Engaging the Disaffected Learner

Making Teacher-Student Relationships Count

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Abstract

The disaffected learner may be described as an underachiever with complex social, emotional and learning needs. Disaffection can correspond with a drop in engagement with learning and an increase in both passive and active behavioural disengagement, particularly as students enter secondary school. In the current dissertation it is argued that a positive teacher-student relationship is critical when engaging the disaffected learner. To explore this idea further, Neufeld's (2008) 'Teachability Factor' (an intervention that seeks to equip teachers to develop positive relationships with *developmentally stuck* disaffected learners), was implemented and evaluated, via a mixed method study design. Student data was captured through an instrument that measured student engagement versus student disaffection (EvsD). Control teacher voice was captured through feedback forms and intervention teacher voice was captured through semi-structured interviews. Quantitative findings indicated that overall student disaffection reduced during the course of the intervention, but that measures of student disaffection decreased more notably in the control group than in the intervention group. Nonetheless, the intervention group maintained the higher mean score, potentially reflecting the relational quality of teaching in the intervention group throughout. Qualitative findings indicated that teacher perception of the quality of the teacher-student relationship improved as a result of the intervention, particularly with disaffected students. The reported teacher perceptions were enriched by stories of transformation of student disaffection.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There is growing evidence that a body of underachieving New Zealand secondary school students has proven difficult to engage as they become increasingly disaffected with schools, teachers and education. Underachievement has been significantly correlated with antisocial behaviour and delinquency in adolescence (Fergusson, Lynskey, & Horwood, 1997; Hinshaw, 1992; Ministry Of Education, 2015) making this group of adolescents a difficult demographic for teachers to motivate and engage. Existing educational interventions largely focus on raising student achievement (Johnston, 2015b) but limited funding is directed towards supporting teachers to address the behavioural and relational challenges implicit in working with disaffected learners. This study examined whether a specific intervention entitled Teachability Factor might enable teachers to better relate and connect to their disaffected students once they view them through a developmental lens. It also examined whether student disaffection and engagement altered as a result of this intervention.

Disaffected Underachievers in the New Zealand Context

Disaffected learners are over-represented among underachieving secondary school students who draw largely from Māori and Pacific Island populations of low socioeconomic status (Education Review Office, 2012). Although disaffection may be encountered anywhere within the total student population, it is the aforementioned group of disaffected learners that forms the focus of this study. These students often have complex learning needs and too often feature in the critical negative educational indicators such as low levels of literacy and numeracy, truancy, early exit from schooling and leaving with no or low school qualifications (MOE, 2015). New Zealand schools' academic achievement results rank above the international average (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013) but in terms of range they demonstrate "an unacceptably wide spread of achievement" (MOE, 2015, p. 7). Data from the Education Review Office (2012) identified that 15% of New Zealand students are part of an underachieving tail and categorised them as *priority learners* stating that, "too many priority learners are leaving school without qualifications they need to enjoy economic security and contribute to New Zealand's economic growth" (p. 4).

Research underscores the usefulness and effectiveness of a caring teacher pedagogy in engaging and increasing the achievement of all students (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Connell & Wellborn, 2009; Klem & Connell, 2004; Ellen A. Skinner & Belmont, M. J., 1993), but some studies highlight the particular importance of relational teacher engagement with disaffected underachievers (e.g., Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2005, 2006). Unfortunately, more often than not, disaffected learners are difficult to relationally engage and may even resist positive teacher interactions (Lever, 2014) making it challenging for even the most well-intentioned of teachers to establish a caring relationship with them. Wentzel (2009), in a thorough overview of the literature on the benefits of positive teacher-student relationships, concluded:

> If teachers have influence by way of the relationships and interactions they have with students, it also becomes essential to understand those factors that contribute to teachers' ability and willingness to engage in these positive forms of social interaction. Research that examines factors that foster supportive and caring behaviour on the part of teachers is relatively rare (p. 317).

Appropriate training for teachers is lacking, it seems, in supporting them to develop a caring pedagogy with their most disaffected learners. My own interest in this subject stems from a sense of this very lack of teacher training when working as a teacher for over a decade with educationally disengaged and behaviourally disaffected students in low-decile, multi-cultural Auckland secondary schools.

Teachability Factor Intervention

This study examines a professional development teaching intervention entitled Teachability Factor that might potentially address this gap. In the intervention, developmental psychologist Gordon Neufeld (2008) encouraged teachers to see their disaffected learners through *different eyes.* He believed that by viewing their disaffected students through a developmental lens, teachers would respond to them in a more caring and supportive manner than they might have previously.

Dissertation Overview

In Chapter Two an overview of current initiatives targeted at priority learners will be presented, and current responses to difficult student behaviours will be critically examined. Socio-emotional wellbeing of students and the significant role teachers can play in engaging disaffected learners with a caring pedagogy will then be investigated. The theoretical underpinnings of Teachability Factor and how it might assist teachers to

develop a caring pedagogy will then be explored. In Chapter Three, use of a mixed methods research approach will be detailed, alongside research questions and the manner in which data were collected and recorded. Ethical considerations in the study are also discussed here. In Chapter Four, key findings are outlined of both the qualitative and quantitative data. In Chapter Five, the divergence and convergence of the qualitative and quantitative results are discussed, and findings are interrogated in the light of extant literature. A discussion around the complexities of working with disaffected learners is included and how these may have influenced the results. In Chapter Six, discussion from the previous chapters is drawn together to examine significant findings, including the study's implications and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The current chapter examines the problem of disaffected learners in New Zealand secondary schools and considers how a behaviourist discipline model in the classroom might disrupt a teacher's ability to form connecting relationships with disaffected students. Attachment theory and its application to the classroom will then be explored alongside the importance of a connecting student-teacher relationship as a precursor to disaffected learners achieving school success. The profile of vulnerability associated with underachieving disaffected learners will then be outlined along with the potential impact of negative teacher – student relationships on this group. Finally, the theory that underpins Neufeld's Teachability Factor (2008) will be investigated and how it might serve as a potential intervention to support teachers to develop a relational pedagogy with disaffected learners.

Underachievement and Disaffection in New Zealand Secondary Schools

Disaffection with learning and associated challenging behaviours are becoming increasingly problematic in New Zealand secondary schools (ERO, 2008, 2012; Leask, 2011; McKean, 2015). New Zealand's underachieving "tail" (Johnston, 2015a) has been a cause for serious concern among educators nationally in recent years, spawning a plethora of initiatives targeted at closing the achievement gap. As many as 80 programmes have been put in place since 2000 to target this underachieving demographic (Johnston, 2015a) and a variety of approaches have been taken.

Some programmes target economic disparity; for example, Education for All (Ministry of Education, 2015) aims to ensure every child is provided with an opportunity to achieve to their potential regardless of their socioeconomic status (SES). Other programmes target cultural groups; for example, Te Kotahitanga is an initiative that focuses on engaging Māori learners using relationship and a culturally responsive pedagogy (Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009). Ka Hikitia (MOE, 2009) also nurtures Māori identity and achievement and advocates a relational pedagogy. The Pasifika Education Plan (MOE, 2012) places Pacific learners, their families and communities at the centre of their educational trajectories. Other programmes target behaviour, for example Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) is an initiative currently being piloted in secondary schools that teaches social and behavioural skills and interventions to modify disruptive behaviour (MOE, 2015).

Such initiatives have partially redressed the gap between successful learners and educational underachievers (MOE, 2015). Nonetheless, the gap in New Zealand is still unacceptably high, where 25% fewer students are likely to achieve NCEA Level 2 in lower decile schools than those in higher decile schools, and 30% fewer are likely to achieve NCEA Level 3 between these two student groups (Johnston, 2015b). It seems that at some level, current programmes are not adequately meeting the needs of New Zealand's underprivileged, underachieving, and most disaffected learners.

The current study investigates whether equipping teachers to undertake a more relational pedagogy may go some way to adding value to existing initiatives and programmes, when working with disaffected learners. The primary focus of the bulk of current school initiatives is on raising educational achievement (Johnston, 2015b). In a report for the Ministry of Education on student disengagement, Bruce (2014) asserted that "any strategies toward more fully supporting young people to re-engage in schooling ought to be cognisant of the inter-connectedness of both the layers of wellbeing within a person, and the ways in which these are affected through different contexts" (p. 2). Although some initiatives focus on the importance of building connecting teacher – student relationships, they do not always equip teachers with developmental understanding that might support them to open their hearts towards these most challenging of students. Too often disaffected learners resist teacher interventions and resist engagement in curriculum and learning (Fall & Roberts, 2012; Stearns, 2006). Poor self concept, underachievement and an increasing sense of alienation in students combine to create a resistance to learning that must first be addressed before raising achievement may be targeted (Brooking, Gardiner, & Calvert, 2008; Education Review Office, 2011; Nairn & Higgins, 2011). In order to better discuss issues of engagement and disaffection, a working definition of these terms will be provided.

Disaffection, engagement and self-determination theory. Engagement, as defined by self-determination theorists, contains both behavioural and emotional components. Engaged children, according to Skinner and Belmont (1993) showed consistent behavioural involvement in learning alongside an enthusiasm for the work. They did not shy away from intense effort to complete a task, and were willing to choose tasks "at the border of their competencies" (Ellen A. Skinner & Belmont, M. J., 1993, p. 572). Engagement reflected a student's motivation. Motivation could be either extrinsic (encouraged along by tangible consequences and rewards) or intrinsic, where a learner engaged with learning in ways that were "spontaneous, flexible, creative, joyful and

energized" (Connell & Wellborn, 2009, p. 230). Intrinsic motivation produced learners who were curious, motivated, interested and persistent in learning, thereby setting them up for future educational success (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001).

Self-determination theory identified three psychological needs innate to healthy human functioning: competence, autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It was suggested that if these three needs were met for a student, they would be likely to experience intrinsic motivation and remain engaged in the learning process (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993). This study will limit itself to the examination of relatedness and its potential usefulness in engendering intrinsically motivated engagement.

Disaffection, rather than disengagement, is viewed by some self-determination theorists to be the natural antithesis to engagement (E. A. Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). Disengagement implies an absence of engagement including boredom, passivity, lack of initiation and a tendency to easily give up. Self determination theorists argued that exclusion from academic success, controlling contexts and lack of emotional connection, resulted less in passive disengagement than in frustration and alienation (E. A. Skinner et al., 2009). The term disaffection contains a wider range of reactions and emotions than disengagement and will be used in this study to describe both passively disengaged and more actively disaffected learners. Actively disruptive behaviour demonstrated by disaffected students must be considered carefully as it can interfere in positive student-teacher connectedness. Disruptive behaviour from students has often been managed by teachers using behavioural strategies that do not facilitate relational connection (Lever, 2014).

Managing the disaffected learner: critical debate. A theoretical divide exists in education around how best to respond to behavioural and academic disaffection in the classroom. Although some teachers emphasise the importance of building a relational connection with disaffected learners, the prevailing emphasis in teacher training and in classrooms is on applied behavioural analysis (Riley, 2010). This ideology has its origins in learning theory and takes the approach that poor behaviour must be modified by imposing sanctions, and that desirable behaviours should be reinforced using rewards. In this way the child would learn to modify his or her behaviour based upon the teacher's consequences and rewards. See (B. F. Skinner, 1954) for a fuller exploration. Although this approach may induce the desired behaviour for a large percentage of

students, there is evidence to suggest that it works least well with those who most need it (Bilmes, 2004; Fergusson et al., 1997; Lever, 2014). Lever (2014) asserted that "when it comes to children who exhibit continually challenging behaviour, the 'usual' strategies invariably do not work. This small minority seem resistant to discipline and it is these children who account for most classroom behavioural problems" (p. 2).

In examining a behavioural approach with disaffected learners, it is important to note that sanctions do not always achieve the desired effect. Sanctions create anxiety in the learning environment and this anxiety "disrupts focused attention, halts exploration and keeps us from taking appropriate risks in the classroom" (Cozolino, 2014, p. 70). This inhibition also disrupts motivation. In a study on the reciprocal effects of teacher and student behaviour, Skinner (1993) found that students who were already behaviourally disengaged were likely to receive negative teacher responses that further undermined their motivation whereas behaviourally engaged students were more likely to attract positive teacher-student interactions. Building on this research, Jacobsen (1997) found academically competent and engaged students developed positive teacher relationships and more readily explored and engaged with new ideas. Students with experiences of rejection or neglect, by contrast, were less confident in classroom contexts and in approaching new people and situations. These students showed poorer attention, participation, grades and sense of security when compared to their more socio-emotionally secure peers (Jacobsen & Hofmann, 1997). A recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report confirmed this research and revealed that disciplinary climate was strongly associated with student engagement, student anxiety, attendance and intrinsic motivation (OECD, 2013).

We see then, evidence that a behaviourist model in education creates a Matthew Effect where the socio-emotionally rich grow richer as they reap the rewards of positive teacher attention, and the socio-emotionally poor grow poorer as they suffer the consequences of teacher sanctions (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Damasio (2008), in his study of neuroscience, suggested that rather than motivate disaffected individuals to engage more positively, a punitive approach caused an emotional *defendedness* that triggered the emotional brain to defend itself against feelings of rejection and isolation (see also Neufeld, 2008). Cozolino (2013) found that as a result, disaffected learners begin to harden themselves to the sanction causing them to withdraw their trust in the teacher. It may be seen, then, that a harsh disciplinary climate disrupts teacher

connectedness and fails to address the socio-emotional needs of the disaffected learner, thus negatively impacting engagement and motivation.

Furthermore the use of rewards within a behaviourist paradigm, do not always succeed in motivating students. In fact, rewards have been shown to reduce intrinsic motivation, yet it is intrinsic motivation that engenders engagement, motivation and ultimately educational success in a student (E. Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). In an early US study, Ross (1975) argued, "the more salient these external consequences become, the more apt the person is to regard them as the reason for his behavior and to perceive his behavior as extrinsically motivated" (p. 246). In a more recent meta analysis of 128 studies examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation, Deci, Kostner & Ryan (1999) concluded that all tangible rewards and all expected rewards significantly undermined free-choice intrinsic motivation. To find an alternative to consequences and rewards to manage challenging student behaviour, a closer look at students' socio-emotional needs is warranted.

Socio-emotional Wellbeing

To focus purely on consequences and rewards in managing disaffected learners is to ignore their socio-emotional needs. To feel cared for and loved is one of the pre-eminent human needs (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Bowlby, 1953). In Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs, the need for love, affection and belongingness is preceded only by physiological needs and the need for physical security. Bowlby (1953) described the need for love and a sense of belonging in children as attachment needs. He proposed the need for a secure home base from which children might venture and return, knowing their need for nourishment, safety and reassurance might be met there (Bowlby, 1953, 1992, 2005).

Extending Bowlby's work, Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall (1978) devised a means for diagnosing a child as either *secure* or *insecure* in their so-called Strange Situation experiment. Findings indicated that a secure child would explore its environment, show a preference for its caregiver over other adults, and turn to its caregiver for support when distressed (Ainsworth et al., 1978). They further categorized an insecure child as either *avoidant, resistant or disorganised.* Whilst they noted that each of these three categories carried distinctive traits, in each case the child demonstrated a lack of connection to the caregiver (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Siegel & Hartzell, 2003). Ainsworth et.al (1978) concluded that it is primarily the manner in

which the caregiver connects and responds to the needs of the child that determines the manner in which they are attached.

In subsequent research it was observed that in later years these tendencies endured. A secure adolescent showed assertiveness during disagreement with the caregiver, yet maintained a close relationship with them (Allen & Land, 1999) whereas an insecure adolescent failed to maintain a close relationship and might display a variety of responses. Some took the lead role in the relationship with a caregiver yet had trouble separating from them (Hodges, Finnegan, & Perry, 1999), some felt angry with the caregiver whilst still seeking to please them (Hesse, 1999), and some rejected the lead of the caregiver altogether (Allen & Land, 1999).

Ainsworth's findings have been replicated in other studies and show distinct patterns in the wider population. It has been estimated through collective investigations that about 60% of children are securely attached, and of the remaining 40% categorized as insecure, as many as 10 – 25% are in the more high risk insecure/ disorganised category (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Bergin & McCollough, 2009; Geddes, 2003, 2005; Sroufe, 2005). Disorganised individuals are more likely to be from homes where the caregiver is unstable, psychologically unavailable, neglectful, or physically abusive (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1992). Furthermore, disorganised attachment is twice as likely in children of low socioeconomic status (SES), than those in other SES groups (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). These findings have implications for the classroom.

Attachment and school outcomes. If a child's need for comfort, security and nurture are met, a child's outcomes are far better socially, emotionally, academically and physically (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Jacobsen & Hofmann, 1997; Learner & Kruger, 1997). A secure parent-child attachment identified at an early age, was found to be a stable indicator of secure attachment into later life (Learner & Kruger, 1997). Secure children were found to have better cognitive functioning than insecurely attached children (Jacobsen, Edelstein, & Hofmann, 1994). Securely attached adolescents also possessed a more healthy self concept and good internal self-regulation when compared to their insecurely attached peers (Learner & Kruger, 1997). Larose, Bernier and Tarabulsy (2005) found that insecure students, when compared to more securely attached peers, were more poorly prepared for exams, did not concentrate as well, feared failure, sought less help from teachers, and gave less priority to studies. In a Minneapolis longitudinal study that began in the 1970's with low-SES families, Sroufe (2005) cited

several reasons for this difference; children insecurely attached in infancy were later found to be less willing to accept challenges and independence in adolescence, showed poor social competency and poor emotional regulation, and displayed ADHD behaviours, psychopathology and delinquency (Sroufe, 1997, 2005; Sroufe, Fox, & Pancake, 1983). Each of these attributes disrupted the learning trajectory for these students, limiting their ability to enjoy school success.

The teacher-student relationship and school success. Higher achievement and motivation in school have been linked to both parent attachment and to teacher support. Although the teacher-student relationship is not often likely to mimic the closeness and attunement present in a secure parent-child relationship, research suggests that students with a good student-teacher relationship are more likely to succeed in school (e.g., Connell & Wellborn, 2009; Learner & Kruger, 1997; Wong, Wiest, & Cusick, 2002).

Studies have found that the interpersonal nature of the teacher-student relationship is important in optimising student engagement and motivation. An early study by Skinner & Belmont (1993) found that the way a teacher related with his or her students directly predicted a student's behavioural and emotional engagement in the classroom. If the student experienced their teacher as caring, affectionate, and with clear expectations, both their behavioural and emotional engagement with learning subsequently improved. In an American longitudinal study of 2,400 students across a mixed demographic, Connell and Klem (2004) found students in middle school were almost three times more likely to report engagement with learning if they experienced their teachers as highly supportive. Supporting this finding, a recent PISA (2013) study found that students who reported a good teacher relationship were far more likely to attend school and to report a sense of school belonging than those who reported poor student-teacher relationships. Furthermore the study found that student-teacher relations are strongly associated with students' engagement at school across virtually all countries and demographics (OECD, 2013). If a good student-teacher relationship is correlated with an increase in motivation and sense of school belonging, it is worth considering whether this might affect student achievement.

It appears that regardless of demographic, student engagement predicts student behaviour and achievement. Goodenow (1993) found that motivation increased along with academic effort and achievement among junior high school students when teacher

support was high. In a large American study, Klem and Connell (2004) found that middle school students who perceived their teachers as caring were 89% more likely to report engagement that translated into subsequent test achievement than those with typical levels of support. By contrast, Midgeley and colleagues (1989) found students showed a corresponding decrease in interest in learning and more negative attitudes to learning when they were moved from classrooms where teacher support was high, to one where teacher support was lower. Confirming these findings, Klem and Connell (2004) found that students reporting low levels of teacher support were 68% more likely to be disaffected than the typical student.

The effectiveness of the teacher-student relationship in improving student motivation, engagement and achievement can be accounted for by a study of teacher effect size. It has been found that the effect size of the teacher-student relationship is larger than typical educational innovations or curriculum changes on positive student outcomes (Cornelius-White, 2007). Hattie (2012) undertook an analysis of over 800 meta-analyses to discover the most effective school interventions, and noted that teacher's beliefs and commitments are "the greatest influence on student achievement *over which we have some control"* (p. 22). He argued that as teachers, "we *must* consider ourselves positive change agents for the students who come to us" (Hattie, 2012, p. 22) rather than blaming students and their circumstances for the deficit. It is caring and motivated teachers, he discovered, who made a significant difference for the students in their class.

Within the New Zealand context, Te Kotahitanga (Bishop et al., 2009) demonstrated the importance of positive teacher-student learning relationships in engaging Māori students. Bishop discouraged teachers from "deficit theorising" about students, where students' resistant behaviour, absenteeism and poor engagement were seen as "a manifestation of their poor attitudes and/or low parental aspirations rather than a manifestation of inappropriate learning relationships" (Bishop et al., 2009, p. 740). Te Kotahitanga and its emphasis on a relational pedagogy has been seen as one of New Zealand's most effective interventions available for minority students in mainstream classrooms (Hattie, 2012).

The collective implications of findings on the benefits of a positive teacher-student relationship are significant. Rather than focusing on those elements of student achievement that are outside of a teacher's influence such as socio-economic status or ethnicity, studies of a caring teacher pedagogy and its link to student engagement and

motivation give educators an opportunity to work with a variable that is malleable and able to be influenced by teachers.

Decline in teacher-student relationships in secondary school. The nature of a secondary student's connection to his or her teacher has important implications for disaffected learners. Just as a positive student-teacher relationship is a predictor of good outcomes in school, poor school engagement and negative teacher-student interaction is a strong predictor of poor learning outcomes (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Bordwine & Huebner, 2010; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Klem & Connell, 2004). Of concern to secondary teachers, is the teacher-student decline in positive relationships over the primary to secondary school transition (Eccles et al., 1993).

International researchers have revealed a marked decline in student engagement and motivation in the transition from primary to secondary school (Eccles et al., 1993). Klem and Connell (2004) showed that as many as 40% to 60% of students became chronically disengaged from school by the time they reach junior high school (Klem & Connell, 2004). For some students, entry to high school marked the beginning of a decline in school grades (Learner & Kruger, 1997), decreased interest in school (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1997), triggered a loss of intrinsic motivation (Harter, 1981) and a loss of school connectedness (Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012). The resulting increase in negativity towards learning for disaffected students could spiral into detentions, stand downs, aggression in the classroom, truancy and eventual school dropout (Clark, Group, & others, 2010; Eccles et al., 1993; Finn, 1989). This drop in motivation and growth of disaffection in secondary school corresponds with a drop in teacher connectedness.

A decline in positive teacher-student relationships was noted by Eccles et al. (1993) in an American longitudinal study of 1,500 adolescents transitioning from elementary school to high school. They found that high school teachers placed more emphasis on teacher control and discipline and less emphasis on student choice and self-management than their primary school counterparts. They argued that the decline in supportive teacher relations was a poor "stage-environment fit" (p. 90), noting that adolescence is a time when there is a particular need for a close, caring relationship with a significant adult outside of the home (Eccles et al., 1993).

Adolescent resilience and on-going adult involvement. One possible reason adolescents receive less relational care from teachers at secondary school is that in

adolescence many teachers, by way of accepting the adolescent drive for autonomy and independence, withdraw protective care and attention, deeming this attention more appropriate for younger students (Midgley et al., 1989; K. R. Wentzel, 2002). There is a fear among adults when working with adolescents that nurture and care will engender dependency and might suffocate independent functioning (Neufeld & Maté, 2011). There is likewise much evidence within international studies that autonomy is an important aspect of self-determination in adolescence (e.g.,Benson & C. Scales, 2009; Prilleltensky, Nelson, & Peirson, 2001; E. A. Skinner et al., 2009; Youngblade et al., 2007). Eccles et al. (1993), however, asserted that the developmental desire of adolescents to covet more freedom from adult control did not equate with a desire to be emotionally detached from the adults in their life. Instead, "they desire a gradual increase in the opportunity for self-determination and participation in decision-making and rule-making" (Eccles et al., 1993, p. 99). In fact, there is evidence that autonomy and self-reliance are built upon the bedrock of a secure adult-adolescent relationship (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999; Denny, Clark, & Watson, 2004b; Youngblade et al., 2007).

Resiliency literature supports the idea that on-going engagement by caring adults and teachers in adolescence is critical for optimal outcomes. A New Zealand study found that strong family caring combined with peer and school connectedness protected students in Alternative Education (AE) from depression despite significant risk factors (Denny, Clark, & Watson, 2004b). This finding replicates similar findings in many other studies. For example a large US study of adolescent health (N = 90,000) found that adolescents' sense of connectedness to parents, family, and to school, protected them against every health risk behaviour measured excepting a history of pregnancy (Resnick et al., 1997). Reported measures of risk included level of emotional distress, suicidal thoughts and behaviours, violence, use of substances, and sexual behaviours, for example, sexual debut and pregnancy history. Although adolescence is a time when the adult-teen relationship is necessarily renegotiated (Hodges et al., 1999), it seems clear that on-going adult involvement and care is vital in this vulnerable life transition.

Compensatory relational teaching and the disaffected learner. Although research supports the importance of a relational pedagogy in engaging all adolescent learners, there is evidence to suggest that a relational pedagogy is particularly useful to the disaffected learner. O'Connor and McCartney (2007) reported that insecurely

attached students who were able to develop a connecting student-teacher relationship would subsequently fare better socially, emotionally and academically (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007). This implies that teachers might compensate for insecure attachment and its accompanying disaffection risk factors if a positive teacher-student relationship is developed.

Positive effects of caring teacher relationships may be strongest among low-SES, disaffected and at-risk students. In a longitudinal study of maltreated children in New York (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1992) it was found that positive and secure relationships with teachers at school could serve to function in a protective capacity. When a meaningful, close student-teacher relationship was formed it served to compensate for the negative relational histories children had with their parents. Interruptions to meaningful relationships such as student transience, changes in staffing, and challenging student behaviour were noted as factors that hindered the development of a relational pedagogy.

Hamre & Pianta (2001) studied 179 American children from kindergarten through to grade eight to examine the academic and behavioural outcomes of a positive teacher-student relationship. They found that the positive effects of a warm teacher-student relationship were strongest in underachieving, low socioeconomic African-American children. In a larger ($N = 910$) subsequent study, Hamre & Pianta (2005) found that children at early risk of school failure were likely to fall further behind academically with each school year unless they were placed in highly supportive classrooms. Notably, those children demonstrating high functional risk (a combination of behavioural, attentional, social and/or academic problems) who were placed for one year in emotionally supportive classrooms, gained similar scores as their low functional risk peers. Conversely, children at high functional risk, who were placed in classrooms with low or moderate emotional support, achieved significantly lower grades than their low-risk peers (Hamre & Pianta, 2005).

By contrast it has been found that increased teacher support does not equally benefit successful students. In related studies, it has been shown that a high degree of teacher support provided to children at risk of learning difficulties increased their achievement notably, whereas already competent children showed little gain with the increased support (e.g.,Morrison & Connor, 2002; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2002). By contrast, in a longitudinal study of students sense of the value of mathematics across the elementary/ high school transition, researchers found that low achieving students experienced a sharp decline in maths values when moving to teachers they perceived as

less supportive, as compared to high achieving students who experienced the same transition (Midgley et al., 1989). These studies highlight the importance of a relational pedagogy that targets disaffected learners in particular. A closer look at students in Alternative Education highlights that disaffected students need a higher degree of socio-emotional support than mainstream peers, as they are a highly vulnerable student population.

Vulnerability and the disaffected learner. Disaffected learners are at high risk of poor life outcomes once excluded from school (Clark, Smith, et al., 2010). New Zealand's *most* disaffected learners aged between 13 and 15 years who have been excluded from mainstream classrooms, due to multiple stand-downs or extended truancy, are referred to Alternative Education providers (MOE, 2011). Alternative Education becomes the only option for students disengaged, alienated, or disaffected with mainstream schooling (Denny, Clark, & Watson, 2004a; Nairn & Higgins, 2011; Vaughan, 2004).

Learners in Alternative Education represent a highly vulnerable student population. Denny and colleagues (2004) revealed that 70% of such students reported they frequently witnessed violence at home, that nearly half had been hit or harmed in the past twelve months, and that 50% of girls reported sexual abuse. A 2009 study undertaken by the University of Auckland Adolescent Health Research Group found that among other risk factors, 69% of students in Alternative Education lived in areas of high deprivation, two thirds were regular marijuana users, over two thirds reported being in a serious fight in the past twelve months and nearly half were involved with a gang (Clark, Group, et al., 2010). Within New Zealand, poor mental health was reported as a common occurrence among Alternative Education students with significantly higher rates of depressive symptoms, self harm and suicide attempts compared to mainstream students (Clark, Smith, et al., 2010). These statistics emphasise the vulnerability of our most disaffected learners.

New Zealand research with excluded students highlights the level of socio-emotional disparity within our educational system. Although there is some evidence to suggest that students fare better in Alternative Education schools than mainstream schooling (Brooking et al., 2008; Clark, Group, et al., 2010) it has been shown that segregation into alternative schools carries its own risk factors. Students can begin to self-identify as low achievers or failures at school and association with disaffected peers

is a strong indicator of subsequent delinquency and poor life outcomes (Hawkins, Doueck, & Lishner, 1988). Understanding the vulnerability of our most disaffected learners suggests that it is critical that a relational pedagogy is engaged in with disaffected students in mainstream education, rather than wait until these students become alienated from this learning environment, through formal disciplinary procedures.

Neufeld's Developmental Theory

Teachability Factor as an intervention looks to support teachers to engage their disaffected learners through a caring pedagogy, taking into account the developmental maturity of their students. Mature behaviour, according to Neufeld, is "grown" in the context of a caring home environment rather than taught (Neufeld, 2003, p. 47). Grounded upon the work of other developmental theorists, Neufeld described early attachment processes as six *attachment roots* that unfold in a child when they are raised within a warm, caring home context (See Figure 1).

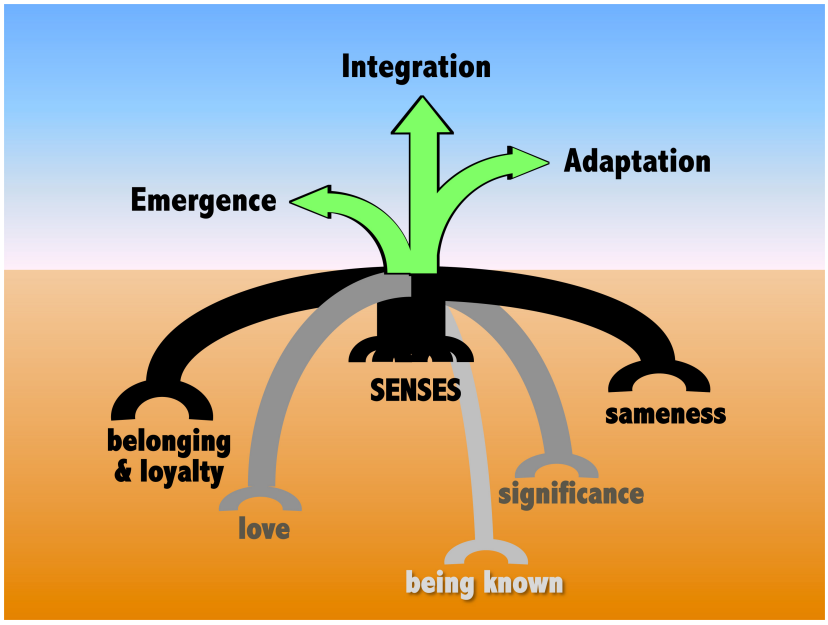


Figure 1. Neufeld's six attachment roots showing the plant emerging above that describes the three distinct processes that are the fruit of developmental maturity. Copyright 2008, by the Neufeld Institute.

Neufeld maintained that if each of these stages unfolded as they ought, the fruits of maturation, like the plant illustration in Figure 1, would become evident in three distinct processes that helped nurture mature psychosocial development (Neufeld, 2008):

1. The emergent process – rendering a child with a sense of initiative, curiosity and a sense of self as a separate individual,
2. The adaptive process – rendering a child able to adapt to frustrating circumstances that engenders resilience,
3. The integrative process – rendering a child able to mix conflicting emotions and elements without the loss of separateness.

Students who failed to develop all six developmental roots through a connecting, caring home environment, according to Neufeld (2008), were unlikely to have fully developed the necessary *emergent, adaptive* and *integrative functioning* necessary to constitute mature psychosocial functioning. He termed this immaturity *developmental stuckness*. Mature developmental functioning, Neufeld (2008) believed, allowed a student to learn from challenging circumstances such as the imposition of consequences, because they were able to adapt to frustrating circumstances and to integrate conflicting emotions when a consequence was imposed, tolerating the current discomfort for the greater intrinsic motivation to succeed. Neufeld asserted that resistance to direction was likely to emerge when an adult directed developmentally stuck students towards learning, with whom they had not formed an attachment. He proposed that the same internal dissonance that lead an integrative student to greater developmental maturity, evoked "cognitive confusion and… discouragement rather than insight" (Neufeld, 2008, p. 5) in a non-integrative student. He believed this resistance to direction could engender disaffection in students who could become unresponsive and even resistant to teaching and learning as a result, rendering them essentially un-teachable. According to Neufeld (2008), however, developmental stuckness and subsequent disaffection in the student could be compensated for by a connecting teacher-student relationship.

Researchers agree that teachers may compensate for a child's developmental deficits by providing a supportive, warm, caring environment (e.g.,Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Neufeld & Maté, 2011). To Neufeld (2008), once a student felt cared for by their teacher, they were more likely to orient towards that adult, seeking to please, emulate and take cues from them. As a consequence, the student became teachable, ready to take advice from and engage in instruction with the teacher responsible for them. Neufeld maintained that the issue for teachers is "not method but context, not strategy but relationship, not what to do but how

to be the student's attachment-designated compass point, teacher, cue-giver, model, mentor, comforter and home-base" (Neufeld, 2008, p. 19).

Care will be taken in this research to distinguish between the teacher – student relationship, where a teacher extends an invitation to students to connect, and the student - teacher relationship, where students take up the invitation and respond to the teacher's invitation for connection. It was only when students accepted their teacher's invitation to connect, Neufeld (2008) believed, that disaffected learners could move to a greater engagement in learning.

Within the literature, a divide exists in prevailing approaches to behaviourally challenging, disaffected students. A behaviourist model looks to manage challenging student behaviour through the allocation of consequences and rewards, whereas a developmentalist model seeks first to understand and address the underlying developmental deficits and socio-emotional needs of the child, before directing them towards challenging tasks. Neufeld (2008) advocated the intentional nurturing of a caring teacher-student pedagogy with disaffected learners in order to compensate for some of the developmental stuckness implicit in the student's development. The following chapter details the method used to investigate these developmentalist assumptions.

Chapter 3: Method

The method used to investigate the use of Neufeld's Teachability Factor intervention with disaffected learners, its effect on teacher perceptions of the student-teacher relationship, and on indicators of disaffection and engagement in students, is outlined below.

Research Approach

This study uses a mixed methods framework to analyse the data. A mixed methods approach can be seen as both a research method and as a "third" research paradigm that allows the strengths of both a qualitative and a quantitative framework to be explored (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Qualitative researchers look to faithfully hear and record the participants' story in order to discover the world through the eyes of their participants (Merriam, 1998) while quantitative researchers seek an objective reality untainted by the personal bias of the researcher (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Willig, 2013). A mixed methods researcher aims to avoid biases from either method using contrasting kinds of data and methodology to best tell the story of their findings (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Denscombe, 2008). In this study, the statistical analysis takes a post-positivist ontology. In line with proponents of critical realism, this study assumes that reality exists and is able to be discovered, but that it is only "imperfectly …apprehendable" because all reality is subject to human interpretation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109). The qualitative analysis takes an essentialist/ realist approach that assumes that language is a vehicle through which meaning and experience may be interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A mixed methods approach best tells the story of these findings because it allows the researcher to triangulate the data capturing both the teacher's voice, through in-depth interviews, and the student's voice, through a questionnaire. A convergent parallel design has been used (Creswell & Clark, 2011), where both methods have equal value and the two strands function independently during the analysis. During the interpretation phase the two strands merge to assess the ways in which the results both converge and diverge.

Research Questions

1. How might an intervention implementing Neufeld's Teachability Factor training influence teacher- student relationships, student disaffection, and engagement with learning?
2. How do teachers' perceptions of the quality of the teacher - student relationship alter as a result of the Teachability Factor training?
3. How does student disaffection and engagement alter subsequent to the Teachability Factor intervention in the surveyed Year 10 students?

Participants

A decile 3 Auckland school was chosen in which to conduct the research. This school was selected because of its above-average representation of priority learners. Year 10 students were purposively sampled based upon research that highlights a growth in disaffection amongst students as they enter high school, that peaks in this year level (Eccles et al., 1993; Stearns, 2006). In this way, both the school and the year level were purposively sampled in order to select a student population with a high likelihood of disaffected learners.

Year 10 teachers were invited to participate in the research at a morning staff meeting early in Term 2. Immediately after the meeting, four teachers approached the researcher with an interest in the intervention and its potential to assist them in better engaging the disaffected learners in their Year 10 classes. A follow up email was sent to all staff, and in response to this six more teachers volunteered to take part in the research. Two voluntarily withdrew once they discovered more teachers had volunteered than were needed. The first four teachers who volunteered to take part were allocated as intervention teachers and the next four teachers were allocated as control teachers. Students of all eight teachers (N=214) were then invited to participate in the student questionnaire. Consent forms were returned and 165 questionnaires were completed. 41 crossover participants were then removed because they were class members of both an intervention teacher and a control teacher. From this group (N = 124) a factor analysis was conducted. A further 22 participants were later removed because of non-randomised missing data leaving a final student participant number of N = 102.

Data Collection

Procedures.

Intervention. Four teachers participated in the Teachability Factor intervention shortly after the first student questionnaire was administered. The training was spread across two full days, one week apart, in weeks three and four of term two of the school year. It was held in a quiet space on site at the school. The intervention consisted of 8 one hour sessions, delivered by Gordon Neufeld via DVD. In addition, time was spent in dialogue around key constructs in the course, facilitated by the researcher.

Target Student forms. Target Student forms were filled out by control teacher participants at the end of the intervention. As part of standard procedure in the participating school, each teacher was asked to choose four Target Students each term, who were at risk of educational underachievement. At the end of each term a standardised one-page document was produced for the group facilitator, outlining strategies used and progress made with these learners. Shortly after the first student questionnaire, all eight participating teachers were given the names (but not the survey details) of the four students in their Year 10 class who scored the highest for disaffection, as screened by the student questionnaire. They were then asked to use these four students as their target students for the term.

The four control teachers continued teaching, without altering their teaching styles or strategies, and filed Target Student forms (see Appendix A) at the end of the school term. They were asked to use their existing insights and strategies when working with their target students and to report these in their Target Student forms. Intervention teachers were asked to use their insights and strategies from the intervention when working with these target students, and to report on them in teacher interviews.

Measures.

Student questionnaire. Participating students completed a questionnaire in tutor class time early in Term 2 of 2015, prior to the teacher intervention. The same students then participated in the questionnaire again in the final weeks of Term 2 after the teacher intervention had been undertaken. The 41 item student questionnaire was an amalgamation of two different standardized scales outlined below.

Engagement versus Disaffection (EvsD) assessed indicators of engagement and disaffection using a 27-item scale (Ellen A. Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2012). This

scale is made up of four domains: Behavioural Engagement (BE), Emotional Engagement (EE), Behavioural Disaffection (BDP), each containing 5 items, and Emotional Disaffection (ED) containing 12 items. One further domain developed by Lloyd (2014) was added: Active Behavioural Disaffection (BDA) containing 6 items. The researcher felt further this measure showed promise as a useful indication of the more active elements of behavioural disaffection.

Student Personal Perception of Classroom Climate (SPPCC) measured student response to caring teacher behaviours (Rowe, Kim, Baker, Kamphaus, & Horne, 2010). Eight items were used from a 26-item scale. This scale is made up of six domains: Teacher Academic Support (TAS), Teacher Personal Support (TPS), Peer Academic Support, Peer Personal Support, Academic Competence, and Satisfaction. Of these six domains two were used: TAS and TPS, each containing 4 items. For each item participants indicated how true each item was for them based on a four point Likert scale: 1 = *Very True* to 4 = *Not at All True.*

Teacher interviews. After the post-intervention questionnaire was completed by students, intervention teachers each participated in a one hour interview with the researcher in the final week of term two 2015 (see Appendix B) for interview questions). One on one interviews were conducted in an office on site at the end of the school day using questions previously supplied to participants. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants' reflections and stories to emerge in answer to open-ended questions, whilst providing a consistent structure between each (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Target student forms. Target Student forms were filled out by control teachers at the end of the intervention.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Exploratory Factor Analysis was undertaken to determine the underlying factor structure of the data. Once complete, a paired sample *t*-test was conducted between both control and intervention groups to compare pre- and post-intervention measures of engagement and disaffection.

Qualitative analysis. Qualitative data were analysed using theoretical thematic analysis. This approach is driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the subject

material, leading to more overtly analyst-driven data than a more inductive approach would take (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretical thematic analysis provides a detailed description of some aspects of the data, rather than a rich description of the overall data, and may be coded around specific research themes, rather than allowing themes to emerge as the data is analysed.

Braun & Clark (2006) describe this process in six broad phases that were followed by the researcher. In Phase 1, the data were explored through interview transcription and a reading and re-reading of the data. Transcripts were emailed to those participants who requested them. Names of students and teacher codes were then substituted with pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. In Phase 2, initial codes were generated. In Phase 3, data were gathered into potential themes and in Phase 4, the initial data were reviewed once again, to ensure all extracts were suitably placed in the code allocated. Data were then analysed as a whole to ensure the thematic map "accurately reflects the meanings evident in the data set at a whole" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91). Major and minor themes were identified. Some theme names were changed accordingly, and other themes were generated. A map of the final codes is included in Appendix C. In Phase 5, data were defined and further refined to the essence, in order to capture each theme accordingly, collecting ideas into the 'story' each one tells and in Phase 6 a report on the data is produced. This will be detailed in the Findings section of this thesis.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study was informed and voluntary. Ethical approval was sought from the University of Auckland Human Participant Ethics Committee and granted on March 26th, 2015. Full details of the study were disclosed to participants in Participant Information Sheets (see Appendix D) including project design and procedures, data retention, anonymity, confidentiality and the right to withdraw from participation. Before consent forms were signed (see Appendix E) teacher participants were assured that neither their identity, the identity of their students nor the identity of the school would be disclosed in any future publication or public address regarding the research. This would be achieved through the use of numbered responses and pseudonyms where participants were discussed in the data. Intervention teachers agreed to being voice recorded and were offered the opportunity to view transcripts of the interview, and to have the recording returned to them. Intervention teachers were also

informed of their right to withdraw participation from the research should they withdraw consent after initial participation.

Particular care must be taken where minors are concerned that power is not misused on the part of the researcher (Powell & Smith, 2006). Student consent and assent forms emphasised that participation in the student questionnaire (see Appendix F) was entirely voluntary, and care was taken to outline procedural details in comprehensible language. Teachers agreed to keep the identity of Target Students strictly confidential, and names of these students were only disclosed to the Target Student's classroom teacher. Student questionnaire details remained confidential to the researchers. Findings are discussed in the following chapter that result from the method of investigation outlined above.

Chapter 4: Findings

Research findings are reported in this chapter with the quantitative factor analysis and *t*-test results first, followed by coded qualitative findings. Some divergence of results between the two research methods is evident. Both the divergence and convergence of research results will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Quantitative Results

Factor Analysis.

Exploratory Factor Analysis was undertaken on the data.

Assumption testing. Assumptions for the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were tested by ensuring that all observed variables included in the initial EFA were normal. That is, in accordance with Bandalos and Finney (2010) absolute skewness and kurtosis values were less than 2.0 and 7.0, respectively. Non-random, purposive sampling was used with normally distributed, continuous data.

Measures of sampling adequacy. In accordance with standard practice (Hogarty, 2005), considering the EFA solution's (a) wide communalities, (b) five factor 23 item structure, and (c) sample size N=124, the corresponding level of congruence (Φ) is .92. This represents the estimated likely correlation between the sample and population parameters. A value of .92 is considered good (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999), therefore a reasonable level of generalization of the results of the EFA to other similar student contexts can be asserted.

Type of factor analysis. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was used. IBM SPSS 22 (2015) provides two commonly utilised estimation methods for EFA, Maximum Likelihood (ML) and PAF. ML is recommended when data are continuous and normally distributed, whereas PAF makes no distributional assumptions (Baglin, 2014) and outperforms other extraction methods for solutions of more than one factor (Lawrence & Hancock, 1999). Therefore, because data in this study were four-point ordinal in nature, and expected factor extraction was more than one, PAF was utilised. In addition, the oblique rotation (direct oblimin) was utilized as this is commonly employed in the social sciences and naturally allows factors to correlate (Baglin, 2014).

Number of Factors and Items removed. Initial attempts to include all 41 items from the EvsD and SPPCC scales were not satisfactory. There were issues of convergence that were not able to be resolved when carrying out the procedure. It was therefore decided that two EFA would be carried out separately using data from the (a) EvsD, and (b) SPPCC scales. A five-factor solution was found for the EvsD scale, but a factor solution was not possible to extract from the SPPCC scale, as the items did not converge. Therefore, this scale was abandoned.

Factor Labels. The EvsD factor labels proposed by Skinner, Kindermann and Furrer (2012) were retained for three of the five factors: Behavioural Engagement (BE), Behavioural Disaffection – Passive (BDP) and Emotional Engagement (EE). The factor Emotional Disaffection (ED) retained only two of the original 12 items and was renamed "Frustration" (FR), and the factor "Behavioural Disaffection – Active" (BDA) introduced by Lloyd (2014) became the dominant factor, using items from both BDA and non-retained factor ED. This factor was renamed "Socio-emotional Disaffection" (SED). This label was chosen to describe the mixture of both passive and active disaffection measured in the combined factors ED and BDA. It also alludes to the lack of socio-emotional support that engenders behavioural disaffection as evident in the literature (Fall & Roberts, 2012; Henry et al., 2012; Klem & Connell, 2004).

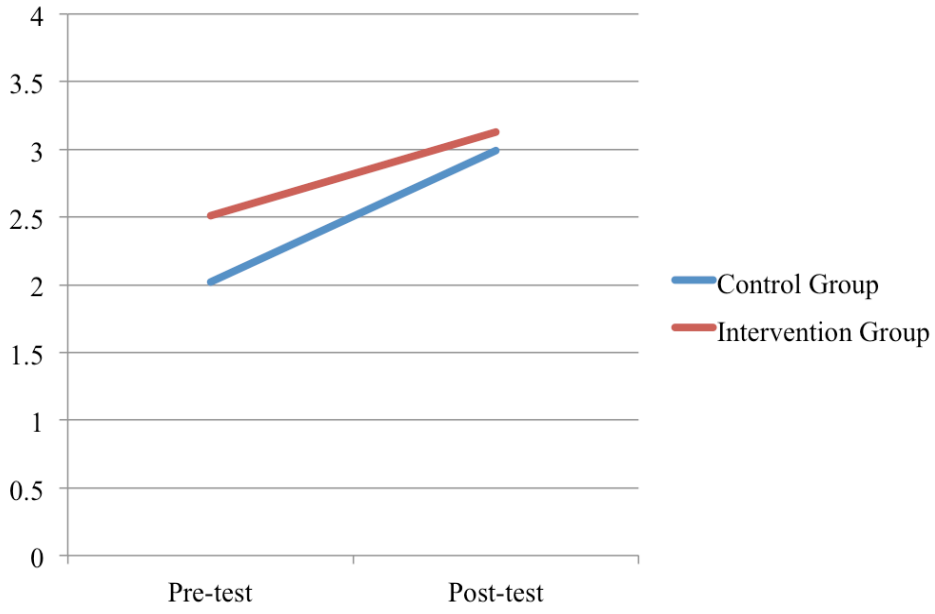
EFA Solution for the EvsD Scale. On-going assessments of factor number (Courtney & Gordon, 2013), deletion of problematic items (cross- and low-loadings under .30), and consideration for theory, generated the EvsD factor solution noted below in Table 2. Reliability ranged from adequate to high for each subscale (SED: α = .94; BE: α = .77; BDP: α = .66; EE: α = .68; FR: α = .75).

Paired sample *t*-tests. The paired sample *t*-test was conducted between both control and intervention groups to compare pre- and post-intervention measures of engagement and disaffection. The correlation scores for each measure are noted in Table 3 below. A statistically significant difference was evident in the control group scores for the factors SED (M = -.97, SD = .16) conditions; $t(35) = -6.16$, $p < 0.001$, $d = -0.304$ and also for BDP (M=.61, SD=1.0) conditions; $t(35)=3.35$, $p < 0.001$. There were no statistically significant differences in the other three factor items within the control group. A statistically significant difference was evident in the intervention group scores for SED (M=-.63, SD=1.15) conditions; $t(65)=-4.47$, $p=0.000$. There were no

statistically significant differences measured in the other four factor items within the intervention group.

The *t*-test results show a statistically significant drop in disaffection and increase in engagement, as measured by the SED factor, in both control and intervention groups between tests (hereafter referred to as an *increase* in SED). A greater SED increase is notable in the control group than the intervention group creating an effect size of d = -0.304. It is worth examining the underlying mean SED scores before concluding the intervention had a negative effect. As outlined in Table 1 below, SED increased in the control group from a mean of 2.1 before the intervention to 2.9 after the intervention whereas in the intervention group SED increased from a mean of 2.5 to 3.1 over the course of the intervention. It is important to note that because the control group began with a lower SED score (2.1) than the intervention group (2.5), it allowed for a steeper increase in engagement, influencing the effect size result. Nonetheless, the intervention group finished with a higher mean score (3.1) than the control group (2.9). In addition, a statistically significant increase in passive behavioural disaffection (BDP) was observable in the control group over the course of the intervention. This renders questionable the assumption that a negative effect size implies the intervention was damaging. The implications of these findings will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Table 1
Mean SED Factor Scores



Note. SED = Socioemotional Disaffection

Table 2
EvsD Exploratory Factor Analysis Solution: Pattern Matrix and Communalities

Factor/ Item	h^2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Factor 1: Socioemotional Disaffection (Cronbach's α = .94, *M* = 2.36, *SD* = 0.91)						
14. When I'm working on my class work I feel mad. (-)	*.975*	**.947**	-.032	-.232	.143	-.033
11. I argue with my teacher in class. (-)	*.795*	**.922**	.128	-.124	-.130	.074
18. When I'm in class, I disrupt the work of others. (-)	*.841*	**.909**	.033	.070	-.037	.126
7. When I'm in class I feel bad.	*.881*	**.878**	-.048	-.147	.172	-.098
29. When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working. (-)	*.718*	**.825**	-.010	.215	-.108	-.135
39. I don't try very hard at school. (-)	*.714*	**.788**	-.143	.094	.069	.134
4. When we work on something in class, I feel discouraged. (-)	*.663*	**.786**	.010	-.119	.107	-.093
8. I get in trouble for not following classroom rules. (-)	*.595*	**.712**	.022	.197	-.114	.089
35. Class is not all that fun for me. (-)	*.571*	**.690**	.032	-.021	.103	-.172
Factor 2: Behavioural Engagement (Cronbach's α = .77, *M* = 3.30, *SD* = 0.48)						
3. In class, I work as hard as I can.	*.962*	-.005	**.990**	.017	.028	.292
5. I try hard to do well in school.	*.636*	-.067	**.703**	-.093	-.012	-.124
23. I pay attention in class.	*.726*	-.070	**.695**	.093	.123	-.236
13. When I'm in class, I listen very carefully.	*.396*	.022	**.540**	-.007	.222	-.066
Factor 3: Passive Behavioural Disaffection (Cronbach's α = .66, *M* =2.50, *SD* = 0.67)						
30. When I'm in class I talk a lot with my classmates. (-)	*.622*	.004	.125	**.751**	-.048	-.014
10. In class, I do just enough to get by. (-)	*.375*	-.072	-.193	**.677**	.056	-.059

Factor/ Item	h^2	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2. When I'm in class, I think about other things. (-)	*.447*	.083	.007	**.583**	-.048	-.172
Factor 4: Emotional Engagement (Cronbach's α = .68, *M* = 3.10, *SD* = 0.50)						
27. When I'm in class, I feel good.	*.694*	-.093	.093	-.051	**.759**	-.172
16. When we work on something in class, I feel interested.	*.558*	-.040	.039	-.056	**.737**	-.135
21. When we work on something in class, I get involved.	*.468*	.083	.011	-.023	**.679**	-.027
9. Class is fun.	*.481*	.097	.077	-.077	**.644**	.095
1. When in class, I participate in class discussions.	*.484*	.041	.080	.291	**.566**	.304
Factor 5: Frustration (Cronbach's α = .75, *M* = 2.5, *SD* = 0.86)						
17. When I can't answer a question I feel frustrated.	*.664*	.226	.162	.135	.057	**-.671**
34. When I get stuck on a problem, it really bothers me.	*.542*	-.118	-.002	.206	.033	**-.664**
Cumulative Percentage Variance Explained		26.87	43.35	53.67	59.62	64.97
Eigenvalues		7.34	4.49	2.44	1.58	1.29

Table 3
EvsD Factor Correlation Matrix

Latent Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1. Socioemotional Disaffection	1				
2. Behavioural Engagement	-.068	1			
3. Passive Behavioural Disaffection	.043	-.036	1		
4. Emotional Engagement	-.008	-.188	-.108	1	
5. Frustration	-.203	-.459	.029	.097	1

Qualitative Findings

Interviews. Findings were revealed after thematic analysis of interviews with the four teachers who took part in the Teachability Factor intervention. Data were grouped into two themes: developing a caring pedagogy and altered quality of the student-teacher relationship. Sub-themes emerged as outlined in Table 4 below:

Table 4
Themes and Sub-themes Emerging from Interview Data

Themes	Sub-themes
Developing a caring teacher-student pedagogy	Seeing with different eyes: (a) recognising vulnerability (b) recognising defendedness (c) recognising developmental immaturity
	Cultivating a context of connection
	Softening the defences
	Getting in the lead
	Compensating for developmental stuckness
Altered quality of the student-teacher relationship	Student connects to teacher
	Disaffection is transformed

Developing a caring pedagogy. Four key concepts from the Teachability Factor training emerged under this theme. Developing an understanding of these concepts together allowed teachers to see their disaffected learners with different eyes.

Seeing with different eyes. Each of the four teachers interviewed shared ways in which they viewed their students with different eyes after the Teachability Factor training, and how this invoked a different internal response in them. BR reflected on one of her disaffected learners, Dylan:

> We have really managed to improve our interactions and I do think that's something to do with the intervention. He will try. Seeing him with a different pair of eyes, listening to what he says sometimes and … realising he's constantly in trouble [with other staff members].

In fact she later commented that her class plan for the entire term had changed as a result of differently understanding the nature her students. For DW, it caused him to reconsider his approach to the class: "I think I've stopped and thought about… how I encourage some of them to reach their potential, and thought about, you know, I wondered if I was in some way blocking them…" He added, "This course has made me sit down and think a bit about what stands in the way of their maturation … and thinking a little bit about the way I relate to them." Similarly MP became more aware of those factors that impede learning. "The training course has definitely opened my eyes up to a whole lot of other barriers that are out there that can affect students." FS found the approach gave him a different global awareness of his students. "This method of teaching pedagogy doesn't fit students into one box, a number of different factors are taken into consideration…this will definitely be my new approach to how I look at a student." Teachers found that seeing students with different eyes was a result of the Teachability Factor training that allowed them to recognise their vulnerability, their defendedness and their developmental immaturity.

(a) Recognising vulnerability. Intervention teachers noted an awareness of the vulnerability of some of their more disaffected learners. Teachers spoke with empathy of students with impoverished backgrounds, students in trouble with the law, and students in sometimes-unsafe home environments in their interviews. MP noted the vulnerable living situation of one her students, Hemi:

> His father is basically living in the criminal underworld. He hasn't had a Mum. There's been things like I got him a jacket because he's been coming to school without a jacket in the middle of winter…I'll often get him something to eat. Basic human needs like food and clothing are not being met for him.

Some of the students in the study were expelled or suspended during the one term intervention leaving them disconnected from existing attachments. Hemi got in trouble with the law during the study and was sent away to live with family in another town. MP reflected of Hemi, "He's down the line and I have no idea if he's coming back, which is a sad thing because kids get transient. You make some headway with them and then they just disappear." Teachers mentioned that they began to see students in light of their vulnerability. BR says of James, "You can almost see the vulnerability in his eyes. Like the shutters coming down." BR is the English teacher of the Year 10 class classified with the highest learning and emotional needs in the year level. She commented on the

vulnerability of students who were being classified in this way, "It may be a presumption but I believe they really feel that they don't stack up. They already know themselves as people who struggle."

(b) Recognising defendedness. A problem teachers noted with recognising vulnerability is that it is not always easy to detect. Teachers spoke of students that appeared streetwise, but that this "toughness" masked a hidden vulnerability. DW described this trait in Miranda:

> She'll sit back in class, lie back, and look like she's bored. She's really rather interested, I think, but she pretends, she pretends that she's not with it. Then she'll say, "I don't understand any of this." And so she will go off task.

BR commented of Javan that he is a "very defended boy. For me he's a 'tough nut'. He has a hard shell around him all the time." She explained that he exhibited his defendedness by pushing away:

> I can see with him that his loudness and his "out there-ness" are about "don't come near me" kind of thing because that will give you the opportunity to assess what I'm doing, to judge it, and I might be found to be lacking in something.

MP talks of building a close relationship with Hemi over time, and finding his trust increase with her personally. However a defendedness arose in other contexts. "Anywhere public … he's different. Very guarded and ready to fight and interact negatively with people. He takes everything as a slight towards him."

(c) Recognising developmental immaturity. Teachers found that viewing students with different eyes meant recognising that not all students had developmentally matured to the same level. MP found it softened her approach to the class as a whole. "I guess just realising there were reasons they were in that space. I guess realising that there was no way they could shift that space. That it wasn't their fault. You know." DW noted that immaturity affected Mathew's ability to sit still in his maths extension class. "I just think he's just too socially young to really realise the gift he has been offered, in my opinion, of academic advancement." BR found it helped her understand Tama's impulsivity:

> I think he's…still growing into himself. And I think he has an understanding of … how he needs to behave in the classroom reacting to things, but at times his

> choices and his actions kind of sneak in perhaps, because he still acts on impulse.

Seeing her students as developmentally immature shifted BR's own internal response to the student. Of James, BR commented, "I have a lot of compassion for him now that I might not initially have had…I realised he's so used to being problematized ... [that] he didn't have the self management to control himself … in class."

Cultivating a context of connection. Teachers described how they chose to extend a welcome to disaffected students whom they recognised as vulnerable, defended or developmentally immature. For some it was a resolve to manage their own emotions even if their students couldn't manage theirs: "Some of my students can be 'hard work' and it's up to me to be more patient or I've lost them." [FS] BR similarly noted, "I put myself down to be more patient with him, 'cause… he's frustrated with himself" and added, "I come back to compassion. Having more compassion. And trying to make our space at least a non-confrontational, softer space." DW emphasised the importance of keeping the classroom atmosphere light saying, "If I don't laugh every day with my class, every day, it's something sad." FS added of disaffected students, "If you haven't got that connection with somebody, what's the point? Why am I doing this?" BR emphasized making an extra effort to connect to struggling students using food. She says of Api, "He knows that I've taken the time to speak to him and listen to him and one of the things that he shared with me is that he likes that I do food in class. He thinks it's caring."

Some teachers continued to extend a welcoming context even in quite trying circumstances. DW described how as a Deputy Principal he cultivated a context of connection with students even when dealing with serious misconduct. He described John and how, after a particularly explosive outburst, he was stood before the board and was excluded from the school, yet he still he took time to listen and to show him a caring involvement. DW elaborates, "I came away from the Board meeting, and it was eight o'clock at night, and I sat down and rang people and said, 'I've got this boy and I want him looked after'". He took care to make sure the Alternative Education Centre John was sent to was the best possible fit for him, and by his account he's now "thriving". He commented that even after overseeing such a difficult transition for John, "If I ran into him on the street now … and I have done once or twice…. he would know that I care."

Softening the defences. Teachers described ways in which they saw emotional defences softening once a context of connection had been established. BR described how creating a context in class for one on one conversations with her disaffected learners allowed a softening of their defences. She explained how this softened her interactions with Jesse. "There's no audience so he becomes what he is, which is a 14 year old boy listening to an adult. So in that sense it made him more vulnerable." She observed a similar softening of defences in Javan through her approach of "slowly working with him, being gentle, being caring, being supportive of the small things he does".

MP described Hemi, who was usually emotionally closed in class, but who softened his defences in the drive home after a competitive tournament. She had just dropped another student home who had expressed he was upset because he "was getting a beating from his Dad and didn't want to go home." She explained that the other boys' story had reminded him of his own childhood and what had happened then describes Hemi's reaction: "He spent the next 20-30 minutes telling me what had happened to him. I just stopped the car and let him talk." MP then describes how he began to break down and cry and commented, "There was nothing I could say or do. It sprung to mind that he had found his tears about it…he was really sad. And able to articulate that." Asked if the dynamic between them subsequently shifted in class as a result of this interaction, she responded, "Oh like 100%. Wouldn't be the same kid. Completely different. Had we not worked on … relationships …he would be exhibiting worse behaviour. It would be the defiant stage, or the swearing stage or worse behaviour." It seems that with the softening of the relationship, there was more chance for teachers to then take the lead with students who, in other contexts, were prone to over-ruling a teacher's lead.

Getting in the lead. Teachers discussed the idea outlined on the Teachability Factor training of *getting in the lead*. This kind of lead looked different from teacher to teacher. For BR it involved getting alongside students first:

> It's been getting them talking to me, getting them listening to me. Sitting them down, talking to them, sometimes just adding myself into their groups and conversations… Breaking down those barriers. Changing roles for a while… Making sure at the same time that I'm establishing my position too.

DW discussed a teacher who took the lead differently. For example he insisted students do push-ups for minor infractions, yet always gained compliance from even the toughest

of students because they knew he cared about them: “And what is it? It’s a relationship. Even though it appears a cruel sort of thing there, the kids see it as him loving them” (DW). MP commented how she was given the lead by Hemi once she had developed a relational connection. “But with Hemi, once I’d got his trust, I could just boss him around. I could say things that he would be very offended by if another teacher had said them.”

Compensating for developmental stuckness. Teachers found that once they had earned the trust and cooperation of their students, and were given the lead by them, they might use this relationship to compensate for some of the developmental immaturity students displayed elsewhere. All four teachers found that some of the discipline problems evident in their disaffected learners in other contexts, either lessened or disappeared entirely in their own classrooms. BR described Javan being co-operative in her class, but in other classes, “he lashes out at someone who says something, then he starts dropping the ‘f-bombs’.” She also described Dylan who had recently been stood down for misconduct in another teacher’s class. As a result of the disciplinary process he was allowed to elect a teacher to support him and he chose her as his “go-to” person. FS described Tim as “onside and positive” in his classroom but as one who “sits at the back of the class and tags” in other classrooms. MP described how Solomona reacted violently when another teacher insulted him and he was stood down as a result, but in her class she experienced no behavioural difficulties with him. She helped him subsequently to make sense of the incident with dialogue and convinced him to offer an apology to the teacher, but she also was pleased to note the teacher involved apologised to him in turn for provoking the outburst. DW, in discussing the phenomenon of compensating for developmental stuckness said, “Some kids have great difficulty just handling their every interaction with adults, and really appreciate it when they get someone who can actually warm to them.”

Altered quality of the student-teacher relationship. It is one thing for a teacher to invite a student into a positive teacher-student relationship. It is another for the student to respond to that invitation. Once a caring pedagogy had been established, teachers perceived that the quality of students’ relationship with them altered as a result. Once a connecting student-teacher relationship had developed, stories of student transformation emerged.

Student-teacher connection. Students' connection to their teachers was demonstrated in a number of ways. Some students chose teacher proximity, such as Ana who was the only girl in FS's Woodtech class. She responded by staying close to the teacher's desk or side throughout the lesson. Some used their teacher as a confidant, such as Api whom BR described as often confiding in her, "even if he just wants to vent…he knows he can do that with me." Some students became less combative, such as James, who initially would enter the classroom agressively, but now "he's given me the time to talk to him about what's going through his mind… there's been a moving to generally more positive, more relaxed connection. Not feeling like I'm going to fight him."

Transformation of disaffection. A number of stories emerged in dialogue with teachers that together described a transformation of disaffection as a result of a more caring pedagogy. DW describes Susan, a girl from "a very impoverished background" who "just refuses to do anything" in school. "Refuses to work. Leaves class. Wanders round . Has been stood down for failing to attend class… She just does what she wants when she wants." DW, at a loss as to how to keep her in school, decided on a whim to send her 'possum hunting with JD and the Service Academy class. To everyone's surprise she enjoyed it and became a committed member of the programme. DW said of her parents:

> … they're just splitting their sides when they talk about it. Here's this pretty girl with the pretty nails etcetera, and she's out there with these guys, doing stuff with possums, and she's coming to school, and she's walking round the school with a smile on her face.

FS described how Eli changed his attitude from being a student who was continually absent or late, to being a reliable attendee as a result of a playful interchange. One day FS saw him in the school grounds and challenged him to an arm wrestle:

> I said… "If you can beat the old man at arm wrestling, you can do whatever you want. You can come to class late, you can do whatever you want when you come to class." He said, "Really, sir?"… So I arm wrestled on the concrete, and – bam - wasted him you know, then put out my right arm, - bam - wasted him. So I say, "Right, you make sure you come to my class in future." [laughs]

DW described the growth of a connection with John, and explained how his connection to John helped keep John out of trouble:

> Yes, now that is a boy, a very angry boy, and when he sparks and goes off, it's an instantaneous explosion…He explodes with some of the worst, loudest, horriblest language that there is... People will sit there, terrified of him.

DW gave John permission to leave class and come directly to him when there was a problem, instead of trying to manage it himself and shared, "And that particular day he walked away from this situation, didn't swear, and came to me. Which is what I'd been trying to get him to do. And it was absolutely brilliant and I was so pleased with him." Intervention teachers found, then, that as a result of the Teachability Factor intervention they developed a more caring pedagogy, and as a result noticed an improvement in the quality of their relationship with their most disaffected students.

Target student feedback forms. Control teachers outlined the strategies they used with their disaffected learners in target student feedback forms. Behavioural disaffection was identified among these students with descriptions such as Lepe who "tags any written work" (DC), Krystal who "fell into the wrong friend group" (WR), students who were "easily distracted" (GI) and a number of students who were noted for persistent absenteeism such as Deanna who on her return "struggled to re-integrate". Educational disengagement was also noted by control teachers with general comments about their target students including, "unengaged in school" (DC), "motivation is lacking" (DA) "disorganised and unfocussed" (WR) and "does little homework" (WR).

Recognition of the vulnerable profile of these learners, the defendedness of these students and the developmental immaturity was missing from Target Student Feedback forms with one exception. WR described her target students with a degree of compassion and understanding commenting that Colin "struggles to write ideas down" and "works well in group situations where he feels less vulnerable in his ideas and work". Of Krystal she noted that "she lacks any confidence in her own ability" and of Emma she noted that "doesn't believe she belongs in this [extension] class". When describing Suzanne she commented that, despite behavioural disruptiveness, deep down she "does want to do well".

Strategies control teachers used to engage disaffected learners included rewards recorded on the board (DC), buddy systems (DC), breaking tasks into small chunks (WR), separating behaviourally disengaged students (GI and DC) having high expectations (DA) using goals and targets (DC, WR and DA) and using "hands-on" (DC) practical activities as a reward (DC and GI). Of the four control teachers, only WR

mentioned using a relational approach to cultivate a context of connection. Commenting on Emma's challenging behaviour WR notes that she is "trying to establish a strong relationship with her so she feels secure and then can develop confidence from here." She records that Suzanne is "a little distant" and that she "will need to work hard to develop this relationship." Of Krystal she comments "I think she is probably quite insecure underneath her shell so it will be important to establish a strong relationship with her."

In discussing the outcomes of strategies used at the end of the intervention period, control teachers noted mixed results. Of the hands-on learning DC notes that Lepe was "the most engaged I have seen him" and of Jay that "he worked and he persevered on [practical] tasks in lessons" whereas DN notes that her students "still have a long way to go" and that despite some improvements in two of her target students, not much improvement was noticed in the other two. Of the relational strategies used by WR she notes that both Colin and Suzanne made "pleasing overall progress in their leaning and learning habits", but that although Krystal and Emma did respond positively to relational strategies, "they still lack confidence in their own ability and haven't made as much progress in their learning as I think they are capable of".

Findings, then, are chequered. Quantitative data indicated that student disaffection dropped and engagement improved over the course of the intervention in both groups. Qualitative data indicated that once a caring pedagogy was undertaken as a result of the Teachability Factor training, teachers perceived that their relationship with disaffected learners made some very positive shifts as a result. A caring pedagogy was not intentionally embraced by all control teachers, but may have been intuitively employed by some indicating a mix of results that need closer examination in order to better understand them.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In Chapter Four key findings resulting from both the qualitative and the quantitative data were reported. In the current chapter both strands of data will be outlined, and an interpretation of how the strands both converge and diverge will be discussed.

An apparent divergence in findings is evident in the data. The qualitative data support the value of the Teachability Factor intervention in assisting teachers to engage disaffected learners, whereas quantitative data reveal that although student disaffection decreased and engagement increased over the course of the intervention, the trend was more emphasised in the control rather than the intervention group thus bringing into question whether teacher perceptions of the usefulness of the intervention were translated into measurable shifts in student disaffection. In order to better understand this apparent divergence of findings, a discussion will be undertaken of how the qualitative data contribute to an understanding of the quantitative findings within the context of the complexities of working with disaffected learners, taking some of the study's limitations into account.

Quantitative Findings

A notable difference in disaffection shifts between the control and intervention groups became apparent in the data through a paired sample *t*-test resulting in a negative effect size. Before concluding the intervention was unhelpful, however, it is worth examining the underlying mean socio-emotional disaffection (SED**)** scores to better understand this result. Although the intervention students did not keep pace in their increase in engagement compared to the control students, the intervention group nonetheless finished less disaffected than before, and ahead of the control group in their overall mean score, and this is worth exploring further.

Control students' initial mean SED score (as shown in Table 1) indicated a higher level of disaffection than the intervention group, yet intervention students may, in reality, have been more disaffected than control students as a whole due to a potential teacher participant sampling bias. Three of the four intervention teachers who volunteered to participate in the research did so specifically because they perceived their Year 10 classes to be behaviourally challenging, and were seeking further ideas for managing them. These teachers did not perceive their other classes to be challenging. The school had defined one of the four intervention classes as that with the highest

social, behavioural and learning needs in Year 10 and was given increased remedial support as a result. By contrast, none of the control teachers indicated they had particularly challenging classes, and one of the control classes was defined by the school as an extension class with few social, behavioural or learning needs. It is not unrealistic to suggest therefore, that intervention students may have carried a higher base line level of disaffection than control students did. This raises the question as to why the control group appeared more disaffected in the initial questionnaire.

It is plausible that the higher initial engagement score among intervention classes was due to the pre-existing expertise, investment and motivation of their teachers. Three of the four intervention teachers held management units as professional development leaders in the school, and the fourth was a Deputy Principal. In contrast, none of the four control teachers were involved in professional development leadership in the school. The energy, strategy and initiative that intervention teachers had already invested into their classes prior to the intervention may have already reduced disaffection in these students. Additionally, control teachers, possibly aware that they were being professionally observed, may have increased their efforts to engage disaffected students as a result of their involvement in the study thus closing the disaffection gap between the two treatment groups. In order to reduce potential sampling bias of this nature in future studies, teacher volunteers should be randomly assigned to intervention and control groups after volunteering to participate in the research.

It is also worth noting, when considering the decrease in disaffection in the control group, that a statistically significant *increase* in passive behavioural disaffection (BDP) was measured in this group over the course of the intervention. Use of behaviourist management strategies such as rewards and consequences, as recorded in control teachers' data, may have reduced active disaffection in students as measured by the SED factor, but simultaneously increased passive disaffection in students as measured by the BDP factor. An increase in BDP was not measurable in the intervention group suggesting that a relational pedagogy was effective in genuinely reducing disaffection in this group, rather than potentially diverting it to a more passive expression less susceptible to teacher sanctions.

In addition to the speculations outlined above, it is also worth considering whether the overall downward trend in disaffection may be explained by increasingly connecting teacher- student relationships across both groups. If, in line with existing research, connecting teacher relationships are key to reducing disaffection and

improving engagement (Baker, 2006; Bergin & McCollough, 2009; Klem & Connell, 2004; Meehan, Hughes, & Cavell, 2003), it could be that time as a factor alone was enough for teachers to create a warmer context of connection in both the control and the intervention classes. As students in the control group continued to spend time getting to know their teachers, this may have facilitated relational connection in the same way as that experienced by the intervention group. Although three of the four control teachers indicated they used behaviourist type strategies to engage their target students, this does not preclude their use of connecting strategies, it merely indicates that it was not recorded as an intentional strategy used. Target student data indicated that WR, at least, used relationally engaging strategies and that this was met with a measure of success. Further investigation of an increasingly positive student-teacher connection over time may reveal the usefulness of the length of time spent in a teacher's class in reducing disaffection. Another factor that may have influenced final results is that of a potential sampling bias among the student population.

An important potentiality to take into consideration when considering the data is that the quantitative sample may have excluded a proportion of the target student demographic. Disaffection by its nature implies a lack of engagement with school and its related procedures. The Ministry of Education (ERO, 2008) defined attendance as one of its three critical drivers to school success. Repeated absence and truancy are some of the key indicators of school disaffection and are predictors of subsequent dropout, serious delinquency, offending and problem substance use in later adolescence (Henry et al., 2012). Repeated non-justified absence was the predominant reason non-participating students failed to return their consent forms potentially leaving disaffected learners under-represented in the quantitative data. Of a potential 173 participants, 124 students returned parental consent forms to allow them to participate in the research. Of the 49 non-participating students (comprising 28% of the potential sample), only 7 students' parents formally declined permission to participate in the research. Taking traits of disaffection into account, a significant proportion of the 28% non-participating students may well have been part of the target demographic, and this may have skewed results.

Another reason that consent forms were not returned was due to difficulty communicating with parents. A key reason for student absences according to Bruce (2014), were "challenging and complex home situations" (p. 14) including home violence, drug and alcohol use, language issues, illness and transience. A range of these factors may have been the deterrents that contributed towards difficulty in

communicating with students' parents. Some students were given as many as ten information sheets and consent forms by teachers to be taken home, but when parents or guardians were given a follow up call, phone-lines had often been disconnected, home addresses or guardians had changed, or forms had not been delivered to parents.

Importantly, however, the divergence in findings could simply be explained by insufficient research time. Positive relationships take time to build, and the effects of positive relationships on student attitudes and achievement take time to come to fruition. Existing longitudinal research indicates that improved student-teacher relationships increase student engagement and that increase in student engagement and motivation is positively correlated with an increase in student achievement (Connell & Wellborn, 2009; Goodenow, 1993; Learner & Kruger, 1997; K. R. Wentzel, 1997). Therefore in future studies, it would be useful to undertake a similar investigation with a longer timeframe.

Together, these combined factors may have influenced the outcomes in the quantitative results. Although a discussion around many of these factors is purely speculative and cannot be verified, such discussion raises a worthwhile consideration: that targeting a disaffected student population is complex. Researching at-risk target populations is recognised by researchers to be a difficult focus demographic. In a detailed discussion of research methods with young people in at-risk life circumstances, Liebenberg, (2009) admitted a bias towards the use of a mixed-methods approach asserting that "this both-and approach to [resilience] research offers a great deal of flexibility and honours the advances achieved among researchers from both methodological paradigms" (p. 16). Although a percentage of disaffected student voice was potentially missing from the quantitative data, teachers in the study were still interacting with these students on occasions when they did attend class, and endeavoured to practise a caring pedagogy with them. As a result, the qualitative research may have reflected a more accurate interface with the target demographic than the quantitative data did, thus allowing a combination of research approaches to more accurately describe the overall value of the intervention.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative findings aligned closely with existing literature that highlights the teacher-student relationship as an important factor in engaging disaffected learners. The current study examined how the Teachability Factor intervention may have assisted

teachers to develop a more relational pedagogy with their disaffected learners. The following discussion outlines how aspects of the intervention evoked a desire in teacher participants to better relationally engage their disaffected learners.

Intervention teachers in this study appeared to develop a more relational pedagogy by undergoing an internal transformation that facilitated seeing their disaffected learners with different eyes. Neufeld theorised that a student in an oppositional or disaffected relationship with their teacher was rendered "un-teachable" (Neufeld, 2008, p. 1) and unreceptive to teacher advice and instruction. The answer, according to Neufeld, was to view disaffected learners differently, recognising their vulnerability, their defendedness and their developmental immaturity. All four teachers reported many ways in which they viewed their students with different eyes following the Teachability Factor training.

Recognising the vulnerability of their disaffected learners was mentioned by teachers as an important aspect that enabled them to see their students with different eyes. Neufeld (2008) believed that at the root of disaffection was a deep sense of vulnerability within a student. Teachers noted an awareness of the vulnerable context of some of their more disaffected learners. In interviews teachers spoke with empathy about their students' impoverished backgrounds, being in trouble with the law, inadequate provision of food and clothing and students living in sometimes unsafe home situations. However, there was little mention by teachers of the vulnerable feelings of these students themselves. This may be because, as DW notes, their sense of vulnerability is sometimes "heavily guarded" or defended against in order to protect themselves from its emotional impact.

Defendedness, then, was recognised as another important characteristic of disaffected learners by intervention teachers. They described students variously as, "very guarded" (MP), "a tough nut" (BR) or as "looking bored" (DW) or even oppositional, and that this defendedness often escalated into disruptive behaviour. Neufeld (2008), contended that the most vulnerable of learners often did not appear vulnerable at all, and instead covered their vulnerability with layers of defendedness in order to protect their vulnerable core. Neufeld (2008) described how the "emotional hardening" (p. 23) of the brain created a developmental stuckness for disaffected learners. He believed that if the brain could be softened, in the context of a caring connection with an adult, maturation would happen "automatically and spontaneously" (Neufeld, 2008, p. 23). Teachers in this study spoke of how they began to view this defendedness as evidence of their

students' vulnerability rather than as a challenge to their authority. This shift in response has significant implications for how readily a teacher might invite a disaffected student into a context of connection.

Another way in which teachers interpreted disruptive or oppositional behaviour differently after the intervention was to view it as a sign of developmental immaturity. They began to reflect on whether their students were under-developed in three key types of functioning identified by Neufeld (2003) as being necessary for developmental maturity: emergent functioning, adaptive functioning and integrative functioning. In particular, integrative functioning, seen by Neufeld as the ability to "tolerate conflicting thoughts, impulses and feelings" (Neufeld, 2008, p. 4), was seen as vital if students were to learn from a consequences based pedagogy. Teachers in the study found that once they began to recognise developmental immaturity, and a lack of integrative functioning in their disaffected learners, their own internal response to these students changed. As a result of their different eyes, teachers described an internal softening towards their disaffected learners, and how they responded to them with more compassion and understanding. In interviews this change was apparent in their tone of voice that softened, as they considered the changes in their relationship with the student or their Year 10 class. This internal shift within teachers appears to have changed the way they interacted with their disaffected learners, and allowed them to cultivate a context of connection with them where formerly they may not have felt inclined to.

Once a softening occurred as a result of their different eyes, intervention teachers found many ways to connect with their disaffected learners. For example, all four made an effort to reduce their own frustration and reactivity in the classroom in order to create a welcoming context of learning. In addition, each found opportunities to periodically share food with their students and made an effort to spend one-on-one time with their more challenging students. Going beyond usual teacher expectations, some even provided clothing, made contact with home, and found opportunities to connect with their students outside of class time. There is evidence that as a result, student defences were softened and resistance to teacher instruction lessened.

Teachers found it was easier to get in the lead role in the classroom, once they had established a connection with their disaffected students. Neufeld (2008) advocated the importance of taking a firm lead in the classroom, but believed a teacher must earn this lead through first connecting with students, rendering them "teachable" and ready to take instruction. This idea is supported by other researchers. In an American study of 32

Black students previously suspended for disruption and defiance, Gregory and Ripski (2008) concluded that these students had to first perceive their teacher as a legitimate authority figure before they would comply with their lead. Teachers who got to know students and built a connection with them "were met with low defiance and high cooperation" (p. 349) implying that the relationship with a teacher whom students trust and respect can serve as a protective function from further disciplinary behavioural encounters. Teachers in this study who underwent Teachability Factor training seemed to similarly compensate for some of their students' disruptive behaviour through the connection built with them.

There was evidence in the intervention teachers' feedback that their relationship with some of their most disaffected students served to compensate for developmental immaturity displayed in other contexts. In the six detailed stories of student transformation that were shared, it was interesting to note that each was a story of how a student had transformed their disaffection and found a more receptive, engaged response in this particular teacher's classroom. For example, John managed to avoid a potentially aggressive outburst in class by accepting DWs invitation to leave class and find him, should he feel frustrated. Both intervention teachers, MP and BR, shared stories of students stood down for disruptive behaviour in other teacher's classrooms, who did not display these behaviours in their class and subsequent to the incident turned to them for guidance and support. All four intervention teachers described students they had relationally engaged who now demonstrated little behavioural challenge in their own classrooms, but who displayed sufficient behavioural disruption to require formal disciplinary intervention in other contexts. Interestingly, then, improved student behaviour did not generalise across other school contexts, indicating that genuine developmental maturing was not occurring, but that students were able to manage their behaviours better through the compensatory function of a warm, connecting student-teacher relationship.

The improved quality of the student-teacher relationship seemed to emerge once a context of connection had been established in classrooms. A range of positive stories emerged from interview data that described a transformation of student disaffection in the context of good teacher relationships. For example Susan, who formerly truanted regularly and refused to participate in most school activities, became an enthusiastic participant in her teacher's possum hunting course, once she had positively engaged with this caring teacher. Disaffected students softened to such an

extent that they willingly engaged in class activities and complied with intervention teacher instructions, whilst simultaneously resisting teacher instruction and direction with other teachers. Such student responsiveness has implications for the usefulness of a relational pedagogy in engaging disaffected learners.

It is interesting to note that of all the intervention teachers' students, disaffected students appeared to benefit the most from this intervention. In semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B), teachers were invited to comment on all their students and how they might have created a context of connection with them. Some commented that the whole class fared better but detailed stories were only shared of transformations in their disaffected learners. It seems that the altered student-teacher relationship was perceived by teachers to be the most significant outcome from the intervention. It could be that those learners who began as the most disaffected, had the most to gain from a caring teacher pedagogy. This aligns with literature which posits that a caring teacher pedagogy is of particular significance to disaffected learners (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2005; Meehan et al., 2003; Morrison & Connor, 2002; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2002).

Implications of Findings

This study, then, has implications for existing behaviourist school practices. Programmes currently targeted at behaviourally disaffected learners such as PB4L, look to actively teach and reinforce positive behavioural expectations, and to provide consequences to discourage "unwanted behaviour" (NZCER, 2014, p. 1), yet the Teachability Factor intervention suggests that true maturity is an attribute developed within the context of a secure relationship, rather than a skill that might be taught. In order for a behaviourist approach to be effective, adaptive and integrative functioning are needed, yet these attributes are missing in our developmentally immature, disaffected learners (Neufeld, 2008; Neufeld & Maté, 2004). In this study, non-participating teachers who engaged a punitive behaviourist approach with their disruptive students were met with students who became frustrated, uncooperative and at times aggressive, to an extent where formal disciplinary procedures were necessarily employed in an attempt to manage their behaviour. Notably, however, this disruptive behaviour was not evident in these same students in the classrooms of teachers who engaged a caring pedagogy and had successfully managed to invite a positive student-teacher connection.

Without an intentionally caring and understanding teaching pedagogy, our disaffected learners may become increasingly disaffected and alienated from the school environment. Ill-equipped to manage positive relationships with others, including teachers, these socio-emotionally impoverished students become increasingly disruptive and disaffected as they continue their educational trajectory into secondary school (Eccles et al., 1993). They become part of a minority of students, who do not respond well to "the 'usual' strategies" (Lever, 2014, p. 2) but who are nonetheless allotted a larger dose of consequences than most (Bilmes, 2004), as teachers grapple with ways to manage their disruptive behaviour. These students least possess the developmental maturity to benefit from such an approach, and yet are expected to tolerate and even learn from more and harsher sanctions than the average student (Cozolino, 2014). In contrast, their better socio-emotionally equipped peers, already experiencing the benefits of a positive student-teacher relationship and engaged and motivated at school (Midgley et al., 1989), are rarely required to face teacher sanctions despite the fact they possess the developmental maturity to learn from such behaviourist strategies. If teachers might compensate for disruptive student behaviour and disaffection through a caring pedagogy, and, if this caring pedagogy might be enhanced in teachers through a developmental understanding of their students, then the importance of equipping teachers to better understand their disaffected students must be emphasised.

Together the qualitative findings of the current study indicate that, in accordance with existing research, a positive teacher-student relationship increases student receptivity to and engagement with learning, paving the way for future improvements in academic achievement. This research adds to existing knowledge by investigating how Neufeld's Teachability Factor teacher training served as a tool to develop a more caring pedagogy in teachers that assisted them to engage their most behaviourally difficult and educationally disengaged students.

Significant Findings

The study offers a number of findings. The current study served to test, via exploratory factor analysis, the retention of items in Lloyd's (2014) addition of six active disaffection measures to the EvsD scale. Although three of the five factor labels were retained from the original EvsD scale, only 15 items from the original 27-item scale were retained. By contrast five out of six of Lloyd's active disaffection items were retained from her added BDA factor label. These, combined with three additional items,

became renamed as socio-emotional disaffection (SED) and became the only statistically significant factor across both groups. Lloyd's active disaffection measure demonstrates promising scope for more accurately measuring active disaffection in schools and further examination of her six-item factor model is warranted.

The quantitative findings reveal that student disaffection decreased with statistical significance over the course of the intervention for both intervention and control students. Qualitative evidence suggests that Teachability Factor training may have accounted for the slightly higher final mean score among intervention students. As many other contributing factors may have influenced the results, however, further research is necessary in order to more fully understand this finding.

Qualitative findings point to a clear shift in teacher perceptions of the improved quality of the teacher-student relationship, indicating the positive value of the Teachability Factor intervention. It could be that the limited time frame of this study did not fully allow the benefits of teachers' altered perceptions of their disaffected learners to translate into measureable shifts in students' disaffection and engagement.

The study also provides a useful examination of the complexities of working with disaffected learners. Targeting this troubled demographic contains its own challenges and thought must be given to maximising the engagement of these students in research if their voice is to be heard. Stablein and Jacobs (2011) advocated, as a possible solution, the waiving of parent consent in low risk research with at-risk youth in contexts where parent-child relationships may be strained. The possibility of an opt-out consent form rather than an opt-in consent form is also worth considering lessening the strain on families who may find it difficult to organise a response. Some thought must be given to this challenge if further research is undertaken with this demographic.

Limitations

Findings in this study are limited by a number of considerations. The short intervention period necessitated by the time constraints of this small study may not have allowed adequate time to discover whether teacher perceptions of shifts in student-teacher relationships translated into measurable shifts in engagement and disaffection. A potential sampling bias including a possible under-representation of disaffected learners may have influenced quantitative results. In addition, the small sample size in the qualitative analysis does not warrant generalisation. However it does set up some possible frameworks for a mixed methods approach for future research to investigate

both disaffection and engagement using a caring pedagogy in New Zealand secondary schools.

In the concluding chapter, key findings from both the qualitative and quantitative research will be highlighted, and implications of these findings for current practice discussed. Recommendations will also be offered to potential future researchers in this field.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The current study aimed to explore how Teachability Factor as an intervention might assist teachers to better engage their disaffected learners, and to find out whether variables of student disaffection and engagement might alter as a result. It found that intervention teacher's perceptions of the quality of the teacher-student relationship altered significantly as a result of the Teachability Factor training. Teachers who underwent the Teachability Factor intervention found that once they viewed a disaffected learner with different eyes, recognising their vulnerability and defendedness and understanding their developmental immaturity, they began to soften towards these students, thus creating a caring context of connection with them. Those students who chose to accept the invitation to the student-teacher relationship softened their defences as a result, and allowed their teachers to take more of a lead in the classroom. In many students, their willingness to engage and comply with teacher instructions and advice improved notably once a relationship had been developed. This altered quality of the student – teacher relationship, evident through stories related in interviews, created a significant transformation in many students. Those students who had been formerly characterised by disaffection, subsequently became more engaged and compliant in the context of the connecting teacher's classroom. This indicates, in line with existing literature, that intervention teachers compensated for developmental immaturity in their disaffected learners through the quality of their relationship with them (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Meehan et al., 2003; Neufeld & Maté, 2011).

The study also found that student disaffection decreased and engagement increased across both groups over the course of the intervention. Notably, the intervention group finished on a higher mean engagement score than the control, indicating a more positive overall perception of the student-teacher relationship. This was true despite the finding that the control group shifted further in their engagement over the course of the intervention than the intervention group, starting as they did on a lower mean score. Reasons for the difference in disaffection shifts are complex involving a number of potentialities that may have influenced the findings. There is sufficient evidence in the study, however, to warrant further exploration of the teacher-student relational dynamic and its potential to shift indicators of student disaffection and engagement, particularly when the findings of the qualitative investigation are considered alongside the quantitative findings.

A finding of significance to future researchers is the level of insight teachers felt the Teachability Factor intervention gave them, that then allowed them to better relationally engage their most potentially vulnerable student group: their disaffected learners. This group of learners are most often underachievers in our New Zealand school system from a marginalised demographic (ERO, 2012) who feel a sense of alienation and lack of invitation to connect with teachers (Brooking et al., 2008; Nairn & Higgins, 2011) as they enter their high school years (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Klem & Connell, 2004). Despite being targeted by many interventions and allocated much funding (Johnston, 2015a), current government initiatives are doing little to successfully engage this vulnerable group of learners (ERO, 2012). The developmental insights given teachers into factors that cause disaffected students to become both actively and passively disengaged from learning, make the Teachability Factor intervention distinct from others currently available in secondary schools. If this intervention proved successful, in future, at engaging a larger group of teachers to develop a more caring pedagogy with their disaffected learners, it could have wider implications in the New Zealand context of disaffected underachievers.

Implications from this study for existing practice include a re-consideration of the ways in which schools address the disruptive and challenging behaviour of their disaffected learners. The prevailing behaviourist approach assumes integrative functioning on the part of the student, in order to learn from the consequences allotted them, yet integrative functioning marks the pinnacle of developmental maturity (Neufeld & Maté, 2011) – a maturity students from an impoverished socio-emotional background have rarely yet developed. This study demonstrates that such maturity is best developed in the context of a caring guardian or parent-child relationship, or if not, then compensated for at school by a caring teacher-student relationship. It is important that developmental understanding is provided to teachers when considering the needs of their disaffected learners, for without this understanding, teacher compassion may be lacking, giving less room for a teacher-student connection to be established. A student-teacher connection is vital if students are to be effectively engaged in learning, as this study shows it to be an effective means of compensating for a lack intrinsic motivation that is the fruit of developmental maturity.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include:

- randomising teacher participants into intervention and control groups;
- broadening the qualitative research to include more teachers in the study;
- employing a more detailed method of capturing student voice such as focus groups or individual students interviews;
- extending the length of the research to allow time for both teacher-student and student-teacher relationships to develop more fully;
- broadening the quantitative research to include a wider sample of schools including schools with a range of decile groupings and with a range of settings;
- considering the possibility of an opt-out consent form in future low-risk research in order to more easily allow student voice to emerge when targeting disaffected youth;
- extending the scope of the research to include an analysis of whether an increase in engagement correlates with an eventual increase in student achievement in the sample demographic.

New Zealand's "long tail of underachievement" (Johnston, 2015a, p. 1) casts a shadow on our education system, that veils a disparity in our nation that is both socio-emotional as well as socioeconomic in nature. Providing teachers with developmental insight into our most disaffected and vulnerable students may prove to be a useful piece in the puzzle that educators must solve if we are to adequately serve our underachieving secondary school student population. Although further work is required to gain a more complete understanding of how both the student-teacher relationship and the teacher-student relationship are best developed, this research demonstrates that a developmental understanding alongside a caring pedagogy, are potentially useful factors to consider when looking to engage disaffected learners. The intervention Teachability Factor may well provide a useful avenue to explore in future in order to assist teachers in better engaging this vulnerable student demographic.

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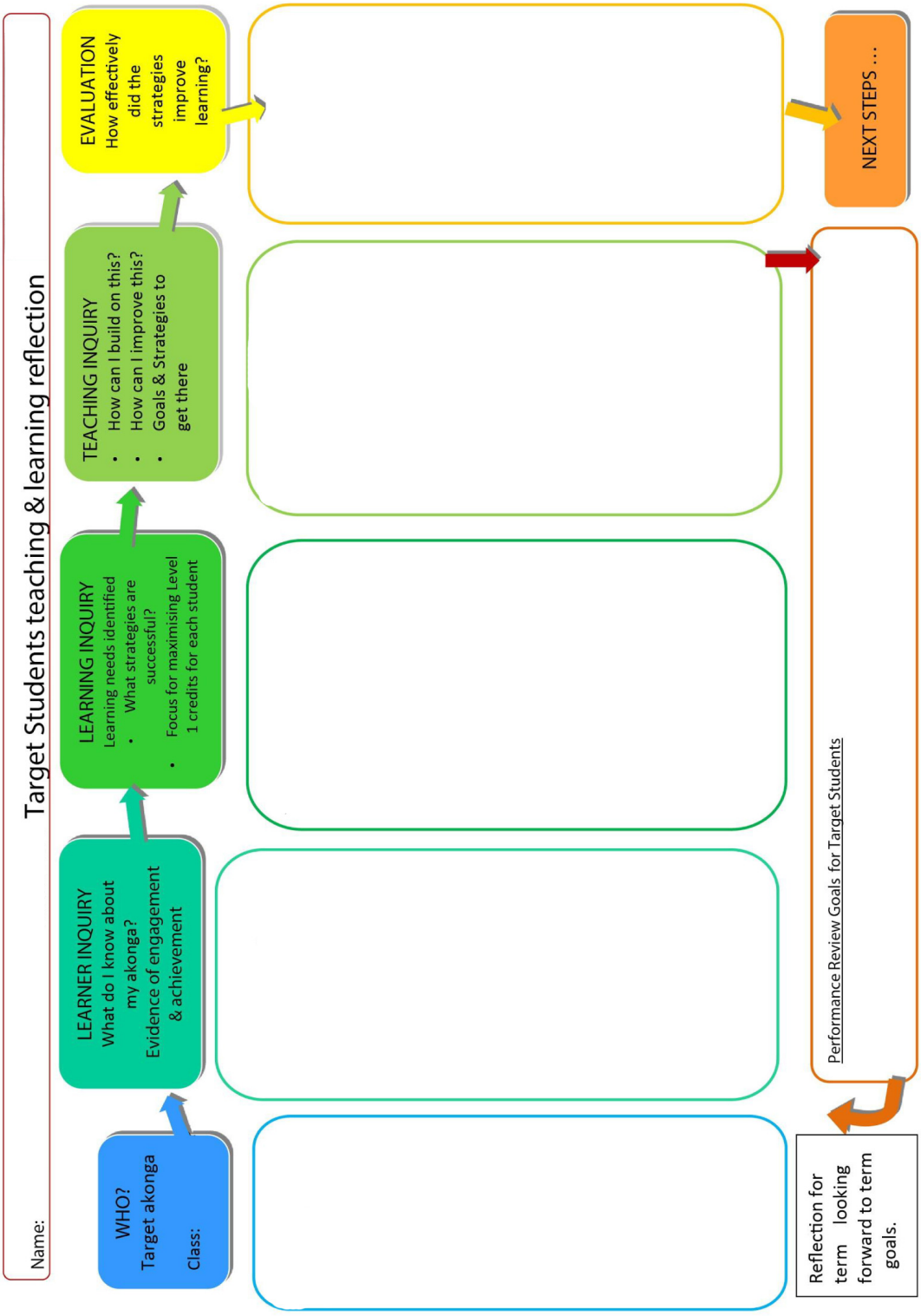
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Appendices

Appendix A: Target Student form



Appendix B: Teacher Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. You have been working with and processing ideas from the TF training for eight weeks now. Have you any general thoughts on its usefulness or otherwise in your classroom?

2. The course covered a number of concepts. These included:

   - Teachability and Maturation: why the immature have trouble learning and behaving
   - The Vulnerability Factor: why some kids get "stuck"
   - The Attachment Factor: why the immature (and disaffected) need to attach to their teachers

   Consider each of the ideas above:

   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student A?
   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student B?
   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student C?
   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student D?
   Were there any other students with whom you found this guideline useful?

3. (a) Tell me about the quality of your relationship with the Target Students in your class after the TF intervention.
   (b) If you felt the quality of the relationship became more positive, did that translate into more engagement with learning for these students?

4. (a) Tell me about the quality of your relationship with the students in your class who were not one of your Target Students after the TF intervention.

   (b) If you felt the quality of the relationship became more positive, did that translate into more engagement with learning for these students?

5. Three key guidelines were introduced in the course to engage disaffected learners as listed below:

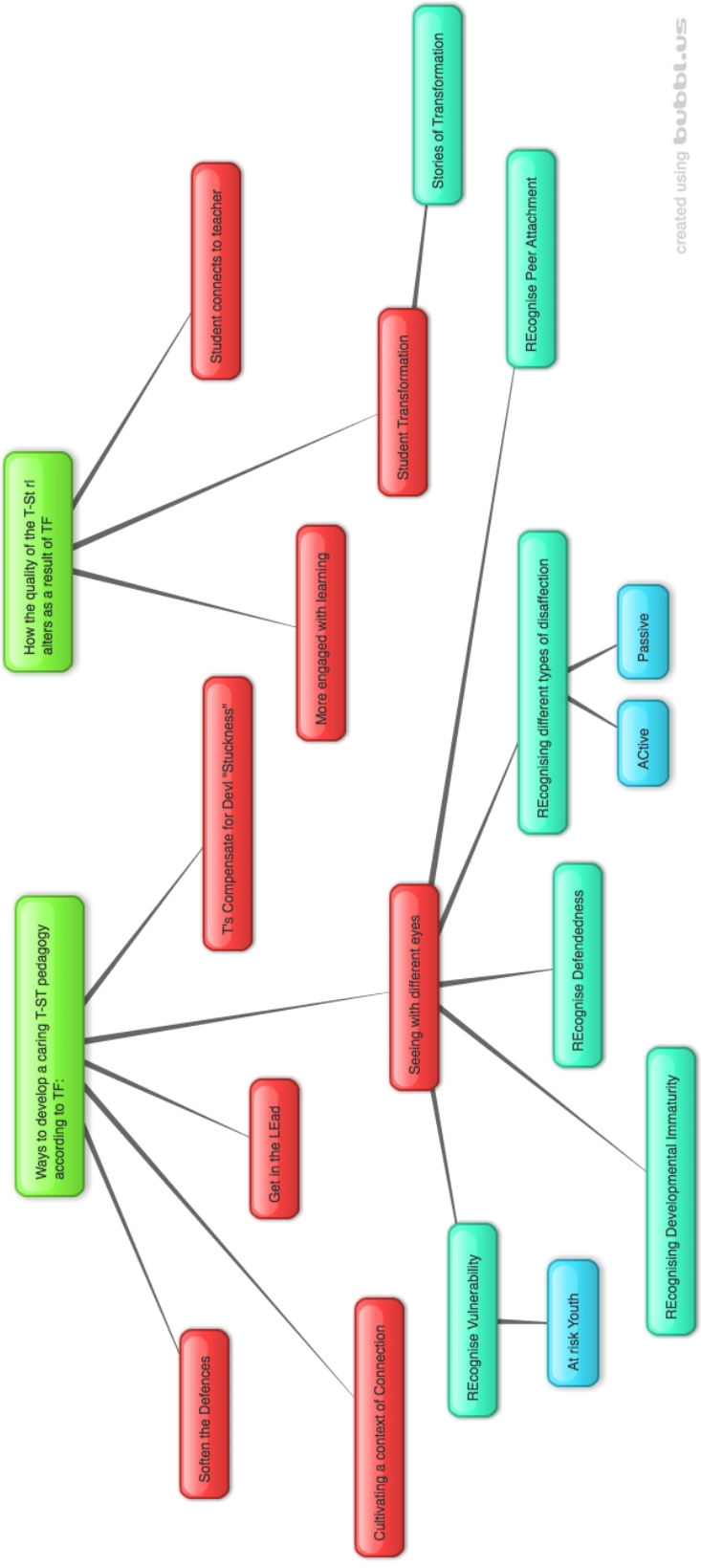
   (a) Get into a lead position (of trust and connection)
   (b) Aim to soften the defences
   (c) Prime maturation and compensate for developmental "stuckness"

   Consider each of the ideas above:

   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student A?
   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student B?
   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student C?
   Was this guideline useful when working with Target Student D?
   Were there any other students with whom you found this guideline useful?

6. Have you any further remarks you would like to make?

Appendix C: Map of coded themes in qualitative data.



Appendix D: PIS Principal/ BOT

School of Learning, Development & Professional Practice
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Participant Information Sheet
Principal/Board of Trustees

Project Title*:* Engaging the Disaffected Learner: Making Teacher-Student Relationships Count

Dear Principal/ Board of Trustees,

My name is Adrienne Wood and I am currently undertaking research for a Masters in Professional Studies, under the supervision of Dr Penelope Watson, and Lynda Garrett, at the School of Learning, Development and Professional Practice at the Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland.

Project Design

The proposed research will explore how teachers and their students might respond to an intervention (Gordon Neufeld's *Teachability Factor* [TF]) that intentionally nurtures positive relationships with disaffected learners with the aim of transforming their disaffection into engagement with learning.

I request permission to invite volunteers from your school to participate in this research. I have selected your school because it presents the opportunity to collect data from participants comprising a range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. I request permission to invite eight staff volunteers and their Year 10 classes to participate in the research. I would ask that students be given time during Tutor Class to fill out a questionnaire both before the TF intervention, and again after the TF intervention. If a student's parent declines to give consent I will supply worksheets for their son/daughter to engage in. The questionnaire will take approximately fifteen minutes to fill out.

I request your assurance that participation or non-participation will not affect the employment of the teachers of their relationship with the school, or the grades of the students.

Project Procedures

In order to recruit participants I would ask to speak briefly to all staff to explain the project, and to send a follow-up email to which interested staff are free to respond. Interested teachers may then contact me and be issued with a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form (CF).

Students of all eight teachers (both TF and CT) would then fill out a questionnaire measuring their levels of engagement with learning using the Engagement versus Disaffection (EvsD) instrument. PIS and CF forms will first be sent home to parents of students, and permission sought. From this questionnaire the four most disaffected learners in each class of participating students will be identified and become Target Students for these teachers to focus on engagement with learning. Students would be requested to fill out the EvsD questionnaire once again eight weeks after the TF intervention.

Four of the eight teacher volunteers will need to be released from two days' teaching in order to undergo TF training that will equip them with relationally-based strategies in working with disaffected learners. The other four teachers will act as control teachers (CT). I would personally facilitate this two day Professional Development course.

Eight weeks after the intervention both CT and TF staff will be requested to submit a Target Student Reflection on their Target Students. TF teachers will also be asked to participate in an interview with me, detailing their experiences. With teacher permission, interviews will be recorded. Interview transcripts will be provided to TF teachers afterwards in order that they can check for accuracy and make any additional comments or clarifications. A small koha (a $25 Westfield voucher) will be offered to TF teachers in recognition of their time involvement. Control teachers will be offered access to the full Teachability Factor training programme after the intervention if they are interested in it, alongside the Summary of Findings.

The cost of the TF training (paid to the Neufeld Institute) will be covered by the researcher. Teachers themselves will receive their usual salary and the researcher will personally fund Relief Teacher release costs.

Data storage/ retention/ destruction/ future use

All student questionnaires, teacher interview transcripts, and all consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr Watson's office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years, after which time they will be shredded. Statistical data will stored on my password-protected computer for six years, after which time any electronic data will be wiped from the computer on which they are stored.

Right to Withdraw from Participation

Participants have a right to withdraw from the research. The Principal has a right to withdraw the school from participation up until three months after initial consent is granted. Teacher participants may withdraw any time up until one week after they have read their interview transcripts for checking. Student participants may withdraw until the time when the second questionnaire is submitted.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Student confidentiality will be maintained. Student survey responses will be numbered and reported anonymously in the data. Identity of the four Target Students as identified by the EvsD questionnaire will be disclosed to teachers but will remain confidential to the teacher and the researchers. Teacher and Target Student confidentiality in comments used will be maintained by use of pseudonyms.

The information gathered at your school may be published for a wider academic audience such as in conference presentations and academic articles, but the identity of your school will never be revealed. Your school will be given a copy of the Summary of Findings. Students and Staff will be able to access the findings by contacting the Researcher.

If you wish to discuss this research with me or my supervisors, Dr Penelope Watson and Lynda Garrett, our contact details are listed at the bottom of this letter. Thank you for your time in considering this matter. If you are happy for your school to participate in this study please sign the attached consent form.

Kind regards

Adrienne Wood
Researcher
awoo028@aucklanduni.co.nz
021 061 6154

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Penelope Watson **Supervisor**	**Lynda Garrett M.Ed (Gifted Ed)** **Supervisor**	**Associate Professor** **Dr Lorri Santamaria** **Head of School**
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APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON March 26th 2014 for (3) years. Reference Number: **013858**

Appendix E: CF Principal /BOT

School of Learning, Development & Professional Practice
Te Kura Whakatairanga i te Ako Ngaio me te Whanaketanga

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The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street
Auckland 1150, New Zealand

Consent Form: Principal – Board of Trustees
This form will be held for a period of 6 years

Project Title: Engaging the Disaffected Learner: Making Teacher-Student Relationships count

Researcher: Adrienne Wood

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and have understood the nature of the research and why this school has been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand participation in this research is voluntary.

- I agree that students and staff at Waitakere College may be invited to take part in this research.
- I agree to allow consenting and assenting Year 10 students of participating teachers to complete a Questionnaire during Tutor group time both prior to the Teachability Factor (TF) intervention, and afterwards.
- I agree to four volunteer teachers of Year 10 students taking part in two full days' Professional Development TF training at the expense of the Researcher.
- I agree to TF staff engaging in an interview with the Researcher approximately eight weeks after the TF training has concluded.
- I agree to allow staff to submit Term 2 Target Student Reflections to the Researcher using their four most disaffected students as identified by the Student Questionnaire.
- I understand that TF training and TF staff interviews will be undertaken and Target Student reflections will be collected in Term 2, 2015 and that no further involvement will be required of staff and students after August 1st, 2015.
- I understand that we are free to withdraw from participation at any time during the research and to withdraw data traceable to the school up until August 1st, 2015.
- I understand that data collected may be published for a wider academic audience but that the identity of the school will never be revealed. I understand that teacher and student anonymity will also be preserved, through the use of numbers and of a pseudonym where necessary.

- I understand that the data will be kept for 6 years, after which time it will be destroyed.
- I give my assurance that participation or non-participation will not affect the employment of the teachers or their relationship with the school, or the grades of the students.
- I wish to receive the summary of findings. YES NO (please circle)

Signature

Date

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON March 26th FOR (3) YEARS. REFERENCE NUMBER **013858**

Appendix F: Student Questionnaire

Student Questionnaire

Please note: These answers are confidential to the Researchers only. Your teacher will never see your answers to these questions. Take your time and think carefully about your answers. Please answer honestly.

This survey is based on your experiences in this teacher's class:
Please base your answers on your experiences in THIS teacher's class ONLY

Full Name:

Teachers's Name: (Circle)

	Very True	Sort of True	Not very True	Not at All True
1. When I'm in class, I participate in class discussions.				
2. When I'm in class, I think about other things.				
3. In class, I work as hard as I can.				
4. When we work on something in class, I feel discouraged.				
5. I try hard to do well in school.				
6. When in class, I annoy my classmates.				
7. When I'm in class, I feel bad.				
8. I get in trouble for not following classroom rules.				
9. Class is fun.				
10. In class, I do just enough to get by.				
11. I argue with my teacher in class.				
12. My teacher cares about how much I learn.				
13. When I'm in class, I listen very carefully.				
14. When I'm working on my classwork, I feel mad.				
15. My teacher does <u>not</u> like to help me learn.				
16. When we work on something in class, I feel interested.				
17. When I can't answer a question, I feel frustrated.				
18. When I'm in class, I disrupt the classwork of others.				
19. My teacher thinks it is important for her/him to be my friend.				
20. I enjoy learning new things in class.				
21. When we work on something in class, I get involved.				
22. When my teacher first explains new material, I feel bored.				
23. I pay attention in class.				
24. When I'm in class, my mind wanders.				
25. When we start something new in class, I feel nervous.				

	Very True	Sort of True	Not very True	Not at All True
26. When I'm doing work in class, I feel bored.				
27. When I'm in class, I feel good.				
28. My teacher likes me as much as he/she likes other students in the class.				
29. When I'm in class, I just act like I'm working.				
30. When I'm in class, I talk a lot with my classmates.				
31. When I'm in class, I don't sit still. I get out of my seat sometimes.				
32. When we work on something in class, I feel bored.				
33. My teacher does not care about my feelings.				
34. When I get stuck on a problem, it really bothers me.				
35. Class is not all that fun for me.				
36. My teacher likes to see my work.				
37. When I'm in class, I feel worried.				
38. My teacher wants me to do my best school work.				
39. I don't try very hard in school.				
40. When I get stuck on a problem, I feel worried.				
41. My teacher really cares about me.				