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**Research Project: Case Study based on
Electives Experience**

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1. How do teachers help form relationships in a classroom.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

In what ways do teachers help promote peer relationships in year 6?

Students' social and emotional development is at a turning point in Year 6. Peer interactions are crucial to their sense of wellbeing and belonging as they get closer to completing their transition to secondary school. This research is based on the question 'In what ways do teachers help promote peer relationships in year 6?'. This research was carried out using an interview with the year 6 class teacher and observation in a year 6 classroom. Promoting and fostering these relationships is a major responsibility of teachers, who serve as essential facilitators of the learning environment. They can give pupils the chance to interact, work together, and form enduring connections by using a range of tactics. Teachers guide students through the complex nature of social relationships, promote empathy, and provide an example of effective communication techniques through structured group activities and the development of an inclusive classroom atmosphere. Additionally, they guarantee that each child feels respected, safe, and valued in their peer groups and offer assistance in resolving conflicts. Teachers can improve their students' social skills and foster a more cohesive, encouraging learning environment by encouraging strong peer interactions. This in turn promotes emotional resilience and academic success. Pupils' behaviour and attitude towards learning can also be significantly impacted by positive relationships (Robson, 2024). This essay will look at the several strategies teachers employ to help year 6 students develop relationships with their peers, emphasising the value of these exchanges in creating a happy learning environment and preparing children for social challenges in the future.

In primary school, peer relationships are essential to students' academic achievement and emotional health. Students in year 6, usually between the ages of 10 and 11, are in a developmental stage where they are starting to deal with increasingly challenging social settings and getting ready to move on to secondary school. Strong peer interactions have been found to be associated with enhanced academic performance, better emotional control, and increased self-esteem (Wentzel, 2010). Positive peer relationships in Year 6 can contribute to children's entire school experience by giving them a sense of security and belonging (Naylor & Cowie, 1999). Furthermore, at this time of transition, peer interactions are very crucial. Year 6 students frequently deal with social pressures and anxiety associated with changing schools. Simmons and Blythe (2003) found that social stress can be increased by anticipating changes, which makes peer support even more important. As children get ready for secondary school, teachers who encourage peer interactions can provide them a sense of continuity and support, lowering anxiety and boosting confidence.

By using deliberate strategies and procedures, teachers can significantly contribute to the development of positive peer relationships. Cooperative learning exercises are one strategy. According to studies, group projects that require pupils to cooperate in order to accomplish shared objectives foster healthy peer relationships and aid in the development of critical social skills including problem-solving, communication, and bargaining (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Teachers frequently employ cooperative games, peer tutoring, and group projects in Year 6 classes to promote student connection. These exercises facilitate the breakdown of social barriers, promote the growth of respect for one another, and give students the chance to make friends with people outside of their own social circles (Cohen, 1994).

Using social and emotional learning (SEL) programs is an additional essential strategy. The main goals of SEL programs are to educate pupils social skills, empathy, self-regulation, and self-awareness. Research indicates that by fostering emotional intelligence and conflict resolution abilities, SEL programs might enhance peer relationships. Durlak et al. (2011) claim that students who take part in SEL programs do better academically, have less behavioural issues, and have stronger social skills. By giving children the skills to comprehend and control their emotions as well as develop empathy for others, SEL can be particularly beneficial in promoting healthy peer interactions in Year 6, when children are dealing with increasingly complicated social dynamics.

Additionally, through structured play and extracurricular activities, teachers foster peer interactions. Play is a vital social development tool, especially in primary school environments. Pellegrini and Bohn's (2005) research emphasise the importance of unstructured playtime and playtime as opportunities for the formation of peer relationships. Teachers may guarantee that each pupil has the chance to engage with their peers in a constructive, encouraging setting by facilitating structured play during lunch or playtime. In addition to offering opportunities for students to interact with their peers in a less formal setting, extracurricular activities like drama clubs, music groups, and sports teams are also helpful in the dismantling of cliques and the development of a feeling of community.

Additionally, teachers are crucial in mediating and settling disputes between students. Since miscommunications and arguments are unavoidable in any social group, conflict resolution is essential to preserving healthy peer relationships. Students can get negotiation skills and social challenge management skills by having their teachers help them navigate difficulties. According to research by Johnson and Johnson (2005), teachers who resolve disputes by emphasising cooperative problem-solving and restorative techniques help to improve peer relationships and decrease bullying.

Teachers can also effectively foster positive connections by implementing peer mediation programs, in which students receive training on how to assist their peers in resolving conflicts. Selected students are trained by teachers to serve as impartial mediators in these programs, assisting their peers in resolving disputes without the

need for teacher intervention. Peer mediation programs have been shown to enhance student relationships, lessen bullying, and foster a more welcoming school environment (Cohen & Travis, 2000). Peer mediation can also be a useful technique for Year 6 pupils to develop their leadership abilities and sense of accountability in resolving social concerns.

Peer relationships are fostered in large part by the educational setting itself. All students, regardless of their social background or skill level, feel appreciated when teachers foster inclusive, polite, and safe learning environments. According to research, positive behaviour and peer collaboration are encouraged in a classroom environment where students feel valued and appreciated (Ames, 1992). Setting clear expectations for polite behaviour and encouraging pupils to embrace diversity are particularly crucial for instructors in Year 6, as children may be becoming more conscious of social hierarchies and group dynamics.

A case study is an in-depth investigation of a particular topic, such as an individual, group, location, occasion, institution, or phenomena. In social, educational, therapeutic, and business research, case studies are frequently employed (McCombes, 2023). A case study is a type of research methodology that entails a thorough analysis of a topic in the setting of actual life. Case studies offer insights into the subtleties of the phenomena under study by examining the sources of underlying principles, behaviours, or outcomes. A broad spectrum of variables and interactions that would not be apparent using other techniques, such surveys or tests, can be recorded by researchers using this method (Hassan, 2024).

One advantage of case study research is its capacity to offer a thorough and integrated perspective on the case in its natural setting, which makes it especially helpful for investigating novel or intricate topics with little to no previous research (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Additionally, case studies give data collecting flexibility, which can improve the findings' validity and richness. However, there are drawbacks to case study research as well, such as worries about generalisability because it only looks at one or a small number of situations. The results might not apply to other circumstances or to larger populations (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Additionally, collecting and analysing data from many sources for a case study research project might take a lot of time and resources.

To conduct this research, an interview was conducted with a year 6 teacher. A popular qualitative research technique is an interview, in which researchers speak directly with participants in person to obtain in-depth information on a certain topic, problem, or occurrence. By giving participants the opportunity to communicate their ideas in their own words, interviews aim to comprehend their viewpoints, experiences, and attitudes. The degree of control the researcher has over the conversation varies depending on the style of interview, which can be classified as organised, semi-structured, or unstructured (Kvale, 2007). This research conducted a semi-structured interview

which offer greater flexibility, enabling participants to freely share their responses, whereas structured interviews follow a prepared list of questions.

In qualitative research, interviews are especially crucial since they allow for a thorough examination of complicated challenges that are difficult to quantify. This approach provides insights into participants' motivations, beliefs, and emotional reactions while recording their rich, subjective experiences (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Interviews give researchers the chance to interact directly with people, which helps them find subtleties that may not be shown by surveys or other forms of data collecting. A better comprehension of the responses is ensured by the flexibility of interviews, which also permits follow-up questions and clarification (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Particularly when discussing delicate subjects, this degree of involvement can promote confidence between the participant and the researcher, enabling more candid, open responses. Additionally, interviews offer a chance to delve into participants' feelings, experiences, and viewpoints in their own words, which makes them incredibly helpful for learning how people interpret their surroundings.

The capacity to collect rich, detailed data is one of the main benefits of conducting interviews. Interviews provide open-ended investigation, providing a deeper understanding of participants' thoughts and feelings than closed-ended surveys that restrict replies to predetermined possibilities (Patton, 2015). This adaptability can result in more contextualised and detailed conclusions, which can be especially helpful when conducting exploratory research or examining intricate, multidimensional phenomena. In order to make sure that the interviewee and the interviewer understand one another, interviews also offer the chance for instant explanation (Kvale, 2007). The researcher can ask follow-up questions to get a better understanding if a participant's response is ambiguous or needs more explanation. Compared to techniques like questionnaires, where errors cannot be readily fixed in real time, this iterative approach can produce data that is richer and more accurate. Additionally, interviews might help the participant and the researcher develop a closer relationship. When discussing delicate or intimate subjects like trauma, mental health, or personal beliefs, rapport-building is crucial. Participants may be more willing to participate in a relationship based on trust, which may provide data that would not be available in other ways (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Despite their benefits, interviews have inherent drawbacks. The process's high time and resource requirements are one of its main disadvantages. It can take a lot of time and effort to conduct interviews, transcribe them, and analyse the results, especially when working with large sample sizes or in-depth interviews (Bryman, 2016). Due to this, interviews may not be a viable option for certain research, particularly those that need a lot of data from a diverse range of individuals. The possibility of researcher bias presents another difficulty with interviews. The interviewer's tone, the questions posed, and even nonverbal clues might affect the participant's answers (Patton, 2015). To guarantee that the information gathered represents the actual viewpoints of the participants rather than the interviewer's presumptions, interviewers must thus

continue to be impartial and conscious of their own prejudices. Furthermore, if individuals experience pressure to meet perceived expectations, they might give socially acceptable responses (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). As a result, the data may be biased or less representative of the participant's actual experiences or beliefs. The fact that interviews only record the participant's viewpoint at a particular moment in time is another drawback. Accordingly, the results of an interview could not accurately reflect long-term shifts or more general patterns (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Furthermore, the interviewer's abilities have a significant impact on the quality of the interview data. Inexperienced interviewers may miss crucial participant indications, ask the wrong questions, or struggle to build rapport.

To conduct this research, observations in two year 6 classroom was also used. A qualitative research technique called observation is methodically observing, documenting, and evaluating encounters, events, or behaviours as they naturally transpire in their natural setting. This approach is perfect for researching phenomena in their natural environments since it enables researchers to collect data without interfering with the individuals' regular activities. Participant observation, in which the researcher actively participates in the group or setting under study, and non-participant observation, in which the researcher observes from a distance as an outsider, are the two primary forms of observation (Cohen et al., 2018). In disciplines like psychology, sociology, and education, observations are frequently used to study interactions, behaviours, and dynamics that would be difficult to record using other techniques like surveys or interviews.

Although they enable researchers to collect rich, real-time data in natural environments, observations are crucial. By using this approach, the researcher can document the complex nature of social interactions and human behaviour as they happen in real time (Angrosino, 2007). For example, in educational contexts, relationships between peers or teacher-student interactions can be observed without the biases or constraints of self-reporting techniques, providing an authentic perspective of the situation. Additionally, observations give context, enabling researchers to comprehend how social norms, group dynamics, and environmental factors impact behaviours.

The primary advantage of observation is its capacity to gather information on behaviours that occur spontaneously in authentic environments. Observations record real behaviours, lowering the possibility of social desirability bias, in contrast to surveys or interviews that depend on participants' self-reports (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, observational data might provide information on interactions and nonverbal clues that verbal communication alone could miss (Silverman, 2016).

However, there are limitations to observations as well. One significant disadvantage is researcher bias, which might affect the data gathered according to the researcher's views and fieldwork (Angrosino, 2007). This is especially difficult in participant observation because the researcher's presence may change the dynamics of the

group. Furthermore, observations can take a lot of time and could not give a full picture of a person's motivations or thinking (Silverman, 2016). Concerns concerning the consistency and dependability of the data are further raised by the method's reliance on the researcher's subjective interpretations.

I used a combination of observations and interviews to collect qualitative data for my study on how teachers support peer relationships in Year 6. Finding and comprehending the precise tactics teachers utilise to build relationships with their peers, as well as how successfully these approaches facilitate constructive social interactions among pupils, was the aim of the data study. The strategies used for data presentation and analysis are intended to guarantee that the results are thorough and significant, representing the practical implementation of teaching tactics used to encourage student social engagement.

The primary data collection method was semi-structured interview conducted with two year 6 teachers. The interview had seven questions lasted around 10 minutes each. While ensuring stability among interviews, the semi-structured method gave flexibility in generating more in-depth answers. Teachers' methods for encouraging connections among their peers, their assessment of students' social dynamics, and the difficulties they have in fostering constructive peer interactions were the main topics of the interview questions. First, each teacher's comments were grouped according to common themes such teacher participation, peer marking, cooperative learning, and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs. These themes underwent additional analysis after initial coding in order to find common patterns and distinctive viewpoints on developing peer relationships.

Over the course of three days, observational data was gathered in two Year 6 classrooms during both organised (such group projects and cooperative learning activities) and unstructured (such as lunch and playtime) periods. These conditions were observed for a total of twelve hours, six hours in each classroom. The observations focused on how students interacted with one another during various tasks and how the teacher either supported or interfered with these interactions. Field notes were recorded in real time and subsequently transcribed for analysis. The observations were divided into three categories: peer relationships, teacher interventions, and student behaviour. This classification was crucial to comprehending how teachers directly and indirectly impacted student relationships as well as how students interacted with one another.

The findings were presented using qualitative data analysis approaches, combining the information from observations and interviews into a coherent narrative structure.

Thematic analysis was the main technique used to analyse the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This required finding, examining, and summarising trends (themes) in the data. This study was especially well-suited for thematic analysis since it offered

a framework for comprehending the larger social processes at work and enabled the investigation of instructors' attitudes and behaviours about peer relationships.

By comparing the information from observations and interviews, I employed triangulation (Patton, 2015) to improve the validity and reliability of the results. I was able to confirm whether the instructors' stated practices matched the interactions that actually took place in the classroom by comparing the themes that formed from their interviews with the behaviours that were seen there.

Several ethical guidelines must be followed when doing research with individuals, especially in educational settings, to guarantee that the study is responsible, respectful, and upholds participants' rights. In order to maintain the integrity of the research process, ethical rules from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) were adhered to for this study, which examines how teachers foster peer connections in Year 6 using interviews and classroom observations.

Clear and thorough informed consent forms were given to all participants, including teachers and the school, in accordance with BERA's ethical principles (2018). Teachers received comprehensive information on the study's objectives, the terms of their involvement, and the intended use of their data. Additionally, the consent forms clarified that participation was entirely optional and that withdrawal was possible at any time without repercussions. A fundamental ethical concept that respects individuals' autonomy and decision-making is obtaining informed consent.

The data gathered for the study were anonymised in order to preserve confidentiality and safeguard participant identities. All identifiable school-related information, including the personal information of teachers, was kept private. The 2018 BERA rules emphasise how crucial it is to maintain participant anonymity, particularly when private information may be exposed. To ensure data management is secured, all files and data is stored in the University One Drive system which is password protected. All files and data will be deleted once research study is completed.

Reducing participant damage is one of the main ethical tenets of educational research (BERA, 2018). An attempt was made in this study to make sure that neither teachers nor the students would experience any distress as a result of the research. For instance, unless they willingly chose to do so, teachers were not requested to share sensitive or personal information. To ensure that the researcher's presence did not disrupt children's natural behaviour, classroom observations were also carried out in a manner that was subtle.

Observations of the students' interactions in the classroom were a crucial component of the study, even though no students were interviewed directly. All information relating to student behaviour was handled with greatest care, guaranteeing that students' identities were kept secret, and their privacy was upheld, in accordance with BERA's rules on research involving minors.

I interviewed two year 6 teachers. I asked each teacher seven questions. Both teachers produced vaguely similar answers. As seen in Appendix 3, pg.4 (A), one teacher said that the typical dynamics can be positive but can become difficult as friendships change a lot in the classroom and the other teacher mentioned that it can be good however, if new children join the classroom, then friendships can become difficult. As seen in appendix 3, pg.4 (B), both teachers answered yes to having a child with ALN within the classroom. As illustrated in appendix 3, pg.4 (C), one teacher discussed that the role of group activities is very important as the children can't always get their own way. Another teacher mentioned that it is very important as children have to work together and compromise with one another. The fourth question seen in appendix 3, pg.4 (D), one teacher said that collaborative tasks can affect the way students interact with one another positively as the children get the chance to work together. However, another teacher said it can be hard for those pupils with ALN as it can become overwhelming or anxious for them to work with others. Question 6, seen in appendix 3, pg.4 (E), one teacher mentioned that they see themselves as the facilitator by helping them with social interactions and seeing things from the other point of view when helping students form positive peer connections. Another teacher mentioned that they plan for opportunities for children to form positive peer connections. As seen in appendix 3, pg.4 (F), both teachers mentioned that they would address any bullying or exclusion concerns by firmly encouraging everyone to be included but also seeing things from both sides as there usually is a reason or need causing it. The last question asked as seen in appendix 3, pg.4 (G), both teachers mentioned that they would plan for opportunities for group work and social interactions throughout the day.

Whilst I was observing two year 6 classrooms, I found out different ways in which teachers can help students form peer relationships. The strategies I observed being implemented are designed to promote positive relationships, teamwork, and emotional intelligence between pupils.

I witnessed a lot of cooperative learning activities. I observed group projects. Students can cooperate, exchange ideas, and improve their problem-solving abilities when they are divided into varied groups to work on educational projects. As students learn to rely on one another's talents, these activities help them build relationships and collaborate (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). I also noticed a lot of peer tutoring in action. Peer relationships can be strengthened, and positive social interactions can be promoted when students are paired for academic help or skill-building activities.

I saw a lot of social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL interventions have been demonstrated to improve students' social behaviours, lessen aggression, and boost emotional well-being, all of which contribute to the development of stronger peer connections in the classroom (Durlak et al., 2011). There was a lot of classroom discussions. Children can reflect on their relationships and learn how to promote diversity in an open environment created by regular conversations about social subjects including kindness, respect, and teamwork.

I noticed a lot of praise and recognition in both classrooms by the teachers. Pupils are encouraged to set an example of good behaviour when cooperative and kind behaviours are acknowledged and praised in front of the class. By praising deeds of kindness and cooperation, educators can emphasise the value of healthy peer relationships. I also noticed that the teachers were modelling positive behaviours that the children would copy. Teachers should set an example of empathy and decency. Teachers create an example for pupils to follow by modelling good communication, conflict resolution, and interpersonal engagement. Wentzel (1997) asserts that teachers' activities have a big influence on how students interact with one another and that pupils frequently pick up social skills through observation.

Building healthy relationships with peers in the classroom requires a welcoming environment. An important thing I noticed that both teachers had on the walls and kept referring to was classroom rules. DeZure's (1999) research emphasises the significance of straightforward, inclusive classroom standards in preventing social exclusion and guaranteeing that every student feels included.

Both classrooms had a chance every Friday morning to have a chat with the teacher about any concerns and to share their feelings. This encourages openness to emotions and fosters mutual empathy among learners (Kramer et al., 2011). Teachers can encourage students to be more open and supportive with their classmates by building trust.

To conclude, encouraging healthy peer interactions in Year 6 is essential to children's social and emotional growth as they get ready to go on to secondary school. Through a variety of tactics, including controlled play, social and emotional development programs, cooperative learning, and conflict resolution techniques, teachers play a critical role in building these connections. Teachers foster the development of critical social skills like empathy, communication, and problem-solving in their students by fostering a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. These abilities improve students' general wellbeing and academic achievement. Intentional behaviours like praise, organised group activities, and open conversations, as seen in the classroom, not only improve peer relationships but also foster a sense of safety and inclusion. These constructive interactions highlight the long-lasting influence teachers have on their students' social development by strengthening their emotional resilience and preparing them for future social challenges.

There are a few future recommendations to this study if it was to be repeated. A larger sample size of Year 6 classrooms from multiple schools might be used in future studies to guarantee a more varied group of children, including those from different socioeconomic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. This would offer a deeper understanding of how teachers develop. Future studies could examine the effects of continuous professional development and training for teachers in inclusive teaching methods, conflict resolution, and social and emotional learning on the standard of peer

relationships in the classroom. More focused suggestions for teacher assistance may result from these interactions between peers in a variety of contexts.

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