). A further potential benefit of using more than one method of data collection with a given sample of research participants was 'cross-method validity raising' in which evidence from one method can be used to facilitate richer responses when using a different method (Hobson, 2000).

The main evidence collection method was semi-structured, face-to-face **interviews**, different versions of which were used with teachers and pupils. This was supplemented at various stages of the research by document analysis, and informal interviews with school leaders and other teachers. The evidence was gathered in an iterative and evolving process consistent with the use of grounded theory methods. Thus, a rich and detailed picture of the teacher-pupil relationships in the target classrooms was

recorded. The preservation of this evidence in detail serves to enhance the verifiability of the findings (audit trail, etc).

Table 1: Methodological instruments.

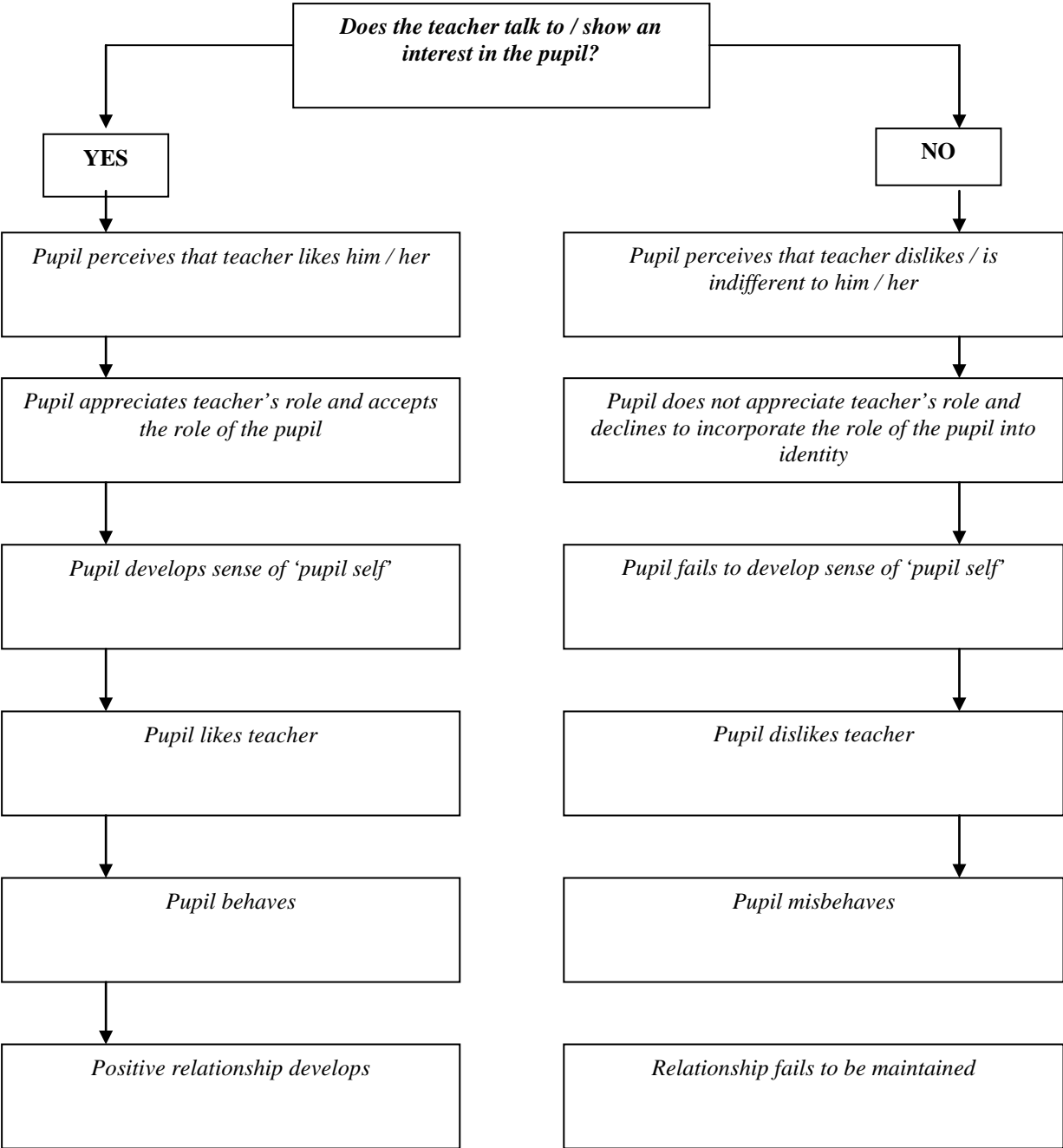| Participants	Methods	Time	Data collected
Teachers	Background information profile	Autumn term	Details regarding target pupils and teachers
	Face-to-face, semi-structured interview	Autumn and summer term	In-depth reflections regarding formation, development and qualities of the relationships
Teachers/ pupils	Detailed fieldnotes	Five times during the year	Interactions between teacher and pupils; verbal and non-verbal communication
Pupils	Diaries	Throughout the year	Thoughts and feelings about the relationship; perceptions of how the relationship was developing
	Systematic observations	Twice per term	Relationships between teacher and pupil; verbal and non-verbal communication
	Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews	Autumn and summer term	In-depth reflections regarding the relationships, particularly the formation, development and qualities of the relationships

The opportunity for in-depth description of relationships was offered by **observations** of interactive episodes between teacher and pupils and sequences of interaction within the classroom. Observations were interrelated with the interviews regarding the perceptions of the existing relationships. The contextual information which this approach generated regarding participants' perceptions of and interactions within the relationship were important in order to incorporate both partners' understanding and behaviour, and to explore these interrelated elements. **Pupil diaries** were also used in conjunction with these two methods to illuminate further the children's perceptions and feelings about the relationships. Table 1 illustrates the timetable by which data were collected during the year.

5.0   Discussion of analytical findings

As a result of the data generated over one school year, a general spiral pattern was observed in pupil interactions across the case studies which demonstrated the content of interaction and the social processes characteristic in the relationship between teacher and pupil. Gradual co-constructions of shared likes/dislikes were seen to promote interactions between teacher and pupil with a special meaning and cumulative affirmation.

In this way, an awareness of the 'other' and of their specific relationship (shared knowledge and an awareness of the status of the relationship) developed which either brought the two participants of the relationship together or maintained a distance between them. However, variations were noted concerning several elements in relation to the teaching style and consequent classroom organisation (shared interaction and teacher control). It was found that certain interconnections promoted the development of teacher-pupil relationships. These interconnections can be represented in diagrammatic form (Fig. 2):

Figure 2: The interconnections promoting the development of teacher-pupil relationships.

Does the teacher talk to / show an interest in the pupil?	
YES	**NO**
Pupil perceives that teacher likes him / her	*Pupil perceives that teacher dislikes / is indifferent to him / her*
Pupil appreciates teacher's role and accepts the role of the pupil	*Pupil does not appreciate teacher's role and declines to incorporate the role of the pupil into identity*
Pupil develops sense of 'pupil self'	*Pupil fails to develop sense of 'pupil self'*
Pupil likes teacher	*Pupil dislikes teacher*
Pupil behaves	*Pupil misbehaves*
Positive relationship develops	*Relationship fails to be maintained*

5.1   Contextual Understanding of Teacher-Pupil Relationships.

Although this model (Fig. 2) of the development of the relationship was based on similarly perceived interconnections between patterns of interaction and other elements, the content of this development was seen to vary. From an outsider's point of view, this relationship was defined as an interdependent relationship developed between teacher and pupil.   It developed as each participant began to characterise the other with the self as a dyad rather than perceiving each one as a separate identity.

Firstly, the notion of 'liking' developed through familiarisation, shared construction, and knowledge of the relationship. The opportunity and time children had to interact with the teacher was significant. Limited positive interactions and controlled impositions by the teacher (seating arrangements or interruptions of interactions) sometimes diminished the shared opportunities with the teacher and opportunities to experience reciprocity in their relationship. Conversely, pupils whose development led to an increased number of social encounters enjoyed more opportunities to learn about others and about relationships; "*they should thus not only gain more frequent opportunities to engender positive relationships, but should also learn more about the nature of relationships as a result of their experience and opportunity*" (Kutnick, 1988).

This had implications in terms of a child's self image and the way they perceived their individual relationship with the teacher individually. This relationship was observed to be important in the development of a positive self image for a pupil, especially with regard to how much time the teacher spent finding out about their family, home background, interests etc. The study did not identify specifically whether certain groups of pupils were developing more positive self images of themselves, however, there was evidence that pupils (both boys and girls) from particular ethnic groups (especially Afro-Caribbean) felt that the teacher did not understand their culture or share as many experiences with them as with other pupils in the class.

This factor was further related to the dynamics between the social networks, and pupil dependence and independence in their relationships with the teacher. Children in the study had a tendency to define their relationships by the relationships other children had with the same teacher, rather than in relation to the qualities of their own relationships. This concern was intrinsically linked to a pupil's awareness of the status of their relationship with the teacher compared with other developing relationships in the class.   The development of relationships was also seen to depend on the actual nature of the relationship formed.   Questions such as "Why am I forming this relationship?" and "Is it reciprocated?" were important questions used to provide an understanding of why a 'good' relationship may or may not have developed.   It was observed in all four classes that 'good' relationships developed where there was a consistency in expectations and, more importantly, a mutual wish to sustain the relationship.

5.2   Degrees, meanings and conditions of teacher-pupil relationship qualities.

Although the majority of the target pupils in the four classes consistently enjoyed sharing time with the teacher, the ways in which this manifested itself in classroom interactions differed according to the specific relationship rituals and the individuals concerned. An important principle in the development of relationships was proximity. This did not guarantee that a 'good' relationship would develop; however, it seemed that pupils needed to see, hear and interact with the teacher sufficiently often in order to recognise the aspects of them that were preferred by the teacher. Kutnick (1988) suggested that if the child is unable to communicate and considers there to be differences between the self and the other (themselves and the teacher), the means for establishing a common activity may be hindered. Closely related to proximity was the consistency of the relationship, which was demonstrated by the teacher in the form of verbal and non-verbal communication. This consistency could be at any level – personal or institutional. The importance for the teacher to be genuine in their teaching was associated with the need to maintain communication, to reduce barriers, and for new ideas to be considered.

The building of trust was achieved over time for all pupils, with great attention being paid to small personal details by all four teachers. This trust was grounded in the care and consistency demonstrated over a period of time, in which a teacher's concern was reflected in response to an individual pupil and the actions they were prepared to take in order to support and develop the child and their relationship. Fletcher (1993) listed a range of teacher behaviours that potentially undermine trust, including inconsistent application of the rules, escalation of situations due to immediate use of sanctions, and humiliating pupil in front of peers. According to Fletcher's study, pupils seemed to identify fairly rapidly those in whom the teacher was genuinely interested and those in whom s/he was apparently not as interested. This was coupled with the warmth and personal nature of the interaction and related to the long term interests of the pupil taking priority over the teacher's needs.

It was interesting that in all classes, a kind of 'exclusivity' (that is, the pupil felt a need to spend time on a one-to-one basis with the teacher) was seen to be a stage in the development of the relationship with the teacher. Towards the end of the year (summer term), nearly all participant children discarded exclusivity as a necessary component of the relationship, as they had come to understand that the teacher was aware of them even when s/he was with other pupils. This suggested an advanced perception of teacher-pupil relationships; that is, one does not have to be alone with the teacher to reaffirm the relationship bond. However, it was observed that this ability to willingly share the teacher's attention was largely demonstrated by pupils who were confident in their relationships with the teacher and who had adjusted to being one member of a larger group. By accepting this, they had acknowledged their 'pupil self' and were able to separate the moments when they needed personal attention from the teacher (advice, counselling, etc) and the times when they were merely part of the 'crowd' (Pollard, 1994) and were expected to work accordingly.

Interdependence of individual pupils was demonstrated either in the form of showing concern, care, feeling of happiness, or anxiety, based on the relationship with the teacher. However, the constraints of experiencing a developing interdependence were related to the opportunities children had to experience such relationships with their teacher (e.g. whether they were trusted with personal information, etc). Initial and continued construction of the relationships was often based on shared experiences or knowledge between teacher and pupil. For example, one of the pupils at St. Stephen's Primary School had a mother who knew the other teachers through her supply teaching experience at the school. The relationships developed as teacher and pupil constructed shared activities/knowledge and meaning, and came to construct the development of their relationship on a dynamic level.

The intensity and strength of the relationship depended on the status of the pupil and their willingness to exhibit genuine feelings to the teacher rather than attempt to seek attention. The pupils who were more successful in the development of their relationships were those who acknowledged and accepted the fact that, although the relationship could be reciprocal, it was unequal. This encouraged a continuous negotiation of the relationship. The most successful examples of this process were seen in Redhill Primary School, where many of the pupils, boys in particular, needed to establish their place within the group without relying on bad behaviour to get attention. They achieved this by constant discussion with the teacher which, in turn, allowed them to discover how far the boundaries could be pushed, without appearing to challenge the teacher's authority. This example highlights again the identification of the 'pupil self' and the acknowledgement by the pupil for the teachers' expectations of classroom life.

5.3 *Reciprocity in formation and development of relationships.*

Reciprocity is most commonly discussed in relation to peer relationships, however, it also exists in teacher-pupil relationships. Within each of these types of relationships the child is in a position of reciprocity. A form of authority is asserted, but the child is part of the authority relationship – by either the obligation to obedience or the obligation to mutuality. Through the interactional experiences offered, the child adapts to relations of constraint and co-operation; from acknowledging that there are constraining boundaries, to understanding that boundaries are a result of mutual and beneficial agreement.

By connecting the range of relationships with the degree of development, it was observed that teachers and pupils who liked each other and who wanted to share information had more opportunity to develop a durable, stable relationship during the academic year. This was due to the process of gradual bonding which involved teacher and pupil, within the process of continuity of shared knowledge, reciprocally making efforts to sustain interactions with each other. The reciprocity element supported an instrumental aspect of teacher-pupil relationships in the sense that if the teacher

demonstrated a negative attitude to the pupil, the pupil would react negatively to the teacher. Lack of reciprocity, expressed usually through bad or unfriendly behaviour, was a potential cause of breakdown of the relationship. The concept of reciprocity was observed to be an essential component of good teacher-pupil relationships in the study. To elaborate, a teacher and pupil were said to have a good relationship if the esteem/respect that one expressed toward the other was reciprocated.

5.4 Stability of the relationships.

The 'history' of the relationship was a component that affected the future development of the relationship between teacher and pupil. The history was significant because it connected the familiarity and shared knowledge which had developed between participants. There were degrees of change during the school year. This study considered that the change, or lack of change, in the relationship was largely based on the extent to which teachers and pupils had identified the appropriate 'self' for the classroom relationships. Every individual had their own interpretation of 'pupil self' or 'teacher self' and, appreciating these differences, the definition of the roles, the methods of communication, and the expectations and perceptions of the other were fully understood from an early stage.

That said, relationships were continually subject to negotiation by members, such that they did not necessarily need to remain stable, and the content of the relationship bond had potential to change substantially (as will often happen in a relationship that spans a considerable amount of time). In terms of both control and organisation of classroom structures, once the establishment was completed, it was maintained and reproduced by the pupils' shared expectations of the situation. For example, the majority of pupils in the Year 6 class at Redhill Primary School negotiated the class rules relatively quickly which resulted in the formation of an understanding between the teacher and pupils early in the school year. The teacher was then more willing to allow the children to negotiate other situations for themselves due to the developed trust between them. However, the network of interdependency that was embodied in the situation moved and changed over time. All actions had their intended and unintended consequences in this process and teacher-pupil relationships in the classroom were expected to evolve and change as a result.

5.5 Development of the relationships

The final area of discussion pertains to the development of the relationships over the year. However, before proceeding in the description of the development of teacher-pupil relationships, it is appropriate to clarify the term 'development of relationships'. By this I refer to changes which were observed to occur in the context, role, expectations or nature and existence of the relationship over time. These changes could have been either positive, thus promoting the duration and stability of the relationship, or negative, promoting its decline and possible termination. Changes were also understood to be

differences observed in the nature of the interactions between teacher and pupil, and in the characteristics of their relationship.

The categories created to describe the development of the individual relationships were: **improving**; **static**; and **declining**. The study found that there were four main features of the relationships examined during the year which were integral to the development of those relationships. These features are summarised in the following statements.

a)   Teacher-pupil relationships were categorised as either **improving**, **static**, or **declining**. An 'improving' relationship was defined, for the purposes of this study, as one which demonstrated an element of permanent improvement during the year; a 'static' relationship was defined as any relationship where neither improvement nor decline were observed (this resulted in there being 'positive static' and 'negative static' relationships); and a 'declining' relationship was defined as one which demonstrated an element of permanent decline during the year.

b)   There were developmental phases within the evolution of a relationship; a decline in the continuity of interactions did not necessarily lead to a permanent decline of the relationship, but was only a developmental phase as a crisis in the history of the relationship. In this case, continuation of the relationship was still negotiable and based on relationship dynamics and interdependencies developed between the teacher and pupil.

c)   Relationships that demonstrated collaboration and stability developed differently to those that demonstrated negativity and instability.

Within all relationships studied, the positive qualities of relationships were observed to develop. However, the content, behaviour, verbal and non-verbal communication, and the specific meaning acquired, differed within the specific relationships.

5.0   Conclusion

Certain similarities and differences have been drawn upon in relation to the characteristics and development of teacher-pupil relationships across the case studies. Contextual differences ranging from differing perceptions, representations, school conditions and interactions have suggested possible reasons for the differences observed. Consistencies in the patterns and qualities of teacher-pupil relationships have been generally established which have led to the development of a model of teacher-pupil relationships. This model relies on several components being in place before the status of the relationship can be assessed as either positive, declining or in a state of breakdown. The process combines aspects of classroom organisation, individual differences, awareness of the 'self', quality of interaction, and expectations (Table 2).

Table 2: Model towards the development of teacher-pupil relationships

Positive: development of relationship	Problem: decline of relationship	Breakdown of relationship
Teacher organises the classroom in such a way as to promote interaction	Teacher constantly changes the organisation of the classroom	Classroom organised in such a way as to inhibit interaction
Teacher takes an interest in the pupil and communicates that interest to them.	Teacher stops communication of any interest in the pupil	Teacher takes no interest in the pupil and communicates that lack of interest
Teacher takes into account the individual differences of the pupil	Teacher recognises individual pupil differences, but does not always take account of them	Teacher ignores individual differences of the pupil
Teacher is aware of 'teacher self'	Teacher alters his/her awareness of 'teacher self'	Teacher not aware of 'teacher self'
Pupil reacts positively to interactions with teacher and initiates interactions him/herself	Pupil begins to react negatively to teacher interactions	Pupil reacts negatively/indifferently to teacher – few interactions occur
Mutual liking is established	Mutual indifference occurs	A disliking occurs
Pupil is aware of 'pupil self'	Pupil alters his/her awareness of 'pupil self'	Pupil not aware of 'pupil self'
Rituals, shared activities	Shared activities become limited	No shared activities
Development of shared knowledge		No development of shared knowledge
Awareness of each other's perceptions and expectations	Different expectations from each other	Negative expectations and perceptions of each other
Reaffirmation of continuity, reciprocity and stability of relationship		No continuity, reciprocity or stability.
Development of certain qualities, co-ordination of behaviour	Imbalance in roles; instability of positive feedback, arguments	Continuous negative feedback, limited shared activities

There are many ways in which the relationship can change and, although the above figure suggests a process of development, decline or breakdown, it could be said that if any of the major components of the relationship alter, this alone could result in decline or breakdown. For example, a change in the individual expectations of the other could result in changes to the frequency, intensity and continuity of interactions between teacher and pupil. Likewise, a change in behaviour towards one another or a contradiction in demands could result in a change in the quality of interactions. Additionally, the complete breakdown of communication and relationship could be brought about by either teacher or pupil feeling disappointed in the other's behaviour.

No matter how homogenous a classroom appears, the range of differences in relationships between teachers and pupils is vast and complex. This research has established that teacher and pupil expectations and perceptions can influence this relationship, yet the source of those expectations and perceptions are not always clear. It is hoped that the issues discussed throughout this paper will contribute to a greater understanding of the complex interplay between pupils and teachers, including their evolving educational experiences at both a micro and macro level. This understanding can then

provide teachers and researchers with an all-important opportunity of returning the promotion of strong, in-depth knowledge of pupils, especially in terms of their individual differences and experiences, back on to the agenda for schooling.

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