

EMBEDDING THE STUDENTS' POINT OF VIEW INTO RESEARCH: THE ADAPTATION PROCESS OF THE TEACHERS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

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The pedagogical relationship between the student and the teacher influences the student's ability to adjust to school. It also shapes students' relations to their peers in school. This phenomenon has great educational importance, however, it is rarely in the focus of scientific interest and pedagogical praxis in Hungary. So far only time-consuming methods could have been used to explore the students' attachment network in Hungary. These methods needed close cooperation between teachers, adults and students. A widely used instrument, the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001) assesses the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the student, although it only gives information about how the teacher evaluates his/her relationship with the students. However, to investigate the teacher–student relationship in depth, the exploration of students' views is also necessary. The current theoretical study has two main objectives. First, it presents an instrument that can be applied to examine the teacher–student relationship from the student's perspective. Second, it presents how the Teachers' Relationships with Students Questionnaire (TRSQ; Leita & Waugh, 2007) was adapted to be used in Hungarian educational context. This questionnaire assesses how the student evaluates his/her relationship with the teacher. It contains 20 items related to three key social and emotional aspects that affect teacher-student relationship: connectedness, availability and communication skills. Connectedness refers to the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the student from an emotional aspect. Availability means the ease with which students can approach their teachers with their academic, social or emotional needs. An effective teacher can communicate with students in positive, sensitive and assertive ways. In the classroom, this kind of communication is expected to enhance trust and respect between the teacher and the student. The questionnaire makes it possible to investigate the teacher–student relationship from the perspective of students. It also gives an opportunity to better understand students' attitudes towards school and their teachers. This questionnaire was chosen for adaptation because it is an easy-to-use instrument, it is not time-consuming, and it can be used to determine the strengths and needs within individual teacher–student relationships. It also helps to explore the students' views and needs in their relationship with their teacher in-depth. In the next steps of this research project, the adapted questionnaire will be piloted with the participation of two classes in a primary school. The planned study helps to test if the adapted questionnaire works properly. The long-term aim of the research is to combine STRS and TRSQ in order to investigate the teacher–student relationship from the perspectives of both the groups. Exploring the views of different actors of the educational process may contribute to improve students' attitudes towards school and learning.

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