

Teacher-Student Relationship in Present Scenario

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Abstract

In the present scenario, for creating a strong discipline system and for the healthy development of all students in schools strong and supportive relationships between teachers and students are the basic requirements. Positive teacher-student relationship is one of the most effective weapons to foster a healthy and learning climate in the classroom. The aim of this research is to investigate how a supportive relationship between teachers and students in the classroom can ameliorate the learning process. By having a fruitful relationship with students, teachers can offer to students chances to be motivated and feel engaged in the learning process as they will be engaged actively in the learning instead of being passive learners. I wish to investigate how using communicative approach and cooperative learning strategies while teaching do affect and improve students' learning performance. The paper also presents some qualitative data collection which was used as the primary method and results show that teachers and students value a supportive and caring relationship between them and that interaction is essential to the teacher-student relationship. Also sizable literature provides evidence that strong and supportive relationships between teachers and students are fundamental to the healthy development of all students in schools.

Keywords: Teacher, Student, Relationship, Supportive, Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between teacher and student has been a matter of discussion for over 2000 years, since Plato, Socrates, and Confucius established much of the philosophical guidelines for teaching. The recent century has witnessed the development of ideas fostering teacher-student relationships. Students' relationships and interactions with teachers are often considered to have a major influence on the mental, social and communicable aspect of student's career. The extent to which the teacher engages the students into fruitful discussions can be pivotal in shaping the relationship. In this sense, relationships between teachers and students reflect a classroom's capacity to promote development, and it is precisely in this way that relationships and interactions are the key to understanding engagement.

Teaching is considered as a challenging activity in our society wherein the students are taught certain social skill sets, knowledge and abilities which make the environment around them seem congenial and they are able to integrate themselves in the community. The most essential part of teaching involves a strong communication between the teacher and students and also among other students. Also, a supportive teacher is one who creates efficiently a positive classroom environment, who encourages students to behave well in classroom and to be motivated. Hence, the orthodox ways of teaching need to be avoided by the teachers of today's generation since the traditional way involves teaching method to methods and strategies whereas the need of present is to promote an engaging and interactive discussion of content and queries in the classroom. Therefore, it is time to change to a method that guarantees communication and interaction between teacher and students and promote a supportive relationship between them.

This sense of caring and supporting from teachers motivates students to become a more interested and avid learner. A good communication, engaging discussions and understanding quintessentially represent an effective teaching and more supportive classroom environment thus encouraging and motivation students to take part in the class and get involved into the content rather than just cramming it up in order to get promotion to a higher standard class.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the proposed objectives of this research paper the qualitative data was collected which consists of general, emerging questions related to teacher and student behavior in the classroom. In order to gather this data, a group of 50 post graduate students were selected randomly along with the post graduate teachers of these students. Students were chosen from different classes and also from different cultural backgrounds in order to reach valid and authentic results. These participants were asked to complete a questionnaire on teacher student relationship in the classroom. Age and class subject were completely disregarded in the selection of students as an equitable

distribution of male and female participants were chosen. The purpose of this question survey was to gauge the teachers' and students' opinions about how a supportive relationship between teachers and students in the classroom can improve the learning process, and how communicative approach and cooperative learning strategies while teaching do affect and improve students' learning performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the present scenario, teaching brings out a pool of challenges and opportunities. An optimistic teacher-student relationship can be the key to success for a student because of its influence on the attitude of a learner's motivation and understanding.

According to Hargreaves (1994), "Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject, being efficient, having correct competencies, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy."

According to Davis (2003), "Operating as socializing agents, teachers can influence students' social and intellectual experiences via their abilities to instill values in children such as the motivation to learn; by providing classroom contexts that stimulate students' motivation and learning; by addressing students' need to belong; and by serving a regulatory function for the development of emotional, behavioral, and academic skills. Moreover, supportive relationships with teachers may play an important developmental role during the transition to and through middle school. However, developing relationships with an early adolescent presents unique challenges to middle school teachers."

Koplow (2002) proposed that effective student teacher relationships encourage greater confidence and classroom engagement in much the same manner as sensitive parenting encourages a greater sense of security and confidence. Students need the confidence and motivation to learn, which can be stimulated by the relationship they hold with their teachers. Students also perform well when they feel that the teacher is passionate about what they are teaching and pass security and confidence to the students. When teachers believes in students' ability to succeed it motivates them because students don't want to let them down but it also makes students believe that they are more capable than they even imagined.

Macpherson (2007) also states that Cooperative Learning models include the following basic principles: First, group tasks are designed to be suitable for group work. Second, positive interdependence is built in – cooperation is necessary for students to succeed. Third, attention and class time are given to interpersonal/cooperative skill building. Fourth, participants learn together in small (2-5 members) groups. Fifth, students are individually accountable for learning and

participation. And finally, the instructor's role changes from being the "sage on the stage" to the "guide on the side."

Instrument 1- Student surveys

To infer about the relationship that exists between students and teachers, the following question was asked:

Q. How is your relationship with your teacher?

In response, 50% of students indicated that they have a good relationship with their teacher and only 38% responded to a very good relationship. On the contrary, 8% ticked the sufficient mark and about 3% of students indicated that it needs improvement. However 1% of students indicated that the relationship was not good.

In terms of motivation by having a caring teacher, this question was asked:

Q. Do you feel motivated by having a teacher who cares about their students?

The answers recorded for this question were quite amazing and immensely satisfying as 91% agreed that they always feel motivated by having a teacher that care about them. With only 9% of students providing the 'often motivating' response there was not even a single student who indicated 'sometimes', 'rarely' or 'never' on the questionnaire.

As for the importance of the relationship students maintain with teachers, the following question was asked:

Q. How important is to have the relationship you maintain with your teacher to classroom interaction?

In response, 73% of the students indicated that it is very important to maintain a good relationship to have a fruitful class discussion. Students also commented that they felt more comfortable in classroom due to the relationship they maintain with teachers. Only 13% answered the 'strong' response and 14% said 'somewhat strong'. Hence, overall the responses revealed optimistic and positive results on maintaining the relationship.

Regarding how students see their teachers, the following question was asked:

Q. Do you feel your teacher is a cooperating teacher?

Of students surveyed, 65% claimed that their teachers are 'always' cooperative. Student's survey reported that teachers always try to engage and help all students inside the classroom. 26% of students stated that their teacher is 'often' cooperating whereas only 9% indicated that the teachers are 'sometimes' cooperative without any student providing a negative response.

As for how comfortable they feel using communicative language teaching, the following question was asked:

Q. Do you feel comfortable of having a teacher that uses the communicative language teaching methods and cooperative learning strategies?

About 71% of the students indicated that they ‘always’ felt more comfortable and motivated to participate in the class due to their teacher’s adopted set of strategies. Also, 25% of students said that they ‘often’ feel comfortable by the method of communicative and cooperative learning and only 4% indicated that they ‘sometimes’ feel good by these new teaching techniques. Overall, a well rounded positive result was yielded supporting the newly adopted learning techniques.

Instrument II- Teacher Surveys

Teacher’s foster positive relationships with their students create classroom environments more conducive to learning and meet students’ developmental, emotional and academic needs. Here are some concrete examples of closeness between a teacher and a student:

Regarding the relationship teachers hold with students, the following question was asked:

Q. Do you hold supportive relationships with your students?

Amongst the teachers surveyed 86% indicated that they always try to hold a supportive and optimistic relationship with their students. Only 14% indicated that they ‘often’ have a supportive relationship whereas none of them ticked ‘sometimes, rarely or never’. A teacher pointed that: it is my role as a teacher to be supportive with my students. It is important for them to grow academically.

Regarding teachers’ awareness of their students’ needs, the following question was asked:

Q. Are you emotionally aware and sensitive to the needs of students?

The responses for this question were quite scattered. About 57% of the respondents said that they are ‘always’ emotionally aware of their students and sensitive need of their students. Another 29% said that they are ‘often’ aware whereas 14% said that they are ‘sometimes’ aware of the needs. The possible reason for this dispersed result as stated by the teachers was the diversity of students who have different backgrounds and hence bring different issues to the class.

Talking about interaction, the following question was asked:

Q. Are you able to interact with students in a calming manner and let students feel engaged in the learning process?

The scattering trend continued in these responses as well. According to 57% of the teachers surveyed, they ‘always’ interact with their students in a calm manner and make them feel engaged in the learning process. Another 27% indicated that they ‘often’ interact in a calming manner and 14%

said that they ‘sometimes’ interact in a calming and engaging manner. One of the main reasons for this response according to teachers is too much leniency can sometimes be troublesome and hence teachers need to assert their seniority and authority.

In relation to teachers’ beliefs in students’ ability, the following question was asked:

Q. Do you believe in students’ ability to succeed when they have a supportive teacher?

The responses of this question are contrary to the last couple of questions asked. The monopoly of teachers, about 86%, indicated that they always believe in students’ ability to succeed when they have a supportive teacher. Only 14% said that they ‘often’ believe in their students’ ability. Teachers shared a common view that a supportive teacher is always able to encourage students to perform better.

Talking about the importance of teaching communicative English to students, the following question was asked:

Q. How important do you think it is to teach communicative English to your students?

The results expected were not found as a slightly less number of teachers gave English the top priority. Results from the surveys show that 66% of the teachers surveyed think that it is always important to teach communicative English to students. However, 17% indicated that it is ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ important to teach communicative English.

RESULT

The survey conducted here has been successfully able to corroborate for the fact that a ‘positive’, ‘communicative’, and ‘engaging’ student-teacher relationship is crucial in shaping the development of students and their careers. Findings from the surveys show that the majority of teachers and students value a supportive and caring relationship between them and that interaction is essential to the teacher-student relationship. This sense of caring and supporting from teachers motivates students to become a more interested learner. A caring teacher will help students to overcome struggles. However, still a few people have provided negative responses as to whether this communicative learning is effective or not. The reason might be the incorrect implementation of these techniques by both teachers and students. But still there is a lot to work upon as there is always a room for improvement.

SUGGESTIONS

For fostering a favorable learning climate in the classroom and developing positive teacher-student relations, there are some powerful weapons of teaching which can be implemented in everyday interaction with the students as follows:

Communicating Positive Expectations

Research on teacher expectations and student achievement has shown that expectations have a dramatic impact on student academic performance. In order to achieve this goal there are several techniques that can be used such as call on each student equitably, increase latency periods when questioning student, deliver hints and clues while trying to solve the questions, encourage students to perform well.

A teacher should always make sure that for equitable discussion he/she gives indiscriminate chances to all students. But there are several things to keep in mind while calling on students for discussion. Often, teachers give chances to few students and ignore those students from whom they have low expectations of getting an answer. By doing so a teacher always loses the confidence of students in their abilities and they think that they will not be able to answer any question. Therefore, it is important for a teacher that equal response opportunities are provided to all the students and always make sure that only high-achieving students are not called exclusively but also those students that are not performing well. Hence, through this strategy a teacher will help students to develop feelings of self-confidence in their abilities and decrease the number of behavior problems. Over time, teachers will notice that these students will remain on task more often and improve academically. Of course this change does not occur overnight, but it definitely does occur and is extremely gratifying to see.

Increasing latency is another technique that can be used by the teachers to communicate which shows positive expectations from a student. Latency is the amount of time that a teacher gives a student to answer questions which are directly related to the expectation of a teacher from his/her students. The time which is given to the students to come up with right answer also reflects the level of confidence of a teacher in their ability. When a teacher wants quick response against his/her question from a student who is struggling to come up with the right response it means that the teacher is not having enough confidence in his/her ability. Therefore, it is necessary to pay more attention to low-achieving students and always involve them effectively in discussion until you move on to another student.

A teacher should always communicate positive expectations by giving hints and clues to their students especially the low-performing students in their work. But while using this technique some cautions should be taken by teachers such as not provide too many hints and clues because in this way a teacher actually give the answer to the student. Also, after a number of hints, it may be that the only student who doesn't know the answer is the one being called on, which ends up being an embarrassing experience. The important point, however, is to use hints and clues with all students to communicate that you have high expectations for the entire class. This helps build positive teacher-student relations.

Correcting Students in an Optimistic Way

There might be instances when students indulge in inappropriate activities and hence it becomes necessary for a teacher to build a positive relationship while correcting them. The goal in correcting students should be to have them reflect on what they did, be sorry that they disappointed, and make a better choice in the future. The degree of punishment and showcasing of authority needs to be limited as too many restrictions on students might be troublesome. Hence, a teacher needs to develop a student by correcting his mistakes in a constructive and optimistic way. The correction process will be counterproductive if students are corrected in a manner that communicates bitterness, sarcasm, low expectations, or disgust.

Showing Sympathy and Care for Students

An important aspect of developing a positive relationship with students is to care about their needs. When actions and words communicate that a teacher sincerely cares for his/her students, they are more likely to want to perform well and enjoy coming to school. Caring is also indirectly associated with complying as students who are cared for by their teachers are often ready to comply with their teachers' policies without much resistance. This aspect, if not taken care of, can prove to be fatal for the student-teacher relationship as students who feel that they are not cared much by their teachers can often be de-motivated and hence end up finding themselves in a deep mental and academic pitfall.

Reducing Frustration and Stress

Certain aspects of teaching bring some inevitable agonies to a teacher in the form of frustration and stress. One of the main reasons for this stress is the feeling of failure from difficult and challenging students whose performances are sometimes near to impossible to improve. It is very essential to de-escalate this frustration as it may tarnish the positive relationship that the teacher has built with a student. No one set of techniques may suit every teacher to lower his/her stress levels and hence it is important on every teacher's part to develop some unique and suitable techniques to avoid stress.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, fostering a positive student-teacher relationship is pivotal in order to promote a healthy education system as well as to provide the students with a positive congenial environment. When teachers hold a positive relationship with students, they certainly impact students' interests in school and therefore their level of achievement. Findings from the surveys showed that teachers feel that when they know their students, and they hold a good relationship with them, students are more focused and work harder and thus they can better achieve their goals. Hence, interaction with the students not only improves and develops a student's performance but also satiates the heart of a

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teacher with a feeling that he/she has been able to improve a student and direct him towards a better future.

“Treat a child as though he already is the person he’s capable of becoming”

-Haim Ginott

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