Faith Valdner

**Significant Others**

-- A Literature Review on How Peers and Teachers Affect Adolescents in Their Academic Life
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FAITH VALDNER

In this study, the aim is to find out how and in what ways teachers and peers influence adolescents in their academic life. Forty-one articles were reviewed to discuss around four research questions:

1. What kinds of influences do peers have on adolescents in the academic context?
2. In what ways do teachers’ high expectations affect the students?
3. What kind of teacher-student relationships do students perceive in order to have positive attitudes towards school and have satisfying outcomes?
4. What aspects in adolescents’ academic life are influenced by teachers’ self-efficacy?

Teachers and peers are important motivators in students’ academic life. When the school, teacher and parents are aware of the influences from peers and teachers, they are given a chance to improve the factors involved so that students can learn best in a supportive atmosphere and environment.
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I. Introduction

1.1 Conceptual background

What and who motivates students to learn? Newman (in Schunk et al., 2010) mentions that many researchers have argued that interpersonal relationships affect students’ academic motivation. Clearly, the people who students have interpersonal relationships with are their peers and teachers. As Connell and Wellborn (in Schunk et al., 2010) point out, students’ relationships with peers and teachers are important motivators. Such motivators influence students’ performance, engagement and adjustment in school. Magdol (1992) states that there are many factors that influence adolescents’ academic achievement (author’s note: the end-product of motivation and learning). Peers influence adolescents’ attitudes toward school and individual efforts, while teachers, on the other hand, are much involved with the students, and encourage learning, through their desire for students to perform well (ibid).

Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s theories should be taken into consideration when discussing whether a student needs support from peers and teachers in learning. In Piaget’s opinion, learning is individual and independent, but Vygotsky promoted “scaffolding” (teachers give necessary support to help students solve problems) and “Zone of Proximal Development” (with teachers and peers’ help, a student is able to reach the level which he cannot reach on his own), which explains that learning is a social activity (Dysthe, 1995). Students need help and support from peers and teachers in order to reach their highest potential. Later in this review the reader will be able to see whether the results from different studies support Piaget’s or Vygotsky’s view.

When considering the influence from peers, the idea of “modeling” was presented by social cognitive theory (Schunk et al., 2010). In the concept of modeling, an act can be strengthened or weakened by observing models, while some model actions serve as social prompts so that observers act accordingly and finally, no motivation can create a new
behavior prior to observing modelling (ibid). Because of the modeling from peers, adolescents believe if their friends can do it, they can do it too (Schunk et al., 2010). If their friends fail, they probably do not have the required competence, either (ibid). Altermatt and Pomerantz (in Schunk et al, 2010) state that adolescents tend to share similar goals with their friends because their perceptions of competence are influenced by friends. In the beginning of a school year, students of similar motivational beliefs tend to occupy peer networks, in which the adolescents and their friends share similar values, beliefs and attitudes (Schunk et al., 2010). Because the young people have common motivational beliefs, values and attitudes towards the teachers and school, they perceive they are similar in competence and feel comfortable in such a friendship circle.

However, these peer groups can have differing degrees of influence according to the student’s age. In a news article, Farmer (2010) points out that peer groups are important in late years in elementary school until the eight or ninth grade. Then during high school this influence begins to decrease (ibid). Younger teens that have a need to belong are more affected by peer influence, while older teens have better sense of who they are and what they want to become (ibid). How much influence friends and cliques have on the adolescents will be discussed in the results and discussion sections.

As mentioned above, teachers can also be a source of influence for students. Historically, teachers’ function as motivators was limited (Schunk et al., 2010). They gave rewards such as privileges, prizes and praises in order to motivate learning (ibid). However, evidence and the views have changed and researchers believe everything teachers do are potentially motivational to students (ibid). This essay has reviewed journals on teachers’ influence on students’ learning and this research area can be categorized into: teacher expectations, teacher-student relationship (including teacher support) and teacher self-efficacy. Other minor areas are categorized into “others”.
Some concepts of the above-mentioned categories are explained as the following. There is a term in teacher expectations, which is called “Pygmalion effect” (Schunk et al., 2010: 318). Rosenthal and Jacobson (in Schunk et al., 2010) concluded that teacher expectations are self-fulfilling in the way that students’ achievement tends to reflect teachers’ expectations. As for teacher-student relationships, they can be understood by how students react to teachers’ behaviors and beliefs towards the students and these relationships further affect the students and their school life. Lastly, according to some researchers, teachers’ self-efficacy signifies “personal beliefs about one’s capabilities to help students learn” (Schunk et al., 2010: 323). The level of teachers’ self-efficacy influences their teaching styles and therefore influence students’ academic outcomes.

1.2 Aim and research questions

Students spend most of their waking hours with their teachers and peers, who are considered to be the significant others, that influence their learning motivation and school life. A common definition of significant others is found in Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2013): “your husband, wife, partner or somebody that you have a special relationship with”. However, this term is applied differently in the field of psychology: it is “A term used by George Herbert Mead to refer to those individuals who are most important in the development of the self, such as parents, friends, and teachers.” (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002). Mead points out that “The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process” (Mead in Mind, Self and Society quoted in Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 1995). The development of a student does not only rely on herself, but also the individuals around her. Whether a student likes to go to school or not,
whether she can adjust in school and engage in all learning activities, whether she can get good grades or fail depend not only on herself, but on the significant others. As a future teacher, I believe it is important to research how these significant others influence the students so that I can benefit from the findings as well as contributing to further studies for other researchers who are interested in this subject area. Parents are also significant others, but I have limited the study to those within the school environment. In this study, the aim is to find out how and in what ways teachers and peers influence adolescents in their academic life.

This essay will aim to discover what researchers say about the issue. Subsequently, further discussion will be made. To make the study more specific, the following research questions are raised:

1. What kinds of influences do peers have on adolescents in the academic context?
2. In what ways do teachers’ high expectations affect students?
3. What kind of teacher-student relationships do students perceive in order to have positive attitudes towards school and have satisfying outcomes?
4. What aspects in adolescents’ academic life are influenced by teachers’ self-efficacy?

1.2.1 Research limitations

As I have been educated to become a high school teacher, the study is limited to adolescents (12-18 years old) instead of all students. My initial search was on peers’ and teachers’ influence on students’ motivation. However most researchers’ studies do not focus mainly on motivation, therefore, this essay has enlarged the subject to the larger area of the entire academic life, namely, students’ motivation for learning, attitudes, adjustment and engagement in school as well as their academic outcomes. A further note is that the influences include positive and negative influences. Positive influences imply factors that contribute to good adjustment and engagement in school as well as teacher-desired behaviors
and satisfying academic results. Negative influences on the other hand imply factors which cause undesired (by teachers, parents and the school) behaviors or worsen students’ well-being and studies. The above definitions were given according to the context of the research articles.

II. Method

2.1 Searching method and selection criteria

I have consulted with the librarian at the university and was advised to use the electronic journals which are accessible from the university database. Then I mainly used ERIC/Educational Resources Information Center (EBSCO) for my search and partially the search engine JSTOR (which often produces a large search result). I used combinations of two to four following keywords for the search: peer influence, teacher influence, teacher-student relationship, teacher expectations, teacher self-efficacy and motivation. When I wanted to check a certain title again, I used Unisearch on the university library homepage.

This essay is a literature review and not a primary research. After screening, I printed out 28 articles on peer influence and 40 articles on teacher influence. Some journals I have searched or used are listed here for other researchers’ reference: Review of Research in Education; Educational Psychology Review; British Educational Research Journal; Journal of Early Adolescence; British Journal of Educational Psychology; American Educational Research Journal; American Journal of Education and Journal of Educational Psychology. I have found journal articles from ERIC and JSTOR, and from the reference lists in some reviews I have also found good journal articles. I have limited the age range to 6th graders to 12th graders. I made this choice because both junior high school and senior high school belong to “secondary education”. The publishing year of the studies was limited to between 1998 and 2013, in another word, within 15 years. Some exceptions were made if the studies were relevant. My final review was on 14 articles on peer influence and 27 articles on
teacher influence. The articles which were left out were because of the age limit, irrelevant content or that the articles were reviews. I have not chosen to use the reviews because the study range would get too large. The articles were transformed into matrix tables and the order of the authors was arranged according to the sequence when I found them in the database.

2.2 Data processing and analysis

The analysis of the studies is a combination of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and meta-synthesis (Kepreotes, 2009; Chenail, 2010). The research articles were read several times. First, the abstracts were read in order to decide if the content matches the aim of the study. A further reading was done and matrixes were made accordingly. The matrixes were also coded and categorized under themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with peers’ influence and teachers’ influence as the main theme and several sub-themes within. When presenting the result section of the review, another reading of the matrixes and parts of the articles was done. While doing this, more necessary coding was made to construct the result section. When the above was done, the synthesis was created to complete the analysis (Chenail, 2010).

2.3 Reliability and validity

If a measuring method is able to repeat the same result, it has reliability, and while a test measures what it is intended to measure, then it has validity (Bryman, 2002; Eriksson Barajas, Forsberg and Wenström, 2013). This essay holds a certain reliability under a period of time, but a similar review done twenty years ago and twenty years later may have different results as there are many factors that influence the education system (around the world). However this review has a high validity as the results answer to the research questions and meets its purpose.
2.4 Ethical considerations

According to APA’s (2002) General Principle E in *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, “respect for people’s rights and dignity” is fundamental (2014-03-11). For ethical considerations, I have given credit to whom it is due, providing the sources of all the literature I used, including books, journal articles and internet materials. As this essay is a review, no participants are directly involved and no sensitive data is shared.

III. Results

The results will be presented in different themes (categories). The two main categories are peers’ influence and teachers’ influence, and within these two categories there are several subcategories containing results of specific research. Some results of the research are partially presented in order to keep the development of the result section coherent under the themes (parts that do not fit under the themes are left out).

3.1 Peers’ influence

The results from different research on peers’ influence on adolescents will first be presented. They can be divided into three categories:

- Peers have positive influence
- Peers do not have direct influence
- Other aspects

Referring to Tables 1, 2 and 3, the reader can get an overview of the study results presented by different researchers.
3.1.1 **Positive influence** (see Table 1 on pages 11 and 12)

According to Wentzel et al. (2004), friends play an important role in adolescents’ development of pro-social behaviors, and if friends are supportive and caring, the students will be more interested in goal-pursuing in school. Adolescents who do not have friends manage poorly (ibid). Because adolescents have interactions with friends constantly, Berndt et al. (1990) also point out that discussions among adolescents change their attitudes toward academic achievement. Wentzel’s research in 1999 came to the conclusion that peers provide values and goals to the students and socially influence the students. When students are rejected by peers, their levels of interest in school will become low (ibid).

Friends with similar academic accomplishment and goals seem to be drawn towards one another. If friends are academically engaged, they tend to achieve higher levels (in grade 8) as well (Véronneau and Dishion, 2011). They found that this is especially so with girls. Friends that associate with one another usually have similar grades and their values and efforts in schoolwork are similar (Altermatt et al., 2003). Ryan (2001) also agrees that adolescents normally associate with those who have similar levels of motivation and similar accomplishment. The peer group influences the students’ intrinsic value for school (ibid).

According to the six studies, peers have positive effect on adolescents’ academic work. The students are encouraged by peers that try to work hard in school. When associating with friends that do well academically, one does well too, because they share common values and goals. What do other researchers have to say about this subject?
Table 1 Matrix of Peers’ influence on adolescents’ academic life (positive influence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berndt, Thomas J.; Laychak, Ann E.; Park, Keunho 1990</td>
<td>To examine friends’ influence on motivation to achieve in school.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>118 8th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Through discussion, friends had similarity in their decisions.</td>
<td>This leads to the conclusion that discussions change adolescents’ attitudes towards academic achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, K. Caldwell, K. McNamara Barry, C. 2004</td>
<td>Relationship between having friendship and social/academic adjustment.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>242 6th graders followed for 2 years 90 not valid in the 8th grade</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Students without friends score significantly lower than those with friends. However, friends’ prosocial goal pursuit influences an adolescent’s prosocial goal pursuit, but an adolescent’s GPA is not influenced by friends’ GPA.</td>
<td>Friendships play a unique role in the development of pro-social behaviors. If friends are supportive and caring, the student tends to be more interested in school and goal-pursuing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R. 1999</td>
<td>To examine how students’ social encounters with parents, teachers and peers influence their socially valued goals.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Social-motivational processes, Personal goals, socialization and academic motivation</td>
<td>Models &amp; hypotheses</td>
<td>Friendships influence motivation at kindergarten ages, but little in adolescence. Peer group influences self-worth and self-esteem, while friendships do not. Peer group enforces the individual to reach the goal pursuit. When rejected by group, levels of interest become low.</td>
<td>Teachers, parents and peers actively provide values and goals to the students and have “social” influence on them (91). These goals and values work with other motivational processes and contribute to academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Véronneau, Marie Hélène &amp; Dishion, Thomas J. 2011</td>
<td>To investigate friends’ influence changes from grade 6 to grade 8 and the role of the student’s role in the relationships.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1,278 students, longitudinal analysis from grade 6 to grade 8</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Academic achievements are related to that students refrain from engaging problem behaviors and actively engage in positive school-related behaviors with friends. Friends’ high achieving accomplishment may have a significant, positive or negative impact on the student.</td>
<td>Students with academically engaged friends may achieve higher levels in grade 8. When considering the influence of friends’ problem behaviors, friends’ school engagement becomes insignificant. High achieving girls seem to benefit from having high-achieving friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altermatt, Ellen Rydell &amp; Pomerantz, Eva M. 2003</td>
<td>To examine if students’ achievement-related beliefs could be predicted from their friends’ beliefs</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>longitudinal study on 929 students from 4th grade to 6th grade</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Students and their best friends had similar grades. Friends also influence their efforts in schoolwork and what they consider important in school.</td>
<td>“associations were stronger among reciprocated than among unilateral friends” (111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan, Allison M. 2001</td>
<td>To investigate “the peer group as a context for the socialization of young adolescents’ motivation and achievement in school”.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>331 7th graders</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>“Adolescents with similar levels of motivation and achievement associated with each other.” (1143)</td>
<td>“Peer group context affects the development of young adolescents’ achievement beliefs and behaviors.” (1145) “The peer group was found to influence changes in students’ intrinsic value for school” (1146)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.2 No direct influence

Some researchers state that peers may not influence adolescents’ academic life directly (see Table 2 on page 14). Wentzel et al. (1997) found that peer relationships were related to 8th grade GPA (Grade Point Average) indirectly. When discussing the relationship between peer relationships and academic achievement, pro-social behaviors have to be taken into consideration as well (ibid). Wentzel et al. in 2004 came up with more results on this matter that friends’ pro-social goal pursuit influences an adolescent’s pro-social goal pursuit, but an adolescent’s GPA is not influenced by friends’ GPA.

Regarding GPA or academic achievement, Altermatt (2011) has done research about success-sharing. When friends share success, it may contribute to positive school attitudes, but it has a negative social effect because no one wants to be “less good” and appear inferior (ibid). Therefore, by success-sharing, others that do not perform as well may feel inferior and the friendship may deteriorate.

Some researchers point out that academic achievement is related to refraining from engaging in problem behaviors and instead taking on positive school-related behaviors. Friends’ problem behavior has a negative influence on adolescents and the impact is so strong that their school engagement seems insignificant (Véronneau and Dishion, 2011). In other words, even if certain friends’ engagement in school is fine, their problem behavior can have a more powerful negative influence on the adolescents.

Therefore, according to these four studies, it can be seen that the relation between peer relationships and academic accomplishment is indirect. Unlike as we have seen in previous studies, good friends may not be the source that encourages or causes good grades. Rather, academic accomplishment is also influenced by pro-social behaviors.

Finally, there are other aspects of peers’ influence to be revealed.
Table 2 Matrix of Peers’ influence on adolescents’ academic life (No direct influence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, K. R. Caldwell, K. 1997</td>
<td>How aspects of peer relationships, peer acceptance, reciprocated friendship and group membership are related to academic achievement.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1)213 6th graders followed for 2 years 2)404 6th graders followed for 3 years</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Peer relationships were related to 8th grade GPA indirectly by significant relations to pro-social behaviors.</td>
<td>Pro-social behaviors have to be taken into consideration when discussing the relation between peer relationships and academic achievement. The relation is not direct and it may differ between boys and girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, K. Caldwell, K. McNamara Barry, C. 2004</td>
<td>Relationship between having friendship and social/academic adjustment.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>242 6th graders followed for 2 years 90 not valid in the 8th grade</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Students without friends score significantly lower than those with friends. However, friends’ pro-social goal pursuit influences an adolescent’s pro-social goal pursuit, but an adolescent’s GPA is not influenced by friends’ GPA.</td>
<td>Friendships play a unique role in the development of pro-social behaviors. If friends are supportive and caring, the student tends to be more interested in school and goal-pursuing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altermatt, Ellen Rydell 2011</td>
<td>To examine students sharing academic successes and consequences of such for school adjustment.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>293 5th-8th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Older students do not share academic success as much as younger students as they are afraid not getting the response they want or that their friends have not succeeded as they have.</td>
<td>Sharing success reflects positive school attitudes, but could have costs in the social domain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Véronneau, Marie Hélène &amp; Dishion, Thomas J. 2011</td>
<td>To investigate friends’ influence changes from grade 6 to grade 8 and the role of the student’s role in the relationships.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>1,278 students, longitudinal analysis from grade 6 to grade 8</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Academic achievements are related to that students refrain from engaging problem behaviors and actively engage in positive school-related behaviors with friends. Friends’ high achieving accomplishment may have a significant, positive or negative impact on the student.</td>
<td>Students with academically engaged friends may achieve higher levels in grade 8. When considering the influence of friends’ problem behaviors, friends’ school engagement becomes insignificant. High achieving girls seem to benefit from having high-achieving friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1.3 Other aspects

Researchers have also presented other aspects of peers’ influence involving such as: age, social influence on values and goals, intrinsic and extrinsic friendship motivation, whether students are low or high-ability students and parents’ interference in friendship (see Table 3 on pages 17 and 18). These aspects influence the adolescents’ academic accomplishment positively or negatively, to a certain extent.

Wentzel (1998) believes that peer related support only plays an important role until students reach adolescence. She again in 1999 held the same belief that friendships’ influence on motivation is more obvious at earlier ages, but not adolescence. Molloy et al. (2011) point out that adolescents rely on peers’ approval the most when they are in the 7th grade. So in their opinions, peers’ influence slowly fades during junior high school.

Besides the issue of age, Wentzel (1999) states that teachers, parents and peers actively provide values and goals to students and have social influence on them. These goals and values contribute to academic success (ibid). However it is interesting to note that peer effects play a larger role for low-ability students than high-ability students (Zimmer et al., 2000).

Besides the issues mentioned above, there are other aspects to the influence of friendships. Ojanen et al. (2013) reveal that intrinsic friendship motivation is associated with perceived ability and efforts as well as positive adjustment, while extrinsic friendship motivation is associated with relying on others and poor adjustment (author’s note: intrinsic friendship motivation in this study is defined as the intrinsic motives to develop and maintain friendships and extrinsic friendship motivation can be explained in the same way. Both terms are used by Ojanen et al. in their study). With this study result, it can lead to an idea that some friendships have positive influence while some have negative influence. Berndt et al. (1990) also mention that discussions between adolescents can change their attitudes towards
academic achievement. When adolescents have mastery goals, when they decide they want to master in something and succeed, they would seek help from peers (Roussel et al., 2011). The relationship between mastery goals and help-seeking is positive (ibid). Other than affecting motivation, some friendships have undesired influences.

Furthermore, according to Simons-Morton et al. (2009), problems with adjustment and engagement in school decline when the students progress from the 6th grade to the 9th grade, but conduct problems become more serious. In order to protect one’s children, parents try to interfere and avoid problem-behaving friends and encourage school engagement (ibid). The negative influence from peers can be seen from this study.

The main points of the study results from the above researchers are: firstly, peers’ influence plays an important role only up to when students reach their adolescence; peer effect has more influence on the low-ability students than the high-ability students. Secondly, intrinsic friendship motivation is associated with perceived ability and efforts while extrinsic friendship motivation is associated with dependence and poor adjustment. Thirdly, discussions and idea-exchange between adolescents affect their attitudes toward academic achievement; adolescents will seek help from friends because they want to succeed or reach their goals and when students are in 6th to 9th grades conduct problems are more serious than other influences. These results discuss different areas of how peers’ influence affect students. They do not fit in the main subcategories, but the author of this review would like the reader to be aware of the existing factors involved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
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<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R. 1998</td>
<td>Supportive relationships with parents, teachers, and peers are related to young adolescents’ motivation at school and to academic performance.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>167 6th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Family cohesion is related to GPA, and perceived support from teachers to students’ grades.</td>
<td>Social support is additive but not compensatory to academic outcomes. Children value parental support throughout school-aged years, peer-related support appears to play an important role only as they reach adolescence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berndt, Thomas J.; Laychak, Ann E.; Park, Keunho 1990</td>
<td>To examine friends’ influence on motivation to achieve in school.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>118 8th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Through discussion, friends had similarity in their decisions.</td>
<td>This leads to the conclusion that discussions change adolescents’ attitudes towards academic achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmer, Ron W. &amp; Toma, Eugenia F. 2000</td>
<td>To examine peer effects in private and public schools in all countries</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>125,000 students were tested in 20 countries</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Results are different for private and public schools because of the students that enrolled, the authors suggest further research on peer effects for private and public schools.</td>
<td>Peer effects play a larger role for low-ability students than high-ability students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R. 1999</td>
<td>To examine how students’ social encounters with parents, teachers and peers influence their socially valued goals.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Models &amp; hypotheses</td>
<td>Friendships influence motivation at kindergarten ages, but little in adolescence. Peer group influences self-worth and self-esteem, while friendships do not. Peer group enforces the individual to reach the goal pursuit. When rejected by group, levels of interest become low.</td>
<td>Teachers, parents and peers actively provide values and goals to the students and have “social” influence on them. These goals and values work with other motivational processes and contribute to academic success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molloy, Lauren E., Gest, Scott D., Rulison, Kelly L. 2011</td>
<td>How peer relationships (reciprocated friendships, frequent interactions, and shared group membership) influence the youths’ academic adjustment</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>467 3rd-5th graders followed for 5 years</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Different relationship play unique role in youths’ academic adjustment and the effects are strongest with the 7th graders.</td>
<td>Adolescents who are in the 7th grade spend much time with peers and are “dependent” on peer approval, therefore susceptible to peer influence. Friends are the only significant predictor of 7th grade effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ojanen, Tina; Stratman, Aaron; Card, Noel A.; Little, Todd D. 2013</td>
<td>To examine motivation and ability &amp; effort over friendship in association with adolescents’ emotional and social adjustment</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>648 students in grades 7 and 8. 8% data was missing</td>
<td>MultiCAM Questionnaire</td>
<td>Intrinsic friendship motivation was associated with perceived ability and effort as well as positive adjustment, while extrinsic motivation was associated with relying on others and poor adjustment.</td>
<td>Early adolescent friendships and their “personal and social adjustment” are associated with their “motivational dispositions for establishing and maintaining friendships”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roussel, Peggy; Elliot, Andrew J.; Feltman, Roger 2011</td>
<td>How achievement goals and social goals influence help-seeking from peers in an academic context.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>551 (317 + 234) high school students in two studies (France)</td>
<td>Revised Elliot &amp; McGregor’s Achievement Goals Questionnaire</td>
<td>“Mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, and friendship-approach goals were positive predictors of instrumental help-seeking” (394)</td>
<td>“Achievement and friendship goals have unique effects on attitudes toward help-seeking” (400) There is a positive relationship between mastery goals and instrumental help-seeking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simons-Morton, Bruce &amp; Chen, Rusan 2009</td>
<td>To assess the relationships between school engagement, parenting practices and peer affiliation among 6th to 9th graders.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>2,453 students between 6th and 9th grades</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>From 6th grade to 9th grade, school adjustment and engagement declined conduct problems and problem-behaving friends increased.</td>
<td>Authoritative parenting practices could encourage school engagement due to avoiding problem-behaving friends and fostering school adjustment.</td>
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</table>
3.2 Teachers’ influence

Teachers’ influence on students’ academic life will be presented in four categories:

- Teachers’ expectations
- Teacher-student relationships (including teachers’ support)
- Teacher-efficacy
- Others

3.2.1 Teachers’ expectations

How do teachers’ expectations affect the students’ learning? Research on the influence of teachers’ expectations is presented in Table 4 on pages 21, 22 and 23. Rubie-Davies (2007) suggests that teachers with high expectations provide a framework for students’ learning and give students feedback; they also ask high-order questions and manage students’ behaviors positively. Klem et al. (2004) add to this point of view and say that students who perceive teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear and fair are more likely to have better engagement in school.

Moreover, Rubie-Davies et al. (2006) found that students were aware of teachers’ expectations and would respond accordingly, in other words, the students tried to meet teachers’ expectations and work hard. According to Vekiri (2010), perceived teacher expectations are positively related to students’ beliefs about their competence. De Boer et al. (2010) further point out that teacher expectations work more positively for students with prior low achievement, students with high socioeconomic status, girls, students with lower motivation or students with higher parent aspirations.

Furthermore, several researchers believe that teachers’ high expectations have a positive influence on students. Sjögren (2013) interviewed teachers in Dammhagsskolan in Sweden and the teachers believed that high expectations gave good school results. McLeod
(1995) believes that high expectations tend to encourage students’ improvement while low expectations cause the students’ academic results to lag. Jussim (1989) states that teachers’ expectations predict future performance and motivation. In 1992 he pointed out that when teacher expectations were high, students had higher grades than predicted by previous performance and motivation.

To summarize the results, it is clear that teachers with high expectations are more engaged in teaching. Meanwhile, students seem to follow teachers’ expectations and work hard in order to meet teachers’ expectations. It is several researchers’ belief that high expectations have positive influence on the students; when teachers have high expectations, students are encouraged to make improvement, while low expectations cause students to fall behind.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sjögren, Lars 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Dammhags-</td>
<td>interview</td>
<td>Researchers identified 5 factors that give successful school results:</td>
<td>genre pedagogy, high expectations, cooperation from parents, social-cultural supportive environment and study guide. The teachers believe that high expectations give good results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubie-Davies, Christine M. 2007</td>
<td>To explore the practices of high- and low-expectation teachers</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>12 primary school teachers</td>
<td>Observations twice in a school year</td>
<td>The high-expectation teachers provided a framework for students’ learning and gave the students more feedback, asked more high-order questions and managed the students’ behaviors more positively.</td>
<td>There were big differences in the classroom environments that high-expectation, low-expectation and average-progress teachers provided. The differences are instructional and socio-emotional which became the mechanisms of teacher expectation effects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubie-Davies, Christine; Hattie, John; Hamilton, Richard 2006</td>
<td>To explore the differences in teachers’ expectations and judgements of students’ performance in reading as well as students actual achievement.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>540 students of 21 primary school teachers</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>Teachers’ expectations were significantly higher than students’ actual achievement.</td>
<td>Positive self-fulfilling prophecies could work, but not in all ethnic groups, further research should be done. Students are aware of teachers’ expectations and will respond accordingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vekiri, Ioanna 2010</td>
<td>To examine possible relations between boys’ and girls’ value and efficacy about ICT and perceived teacher expectations/parent support/the nature of science instruction.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>301 grade 8 and grade 9 students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Students who received teachers’ and parents’ encouragement on learning ICT expressed positive self-efficacy and value beliefs.</td>
<td>Perceived teacher expectations were positively related to students’ beliefs about their competence. Perceived teacher expectations were more significant for girls’ efficacy beliefs.</td>
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<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
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<td>McLeod, Susan H. 1995</td>
<td>To discuss about teachers’ high expectations and low expectations</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>(the author is a college professor of English and the article discusses about college students, however the topic remains relevant to the study)</td>
<td>Academic researches</td>
<td>High expectations tend to encourage students’ improvement while low expectations cause the students’ academic results to lag. High-empathy teachers achieve more than low-empathy teachers; students of high-empathy teachers gain socially. Teachers are students’ role models because of their attitudes and behaviors. The high-empathic teachers are active listeners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Klem, Adena M.; Connell, J. P. 2004</td>
<td>What levels of teacher support are critical to students’ academic success? To examine the difference between support levels for success and failure?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Students from 6 elementary schools and 3 middle schools between 1990-1995</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“Studies show students with caring and supportive interpersonal relationships in school report more positive academic attitudes and values, and more satisfaction with school”(262) “Students who perceive teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear and fair are more likely to report engagement in school.” (270) Teachers’ support encourages school engagement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>De Boer, Hester; Bosker, R. J.; Van der Werf, Margaretha P. C. 2010</td>
<td>To address the relationship between teacher expectation bias and student characteristics and its effect on student performance.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>11,040 (originally 19,391) secondary school students, longitudinal study for 5 years, Netherlands</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>“Teacher expectation bias partly mediated the effects of student characteristics on students’ performance.” (168) The effects of teacher expectation bias varied somewhat during the first 2 years then remained stable afterwards. Teacher expectation works more positively for students with prior low achievement, students with high socioeconomic status, girls, lower motivation, or with higher parent aspirations. Educational performance is higher when the teacher expectations are positive.</td>
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<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jussim, Lee 1989</td>
<td>To examine that students’ performance may confirm teachers’ expectations.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>27 teachers and 429 students in 6th grade math class (151 invalid samples out of 580)</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>“The largest influence on perceptions of effort was teachers’ own perceptions of students’ performance.” (474) Teachers assumed girls worked harder than boys. Teachers used students’ previous grades as a basis for inferring their efforts.</td>
<td>Teacher expectations predict future performance and motivation. Teachers give more positive and less negative feedback to students with high-expectancy. Feedback may very likely influence motivation.</td>
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<td>T31</td>
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<td>Jussim, Lee; Eccles, J. S. 1992</td>
<td>To prove the hypothesis of “self-fulfilling prophecies, perceptual biases and accuracy” for teacher expectations.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>98 6th grade math teachers &amp; 1,731 students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>“Teacher expectations predicted changes in student achievement beyond effects accounted for by previous achievement and motivation.” (947)</td>
<td>When teacher expectations are high, students have higher grades than predicted by previous performance and motivation.</td>
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<td>T32</td>
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</table>
3.2.2 Teacher-student relationships (including teachers’ support)

Relationships are important in students’ lives and they need support from teachers. In Table 5, on pages 27-30, the overview of the results is shown. Several researchers found that positive teacher-student relationships contribute to students’ motivation for learning. According to Davis (2006), positive relationships reported increased motivation; quality of the relationships reflected the way in which a student identified her role as a student and that teachers’ confidence in teaching has important consequences for student motivation. Wentzel (1998) also points out that teacher-student relationships have motivational significance. Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004) relate further that supportive relationships with teachers increase students’ motivation to learn and students become actively involved in subjects which they were previously uninterested in. That is to say, positive teacher-student relationships lift up students’ interest in learning.

Teacher-student relationships not only affect motivation, but also academic outcomes. Gehlbach et al. (2011) state that teacher-student relationships are important for students’ achievement, therefore, it is necessary to improve teacher-student relationships. Teacher-relationships and student outcomes affect each other (ibid).

Teacher-student relationships influence the social and emotional aspects of students’ life in school as well. Lizzio et al. (2011) discovered that students’ perceptions of relationship quality between students and teachers predicted their sense of membership and identification with school as well as motivation to demonstrate citizenship behavior. Fredriksen and Rhodes (2004) also point out that good teacher-student relationships help students to have less adjustment problems and emotional issues.

One should not forget, teachers’ support plays an important part in teacher-student relationships. Teachers give academic and emotional support in the classroom. Can teachers help students succeed and adjust well because of their support in school? Let us take a look at
the study results from the researchers. Teachers show their support in some specific ways. Wentzel (1997) points out that students think teachers who are caring show democratic interaction styles and respect differences in students, showing that they care for their work and provide positive feedback. Wentzel (1998) also argues that students’ interest might be driven by teacher characteristics reflected in their instructions and approaches. Murdock (2003) suggests that students perceived consistency in messages given by the teachers. Therefore, it is not difficult to speculate what teachers could do to students with their constant supportive or frustrating messages.

Four studies have pointed out the importance of emotional support. Wentzel et al. (2010) found that emotional support from teacher is important to students’ academic and social motivation. Maleki and Demaray (2003) also presented similar results, which surprised them, that emotional support was most related to student success in their studies. Hallinan (2008) explains further that when students perceive that their teacher care about them, respect them and praise them, tend to like school more than those who do not. Burnett (2002) adds that negative feedback influences teacher-student relationships.

Teachers’ support affects students’ motivation and academic performance. Besides the emotional side, Wentzel et al. (2010) found that teachers who interacted with students in supportive ways were more successful in promoting interest and motivation. According to Hallinan (2008), teachers’ support has strong, positive effects on students’ attraction to school. Maleki and Demaray’s (2003) study shows that perceived support from teachers is a predictor of student’s social skills and academic competence. Klem and Connell (2004) point out what previous studies have shown; students who have supportive and caring teachers report more positive academic attitudes and values, besides having more satisfaction with school. In Wentzel’s (1994) earlier study, she reveals that perceived support from teachers are related to social goal pursuit, and academic support from teachers predicts the pursuit of
academically-related social goals, which is an important motivator for students to be responsible academically.

The subject about teacher-student relationships (including teachers’ support) takes up a large part of the study results. From the results we can see that supportive teacher-student relationships are desired. If the relationships are positive, the students are more motivated to learn. Teacher-student relationships also affect students’ social and emotional life in school. When the emotional part is taken care of, the students tend to do better in their studies. Students feel that the teachers who are caring show more democratic interaction styles and respect the students more; students perceive that these teachers care about their work. The researchers are positive about a supportive kind of teacher-student relationships.
### Table 5 Matrix of Teachers’ influence on adolescents’ academic life (Teacher-student relationships & Teacher support)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Davis, Heather A. 2006</td>
<td>Introducing a framework for understanding relationship quality between students and teacher in the middle school.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>905 students and 25 teachers (survey), 6 students and 6 teachers (interviews), 28 teachers (journal data)</td>
<td>Survey, interviews, Journal data</td>
<td>Students’ relationship history predicted their perceptions of relationship quality with the present teacher. Positive relationships reported increased motivation. Students’ motivation also affected the relationship quality. Quality of the relationships reflected the way in which a student identified his role as a student. Teachers’ confidence in teaching has important consequences for student motivation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gehlbach, Hunter; Brinkworth, Maureen E.; Harris Anna D. 2011</td>
<td>To investigate the changes in teacher-student relationships and how they are associated with academic or motivational outcomes.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>119 students and 30 teachers</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Substantial changes in relationships occur when there were shifts in important student outcomes. Changes in students’ social perspective correspond with changes in teacher-student relationship.</td>
<td>Teacher-student relationships are important for students’ achievement, field experiments should be made to improve the teacher-student relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdock, Tamera B.; Miller, Angela 2003</td>
<td>To examine the relations between students’ achievement motivation and their perceptions of teacher caring (besides peer and parents’ prior influences on their motivation).</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>206 grade 7 and grade 8 students</td>
<td>Students’ self-reports</td>
<td>“…teacher caring makes the largest unique contribution to intrinsic valuing of education….” (391)</td>
<td>Students perceived consistency in messages given by the teachers. It is logical to think that students see teacher caring as attached to the subjects they teach instead of the personal aspects of the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, K. R.; Battle, A; Russell, S. L.; Looney, L. B. 2010</td>
<td>Adolescents’ perceptions of teachers’ and peers’ supports were examined in relation to students’ motivational outcomes.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>120 6th graders, 115 7th graders, &amp; 123 8th graders (students of 5 teachers)</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Because of students’ sex, grade level, teacher and classroom, social supports differed as a function.</td>
<td>Teachers who interact with students in supportive ways are more successful in promoting interest and motivation. Emotional support from teachers is important to students’ academic and social motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Method</td>
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<td>Data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R 1998</td>
<td>To examine the relationships between parents’, teachers’ and peers’ supportive influence and adolescents’ motivation in school.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>167 6th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Teacher support was a positive predictor of interest (general and school related) and goal pursuit.</td>
<td>Teacher-student relationships have motivational significance, student interest might be driven by teacher characteristics reflected in their instructions and approaches.</td>
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<td>T9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R. 1997</td>
<td>How pedagogical caring influences adolescents motivation to achieve positive social and academic outcomes.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>248 students followed from 6th to 8th grade</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Students thought teachers who were caring showed democratic interaction styles, respected differences in students, modelled “caring” for their work and provided positive feedback.</td>
<td>“Perceived caring from teachers predicted motional outcomes.” (411) Supportive teachers are important to students’ academic outcome.</td>
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<td>Lizzio Alf; Dempster N.; Neumann R. 2011</td>
<td>To understand the factors which influence high school students’ motivations to engage in leadership in school.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>167 Australian grade 11 students</td>
<td>Self-report survey</td>
<td>Students holding formal leadership had more positive views of school and peers.</td>
<td>Students’ perceptions of relationship quality between peers and teachers predicted their sense of membership and identification with school as well as motivation to demonstrate citizenship behaviors. At the same time, they indirectly influence students’ peer interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fredriksen, Katia; Rhodes, Jean 2004</td>
<td>“Positive teacher-student relationships are seen through a variety of psychological models.”</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Academic researches/ psychological models</td>
<td>Self-report survey</td>
<td>Supportive relationships with teachers increase students’ motivation to learn and students become actively involved in subjects which they were previously uninterested in. Good teacher-student relationships also help students to have less adjustment problems and emotional issues. “Students’ perceptions of teachers’ relationships with other students in the classroom may influence their own relationship with the teacher.” (49)</td>
<td>Supportive relationships with teachers increase students’ motivation to learn and students become actively involved in subjects which they were previously uninterested in. Good teacher-student relationships also help students to have less adjustment problems and emotional issues. “Students’ perceptions of teachers’ relationships with other students in the classroom may influence their own relationship with the teacher.” (49)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maleki, Christine K.; Demaray, M. K. 2003</td>
<td>What type of support do students perceive from parents, teachers and peers? Are certain types of support more related to student outcomes?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>263 5th to 8th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Girls perceived more support from classmates and friends. Informational support was the most highly reported from teachers. Perceived support from teachers are predictors of students’ social skills and academic competence. Surprisingly, emotional support is most related to student success.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klem, Adena M.; Connell, J. P. 2004</td>
<td>What levels of teacher support are critical to students’ academic success? To examine the difference between support levels for success and failure?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Students from 6 elementary schools and 3 middle schools between 1990-1995</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>“Studies show students with caring and supportive interpersonal relationships in school report more positive academic attitudes and values, and more satisfaction with school”(262) “Students who perceive teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear and fair are more likely to report engagement in school.” (270) Teachers’ support encourages school engagement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hallinan, Maureen T. 2008</td>
<td>To examine the role of teachers in influencing students’ feelings about school.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>35,132 students in 2001 and 4,421 students in 2002. Longitudinal data is from 1,458 8th graders</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Teachers’ expectations do not affect whether the students like the school or not. Teacher-support however has strong, positive effects on students’ attraction to school. When students perceive that their teachers care about them, respect them, and praise them, tend to like school more than those who do not.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burnett, Paul C. 2002</td>
<td>To investigate the relationships between teacher praise, feedback and students’ perceptions of classroom environment.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>747 3rd to 6th graders in Australia</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Negative feedback influenced teacher-student relationships. Satisfied students received more general praise and feedback and less negative feedback. Students who have good relationships with teachers have perceptions of positive classroom environment.</td>
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<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R. 1994</td>
<td>To examine the relationship between social acceptance, classroom behavior and perceived social support.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>475 6th and 7th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>“Students’ pursuit of academic pro-social goals (to help classmates with academic problems) was related positively to peer acceptance.” (173) “Pursuit of academic responsibility goals” (following rules) was related positively to teacher acceptance (ibid).</td>
<td>“Perceived support from teachers and peers was also related positively to social goal pursuit.” (ibid) Perceived academic support from peers and teachers predicts the pursuit of academically-related social goals and is an important motivator for students to be responsible academically.</td>
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</table>
3.2.3 Teacher-efficacy

Different aspects of adolescents’ academic life are influenced by teacher-efficacy (for an overview of the related studies, please refer to Table 6 on pages 33 and 34). There are certain qualities and styles in high-efficacy teachers’ teaching. Dembo and Gibson (1985) suggest that these teachers spend more time on whole-group instruction as well as monitoring seatwork (note from the essay author: whole-group instruction was probably the trend in 1985, recent teaching has developed to use more group work). They are also effective in guiding students to correct answers (ibid). These teachers have high academic standards and clear expectations and they maintain students’ on-task behaviors and demonstrated “withitness” (1985:176). In other words, these teachers are devoted, alert and have control over their teaching.

Teacher-efficacy also helps with class management. Pas et al. (2010) mention in their article that studies show that teacher efficacy relates positively to effective instruction and positive classroom management. Woolfolk et al. (1990) touch on this subject as well: the stronger the teacher’s personal efficacy, the more humanistic the classroom management. When they believe the teaching can be successful, more autonomy can solve the problems in the classroom because the teachers will be more trusting of students and able to share responsibility of solving problems in class (ibid).

Does teacher-efficacy affect students’ academic performance in some way? According to Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004), there are significant positive relationships between teachers’ perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and student achievement. They conclude that teacher-efficacy influences student achievement positively (ibid). Caprara et al. (2006) presented a related study result: teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs affect their job satisfaction as well as students’ school achievement because the teachers are more enthusiastic in teaching and committed and are likely to influence students’ outcomes.
From the results of the above research, we can see that teachers with self-efficacy have high academic standards and clear expectations. Moreover, they have control over students’ behaviors and learning. They can keep a more humanistic classroom management because they believe their teaching will be successful; the classroom has more autonomy because the teachers are more trusting of their students. Teacher-efficacy not only influences students’ academic performance positively, but also teachers’ own job satisfaction.
### Table 6 Matrix of Teachers’ influence on adolescents’ academic life (Teacher-efficacy)

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<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dembo, Myron H.; Gibson, Sherri 1985</td>
<td>How teacher efficacy influences classroom behaviour and how it can be developed and enhanced.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Elementary, junior and senior high school teachers</td>
<td>Researches in literature</td>
<td>High-efficacy teachers spent more time on whole-group instruction as well as monitoring seatwork. They were also more effective in guiding students to correct answers (through questioning). High-efficacy teachers “maintained high academic standards, had clear expectations, concentrated on academic instruction, maintained students’ on-task behaviour, and demonstrated ‘withitness’.” (176)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pas, Elise T.; Bradshaw, C. P.; Hershfeldt, P. A.; Leaf, P. J. 2010</td>
<td>How teacher efficacy (and burnout) relate to student disciplinary actions (and student support) while adjusting for variables such as school, teachers and peers.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>491 teachers (of 9,795 students from 31 elementary schools)</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Studies show teacher efficacy relate positively to effective instruction and positive classroom management. <em>This article is not quite relevant to the essay as it is mainly about how low teacher efficacy and high burnout influence students’ referrals to school services (principal’s office or in-school suspensions).</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Woolfolk, Anita E.; Bosoff, B; Hoy, W. K. 1990</td>
<td>To examine the relationships between general and personal teaching efficacy and toward classroom management.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>55 6th &amp; 7th grade teachers in 40 Hebrew supplemental schools</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>The stronger the teacher’s personal efficacy, the more humanistic the classroom management. The more the teacher believes the teaching can be successful, the more autonomy in solving classroom problems. When the teacher has more confidence in her teaching, classroom control tends to be more humanistic. Teachers who have more personal efficacy and teaching efficacy are more trusting of students and able to share responsibility of solving classroom problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author &amp; year of publication</td>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caprara, G. V.; Barbaranelli, C.; Steca, P.; Malone, P.S. 2006</td>
<td>To examine teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and students’ academic achievement.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Over 2000 teachers in 75 junior high schools, Italy</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs affect their job satisfaction as well as students’ school achievement, but teachers’ job satisfaction does not influence students’ achievement.</td>
<td>Teachers with high efficacy are more enthusiastic in teaching and committed and are likely to influence students’ outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tschannen-Moran, Megan; Barr, M. 2004</td>
<td>To examine the relationship between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Teachers from 66 middle schools (5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; to 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; grade), Virginia, USA</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>There were significant positive relationships between teachers’ perceptions of collective teacher efficacy and student achievement.</td>
<td>Identifying factors that improve teacher efficacy may be helpful to the development of effective schools as teacher efficacy influence student achievement positively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.4 Others

There are some results which cannot be categorized in the previous three themes, but they are presented here as they appear to be interesting and worth-mentioning. Wentzel (1998) mentions that students’ interest might be driven by teacher characteristics reflected in their instructions and approaches. So, teachers’ characteristics should be taken into consideration as well when judging how students are learning. The research by Hargreaves (2000) suggests that secondary school teachers do not develop shared emotional goals with the students or have emotional bonds with them. Teachers keep a professional distance with the students and do not allow an emotional side to be part of classroom life (ibid). Besides, teachers are more focused in fending off the negative emotions instead of creating positive emotions in the classroom (ibid). (Note from the essay author: this seems to be a particular phenomenon in the Western world: teachers should be professionals and not friends.)

To sum up this part of the results, the researchers suggest that teachers’ characteristics and their keeping a professional distance with the students can also influence the students’ learning. The overview of the above study results is shown on Table 7 (on page 36).
Table 7 Matrix of Teachers’ influence on adolescents’ academic life (Others)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author &amp; year of publication</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wentzel, Kathryn R 1998</td>
<td>To examine the relationships between parents’, teachers’ and peers’ supportive influence and adolescents’ motivation in school.</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>167 6th graders</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Teacher support was a positive predictor of interest (general and school related) and goal pursuit.</td>
<td>Teacher-student relationships has motivational significance, student interest might be driven by teacher characteristics reflected in their instructions and approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hargreaves, Andy 2000</td>
<td>To investigate teachers’ emotions on interacting with students, parents and school leaders; how they experience and express their emotionality in teaching and life.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>53 elementary &amp; secondary teachers in 15 schools, Canada</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Secondary school teachers do not develop shared emotional goals with the students or have close emotional bonds with them. Teachers keep a professional distance with the students and do not allow an emotional side to be part of classroom life.</td>
<td>Teachers are more focused in fending off the negative emotions instead of creating positive emotions in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>T27</td>
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</table>
IV. Discussion

4.1 Summary of main results

The main results of the different research presented in this essay can be summarized as the following: regarding peers’ influence, some researchers believe peers have positive effects on adolescents’ academic work while others do not think there is a direct connection in between. Some of the research shows that peer influence only plays an important role until students reach their adolescence. Moreover, intrinsic friendship motivation has positive influence and extrinsic friendship motivation has a negative one. As for teachers’ influence, many researchers believe that high expectations, supportive teacher-student relationships and teacher-efficacy have positive influence on students. Teacher-student relationship help the students cope with their social and emotional life in school. Furthermore, teachers with efficacy have high academic standards and clear expectations; therefore, students’ behaviors and learning are in control.

4.2 Discussion based on the aim and the research questions

In the beginning of this review I have stated the aim for the study, which is: *How and in what ways do teachers and peers influence adolescents in their academic life?* From the various studies, the reader can see that peers and teachers influence the adolescents in their emotional and social lives in school, their behavior, school adjustment and engagement, motivation for learning as well as academic achievement. When students have supportive peers and teachers, they will be positively influenced, on the other hand, when the students have to be around teachers that are not supportive and without self-efficacy or peers that have problem behavior, they may be negatively influenced. However, more details must be discussed.

Next, I will discuss according to the four research questions I raised previously. The first question was: *What kinds of influences do peers have on adolescents in the academic*
Peers can have positive and negative influence on adolescents. This is why parents always show concern about who their children befriended. As choosing friends is out of free will and personal choices, the teachers can only observe and understand the relationships, but cannot influence students’ choices of friends. The teachers may observe that the high-accomplishing students associate with friends of the same kind, while the low-accomplishing students’ friends are often seen together with students with low grades. The teacher may have to come up with ideas to cope with the negative influences from peers. On the other hand, pro-social behaviors can be a positive element in peers’ influence. Because of pro-social behaviors, students are encouraged and motivated for further endeavors in academic work as well as school adjustment and engagement.

While some scholars argue that peers have a positive influence on students, others claim that such influence only lasts until students reach adolescence. This is reasonable as students start to build their own ideas and beliefs about the world at this age; they are becoming more mature and independent. They are not so easily persuaded at this stage. However, as Berndt et al. (1990) point out, adolescents have their discussions and such discussions influence their attitudes toward academic achievement. Therefore, friendship could still have a strong influence even when students reach middle to late adolescence, as young people all want to fit in and be part of their groups. On the other hand, students who do not have friends have no emotional and social support and will likely adjust poorly in school.

According to Ojanen et al. (2013), intrinsic friendship motivation encourages students to work hard in school as a positive influence while extrinsic friendship motivation causes students to rely on others and have poor adjustment in school. In other words, friends may motivate the students to do better academically, but some students may rely too much on their friends for decision-making or attitudes towards studies. Therefore, under this issue we
can conclude that friendships can have both positive and negative influence on the adolescents.

The second question was: *In what ways do teachers’ high expectations affect students?* The general belief of the researchers on teachers’ high expectations is quite similar, that they have positive influence on the students’ achievement in school. Students get the signals sent from the teachers and will somehow live up to the teachers’ expectations. They try to work hard because they do not want to fail the teachers that trust in them. High expectations could be enforcement for working harder or to some students an unbearable burden. As a result, this could raise the pressure and tension because they become worried that they are not able to meet the teachers’ expectations.

Teachers’ high expectations also work as a motivator; it is a vision for both teachers and students. In a way, teachers are setting a goal that encourages students to work hard. In order to reach this goal, both teachers and students have to be fully-engaged in teaching and learning. On the contrary, the teachers who do not keep high expectations for their students do not supply them with a goal. Students do what they are asked to do and will not make an effort to do well because they lack a reason or incentive for learning.

Another aspect one can think about is the conflict between teachers’ expectations and parents’ expectations. While teachers are trying to get students to work hard, there may be parents’ that do not think studying is very important. If there is a conflict with the values, the students might be confused and cannot reach their highest potential. During parents’ meetings, teachers and parents should try to find their common ground.

The third question asked was: *What kind of teacher-student relationships do students perceive in order to have positive attitudes towards school and have satisfying outcomes?* Majority of the researchers who investigated about teacher-student relationships that are included in this review consider supportive teacher-student relationships desirable and
helpful. When teachers are supportive, students are motivated to learn and the outcomes are more satisfactory (Stipek, 2002; Davis, 2006; Wentzel, 1998; Fredriksen and Rhodes, 2004; Gehlbach et al., 2011). Researchers have also pointed out that such relationships affect students’ emotional and social aspects of school life (Lizzio et al., 2011; Fredriksen and Rhodes, 2004). As we know, human beings are social creatures. One needs to belong in a group and should be able to get support from others when she needs it. If a student cannot get support from her teachers or fellow students, it is very likely that she loses motivation to learn and may stop trying because she lacks encouragement and resources.

Emotional and social parts of school life can be most complicated and difficult for any student to face. It is probably not as hard trying to do well in school work as trying to feel fine and in control mentally and socially. Adolescents are at an age when they are still searching for their identity and establishing their values, much help is needed. They cannot be left alone and become lost. Teachers’ job is to lead and guide their students, however not only in learning; the Swedish teachers have a big responsibility to nurture and form (fostra) their students. It is clear that teachers have to show concern about students’ emotional and social engagement. Only when a student feels emotionally and socially secure, can she have a positive attitude towards school.

Teachers are constantly sending out messages through their teaching and the students can sense if the teachers are supportive by the way they teach (Wentzel, 1997). Stipek (2002) suggests that by making an effort to promote learning the teachers convey a message that they care. It is understandable that such a perception encourages students’ positive attitudes towards academic endeavors. These supportive teachers show democratic interaction styles; they respect the differences among students; they show that they care and they give positive feedback (ibid). It is a common student experience that certain teachers are always remembered and cherished, while others are either hated or forgotten. It all has to do
with how much support and caring they give to the students. Students like school more if they have support from teachers (Hallinan, 2008).

In the results presented in 3.2.4 “Others” (a minor section on Teachers’ influence, page 35), it was mentioned that many secondary school teachers try to keep a professional distance from their students. To try to be caring and show support could be a problem for many teachers if they want to at the same time keep a professional distance. Many teachers choose to keep a distance because keeping a close relationship with students causes the students to lose their respect for the teachers (according to my personal interview with a junior high school music teacher, 2013-10-25). There is a very fine line in between, teachers have to find a balance between showing as much support as they can and keeping the professional distance that preserves the respect. Such ability can only come from years of teaching and experience.

The final question previously asked in this review was: What aspects in adolescents’ academic life are influenced by teachers’ self-efficacy? Teachers with self-efficacy are confident in themselves and their teaching. Dembo and Gibson (1985) suggest that they are more effective in guiding the students; besides, they set the academic standards high and are good at maintaining the students’ on-task behaviors. From the above statement one can see that students’ performance and behavior in the classroom are influenced by teachers’ efficacy.

Pas et al. (2010) and Woolfolk et al. (1990) discuss the relationship between teacher-efficacy and classroom management. It is understandable that when the teacher believes she will be successful with her teaching, she is likely to succeed and have control. Again, this is a further proof that teacher-efficacy influences students’ activities in the classroom.

If students’ performance and behavior are influenced positively by teacher-efficacy, their academic achievement can consequently be satisfactory. As Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) point out: there are positive relationships between teacher-efficacy and students’
academic achievement. It is a common understanding that when there is a good learning environment and atmosphere in the classroom, students are more motivated to learn.

Teacher-efficacy seems to be related to another subject brought up in section 3.2.4, teachers’ characteristics. Self-efficacy is a quality that competent teachers cannot do without, and because the teachers have certain characteristics, self-efficacy is developed accordingly.

To sum up, teacher-efficacy influences students’ performance and behavior in the classroom as well as their academic outcomes.

4.3 Discussion relating to previous studies and theories
In this section, the author would like to make a connection between the findings and the previous studies and theories brought up in 1.1 Conceptual Background. According to the research included in this review, it is clear that the “modelling” idea from social cognitive theory stands quite true. Adolescents are among their peers and friends daily and they are “modelling” and learning from each other, which creates positive and negative influences on their academic life. This modelling could be their behaviors in the classroom or attitudes towards the teachers and school. A few researchers have found that peers’ influence only affect the students until they reach adolescence (Farmer, 2010; Wentzel, 1998; Molloy et al., 2011). However, these three studies cannot represent the real situation of all the students. More studies have to be conducted.

Schunk et al. (2010) state that researchers believe that everything teachers do are potentially motivational to students. From the results and discussion, we can see that teachers play a very important part in motivating the students, whether because of their high expectations, their supportive relationships with the students, or their own self-efficacy. Whatever the teachers do or say are sending signals to the students, whether they believe in what they are doing; whether students are important to them; whether students’ work is
meaningful to them; whether they care about the students, not only academically but emotionally. Students are taking in everything, or a large part of what the teachers give; the teachers are motivators and molders for the students. Teachers have a decisive influence on the students.

Reflecting upon the different studies, the reader may find that learning in the modern classroom seems to echo with Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism theory instead of Piaget’s idea. In other words, students need support from their teachers and peers and not helplessly grasping or assimilating knowledge on their own. Teachers and peers bring out students’ potential, they motivate students to go further and reach their goals. It has been shown that the supportive teacher-student relationships in the modern classroom correspond with Vygotsky’s theories on “scaffolding” and “Zone of Proximal Development”.

4.4 Critical discussion on the research method

As I tried to be as systematic as possible when searching the articles, the work was however rather time-consuming and tedious. I would strongly suggest any new researcher or university student to learn to search effectively or have a strategy on doing it. When I gathered the articles, some of them were reviews and not journal articles. I decided not to use the reviews. This should be a wise decision; otherwise my research would become too wide and uncontrollable. However, I did find some good articles from the reference list in the reviews. After I searched and decided on the articles I wanted to use, all the different studies were made into matrix tables, which was a method suggested by Eriksson Barajas et al. (2013). This enabled me to present the results smoothly and clearly. To evaluate my searching method, it could be considered fairly-done.
4.5 Need for further research

The research on whether peers’ influence only lasts until students reach adolescence are quite limited, only three studies were found and included in this review. Further research should be done in this subject as it could benefit the educators. Although the teachers cannot choose friends for the students, she is able to understand what is behind a student’s school engagement and study results.

Problem behavior seems to be the main negative influence peers can have on the adolescents. Further studies should try to explore other existing threats or negative influences peers can have. By obtaining such information, the school, teachers and parents can try to improve the situations or solve the problems appropriately.

The studies included in this essay on teacher-efficacy were all done with teachers, which may not be comprehensive enough. It should be beneficial to do the surveys from the students’ perspective, which could be more objective and closer to the fact because when surveys are done by the teachers some may be reluctant to say that they are not teachers with self-efficacy. Students receive lessons from their teachers regularly; they should have a better idea or be honest about how they perceive the teachers’ self-efficacy.

Many teachers discuss about what kind of feedback they should give and how much they should praise the students in the classroom, further researches should be done in this area as well. Such research may greatly benefit the newly qualified teachers.

4.6 Empirical application

This review enables the school, teachers and parents to understand peers’ influence on students so that they are able to know what they are facing and learn to help the adolescents.
Teachers, by reading this review, may become better teachers and motivators to the students. When teachers work together, they can use the studies in the review as a starting point to discuss how they can better lead the students.

V. Conclusion

Teachers and peers are important motivators in students’ academic life. They influence the adolescents’ attitudes toward different aspects and people in school. As much as they can have positive influence, some create negative influence on the students in the mean time. When the school, teacher and parents are aware of the influences from peers and teachers, they are given a chance to improve the factors involved, so that the students can learn best in a supportive atmosphere and environment.
References:


