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## Creating Connections in a Collaborative Classroom

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# Creating Connections in the Collaborative Classroom

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## Research Question

*What impact does the teachers implementation of collaborative learning have on student relationships and classroom environment?*

## Literature Review

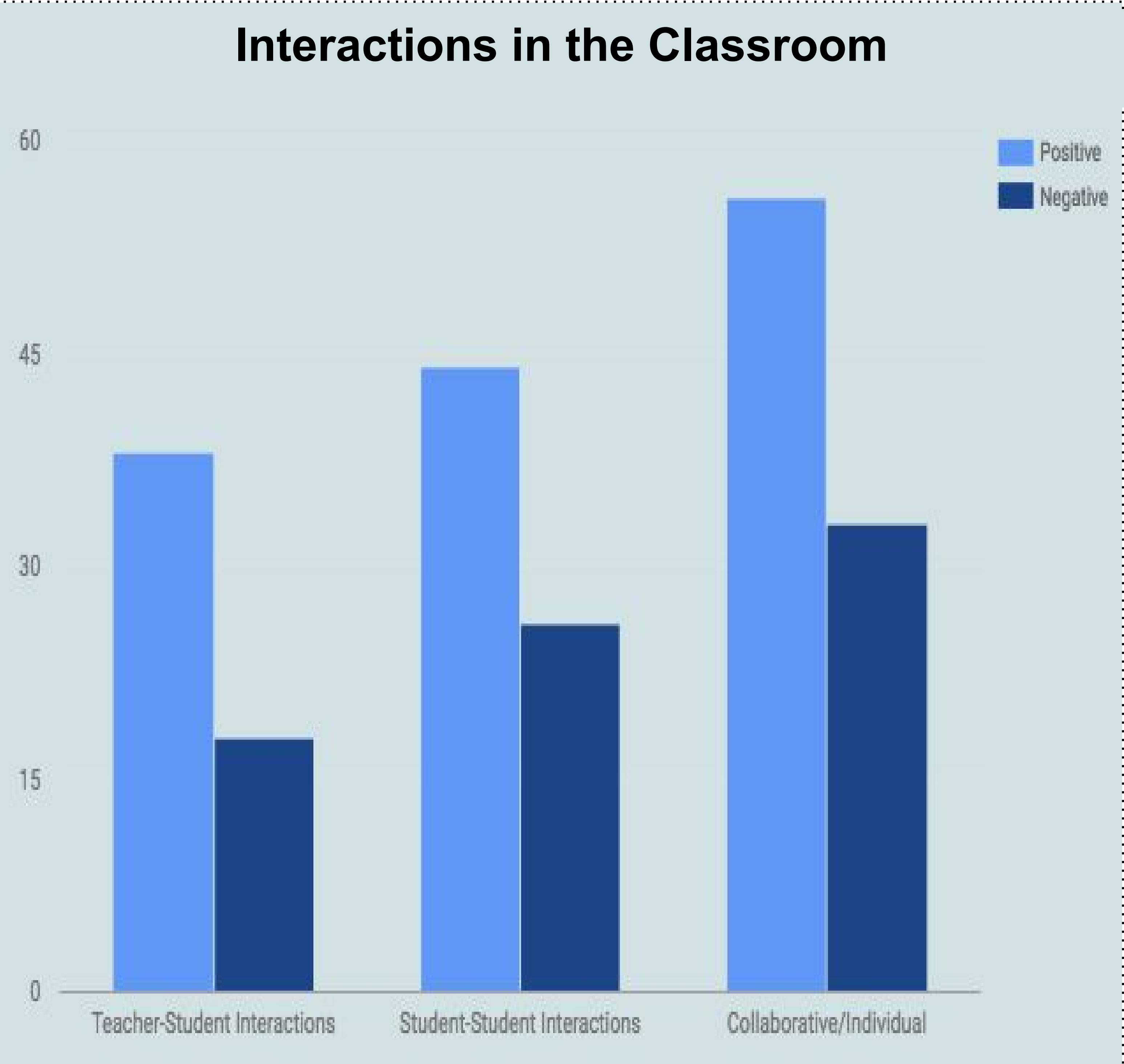
- In Wilhelm’s (1997) study of *collaborative learning*, she uses qualifiers such as student interaction and decision in the classroom to define collaboration.
- Tian (2015) found that students reported a positive correlation between school-belonging and school satisfaction.
- Hugerat (2016) showed that students in the project-based environment developed better relationships and led to the creation of a more positive educational climate.
- Students who were given opportunities for free-inquiry were more likely to gain procedural understanding of the problems by working collaboratively (Joyce-Gibbons 2017).

## Methodology

- Participants included twenty-two Fourth Grade students.
- Student teaching and research was done in a rural school district
- Data included field notes and anecdotal records, lesson plans, and student work.
- Data was analyzed using Ryan & Bernard (2003) theme techniques: similarities and differences, missing data, and

## Results and Data Analysis

- ***Students are able to collaborate easily with their table groups:*** students find validation with each other when working together and this helps them collaborate naturally.
- ***Collaborative Work with Teachers Occurs Naturally:*** When implementing an activity the interactions from the teacher were more often naturally occurring than planned into the lesson.
- ***Facilitates Positive Classroom Interactions when a relationship has been established:*** When positive relationships have already been established in the classroom students feel more comfortable being involved in how the classroom operates.
- ***Create a Positive Classroom Learning Environment:*** The unstructured environment is more cohesive for creating trust between students as well as creating student autonomy.



**Figure 1:** Over time as collaborative learning occurred in the classroom, there were more positive teacher-student interactions, and student-student interactions.

## Conclusion

- There are many different collaborative strategies that help bring students together. Some of these include: debate, discussion, turn and talks, and group projects.
- When students have the chance to work together in the classroom they will learn the importance of compromise and how they feel when their voice is not heard. This helps students develop empathy skills that they will use in future problem solving and social situations
- Teachers should always consider collaborative learning as a way to bring their class together and create bonds between their students.
- The data collected was collected with the research question in mind and might have some implicit bias.
- This data is not indicative of every single student in the studied classroom and will not be indicative of every single student in the world.
- Future researchers should consider doing surveys about what students enjoy about collaborative work or what types of collaborative work they enjoy. This will help to inform teachers of how their students like to learn when it involves learning with others.