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Exploring the Correlation Between Being a Student's “Favourite” Teacher and Expertise of the Subject Area Being Taught

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Abstract

This paper examines the correlation between whom students identified as a “favourite” teacher and whether or not that teacher was considered to be an “expert” in the subject area(s) they were teaching. In 2025, a study was conducted in Canada exploring the perceptions of students regarding their favourite teachers. Specifically, this study invited current university professors with doctorate degrees to be individually interviewed in order to better understand what made someone their favourite classroom teacher. The participants (n=8) who consented to participate in the study were interviewed individually and asked to describe their favourite teacher. A review of these interviews uncovered several themes, including a key theme that, “students found it beneficial when a teacher was an ‘in-field’ expert’ of the subject they were teaching, but it also depended on other factors.” This paper reviews literature pertaining to the importance of teacher expertise in subject areas they are teaching. It then highlights specific examples in which participants described whether or not it mattered if their favourite teachers were experts in the subject areas they taught.

Keywords: Teachers, Students, Expertise, Subjects, Gifted, Talented