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The Role of Trust and Rapport in Teaching

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Introduction

Within the classroom, the building of trust between both students and teachers, is dependent on many different factors. Majority of the time, a student's insecurities surrounding the fear of looking unintelligent, hamper their learning experience. Because of this issue, trust is necessitated in order for active learning and development to occur. The implementation of tailored teaching methods, establishment of effective classroom management and emphasis on emotional intelligence all are ways it is said that trust can actually be maintained and developed further in spite of the obstacles present.

Research Question

How can the teacher facilitate the building of trust and rapport to stimulate learning in the classroom?

What is the relationship between teaching style and trust?

Background and Literature Review

Gurland & Grosnick (2003) explains in their study that the power hierarchy between children and adults implicitly affects the level of trust present and is a factor to be cognizant of, creating an inherent gap in both the relationship and the level of trust present.

Bruney (2012) elaborates on the effect of being the authority figure on student performance, teacher authenticity in relation to students, building self confidence in the classroom, and the establishment of mutual respect in the symbiotic relationship.

Stanard (1986) states that rule formation, technical teaching prowess, active involvement of both teachers and students, as well as effort put into rapport building, yielded cooperative students who were eager to learn.

Naqvi, Iqbal, Muhammad, Akhtar, & Naeem (2016) finds that teacher mindfulness and emotional intelligence in the form of recognizing wellbeing, emotionality, sociability, and self confidence, results in significant student success academically when integrated into teaching style.

Methods

My goal is to use naturalistic observation as my method for figuring out how trust and rapport is established by teachers in the classroom.

To do so I will sit in multiple high school classroom environments and observe teachers as they teach their classes, noting each time trust, rapport and emotional intelligence is exemplified and built.

-Trust can be defined as the number of instances in which a teacher exemplifies aspects of reliability and supportiveness as they contribute to the overall classroom atmosphere being built

-Rapport can be defined as the number of times a teacher establishes personal interaction between themselves and the student(s) within a single class period

-Emotional intelligence can be defined as the number of times a teacher is responsive to the unspoken social cues given off by a student in either one on one or group interaction within a single class period

This process of observing these elements will repeat up to 3 times with different teachers, teaching styles, and subjects taught. Afterwards, I will compile the notes together and find patterns or lack thereof between observations, keeping in mind the research question at hand when generating possible hypotheses.

Expected Results

I expect to see that teachers who utilize their skills of emotional intelligence and implement teaching strategies that put an emphasis on the building of trust and rapport, will create positive learning atmospheres where students are interested and engaged.\

Significance

This is important to conduct a study on because the effect of trust is many times glossed over when thinking of leading a classroom as a teacher, despite the fact that it plays a factor in student performance and the overall positive learning experience for both students and teachers alike. The lack of trust in classrooms is a relevant and multifaceted issue, so the knowledge gained from this study will add breadth to the discipline overall and eventually contribute to creating solutions to the problem at hand.

Figure 1.

Progression of Rapport in the Classroom

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