

Teacher – student relationship within the educational process in Kosovo

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Abstract

The purpose in this study is to address some cases and situations of the strategies used in the classroom that show teacher-student interactions in environmental education. This study of qualitative nature addressed two research questions. Its results are practical in nature and includes similarity of affective characteristics and strategies used by teacher to affect in environmental education of students and learning experience.

The purpose in carrying out this study is to provide more specific and empirical evidence of how relationship between teachers and students are created, identifying specific factors related to teacher-student interactions provides valuable information for an educational learning community.

This study describes strategic strategies and interactions with students using a teacher to effectively engage students in the learning process. Teaching nowadays is filled with challenges and opportunities, but also with changes. What needs to be done to be a teacher is change and this requires new teaching methods, strategies and new activities, attitudes, values, and new perspectives for the classroom.

Relationships between teachers and students are key to students' attitudes toward learning and can have a profound effect on everyone's lifestyle. By having a supportive relationship with teachers, students are motivated, feel protected, and this feeling of security and friendship creates the empathy that is important to encourage interested and desirable students to succeed.

To achieve the goals in preparing this study, data was collected using open teacher questions and student surveys. Collection of qualitative data consists of gathering data using general question forms to allow participants to generate answers. Surveys were collected by a group of teachers and students and analyzed by the researcher.

The questionnaire data analysis involves analyzing closed and open questions. Closed questions were analyzed with the help of the computer program and survey questionnaire.

The result of this study is a description of the experiences and procedures that guide the development of the relationship between the teacher and the student. The results of this case study are of a practical nature and include a description of the affective characteristics and strategies used by teachers that influence the learning environment.

The study will contribute to the education field by providing teachers and administrators with guidance on the relationship building strategies that a very successful teacher uses in the real environment, classroom.

Keywords: teacher-student relationship, construction, learning motivation, teaching strategy, classroom management, classroom environment.

1. Purpose of study and research questions

Most of the education employees recognize the importance of the relationships that students build with their teachers that result in positive educational achievements. The purpose of this study is to develop several cases and situations of the strategies used

in classrooms that show teacher-student interactions in the educational environment. Interview procedures allow us to identify the thinking process of teacher, while teaching and developing relationships with students. Downey (2008) states that “teachers need to know how their day-to-day work can be spread in classrooms with the interactions and educational strategies that research has shown can make a positive change in the lives of students that are at risk of educational failure”. This qualitative study addressed the following research questions: How does this teacher describe his process of building relationships with his students? Which specific components of teacher-student interaction are essential for learning environment? The results of this study are practical in nature and will include similarities of affective characteristics and strategies used by the teacher that influences students learning environment and learning experience.

1.1. The importance of the study

Rich and valuable literature provides evidences that strong relationships between students and their teachers are essential for the development of all students at school (Hamre & Pianta, 2006, Birch & Ladd, 1998). Hamre & Pianta point out that positive student-teacher relationships are a valuable resource for students. They suggest that having a positive relationship with a teacher, enables students to be able to work independently, because they know they may consider having their teacher’s support if problems arise, who will recognize them and will respond to the situation for solving the problems. As students enter school environment, their relationship with teacher is forming the foundation for successful adaptation to the social and educational environment.

Hamre & Pianta recommend that “the conversation with a teacher and conducting observations in the classroom will provide important and unique information for planning interventions” (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). These researchers conclude that “the formation of strong and supportive relationships with teachers allows students to feel more safe and secure in school, feel more competent, establish a more positive relationship with their coevals and then obtain better educational results” (ditto).

Although research is on the rise in this field, more empirical evidences are still needed on aspects of student-teacher relations to better integrate this capability into existing teacher programs (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; Sarason, 1999; Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004).

Research on factors related to the quality in classroom suggests that, for students, teacher attitudes and beliefs are very important components to predict the quality of a child’s education (Pianta, LaParo, Payne, Cox & Bradley, 2002). Personal interactions of a teacher with his or her students can make a significant difference for the students. The importance of teachers relations with their students cannot be exaggerated according to Downey (2008). As Darling-Hammond (2006) explains, “teaching is in the service of students, which creates the hope that teacher will be able to understand how students learn and what students need in order to learn successfully and that they will incorporate it into their teaching”. The idea of defining what needs to be incorporated into teaching for effective learning, we want to consider using an authentic learning environment through an exploratory case study.

This study will describe strategies and interactions with strategic goals with students using a teacher to effectively engage students in the learning process.

This study will contribute to the education by providing teachers and administrators with guidelines on the relationship building strategies that a very successful teacher uses in the actual, real environment, in the classroom. Following the conclusion of an ecological study on teacher and children relationship problems, O'Connor, Dearing and Collins (2011) claim that in relation to the education of the teacher, their study shows "the importance of encouraging the awareness of elementary school teachers for the role of their relationship with students, and provides teachers with information on how to act and how to support high quality relationships with their students."

Darling-Hammond (2006) is convinced that "it is up to educators to guide policymakers and the public about that they should develop education in productive way nowadays." She feels that educators have little contribution in helping to create types of learning environments that are enabling teachers to practice well and to allow children to learn and succeed (ditto). What we can learn through this case study is an attempt to raise voice for the formation of quality teaching practices that flourishes children's learning.

The concept of teachers who build relationships with their students so as to be seen as a reliable and valuable source of information is a valuable endeavor for long-term learning (McCombs & Whisler, 1997, Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). For the purposes of this study, we will focus on current practices and intentional steps that a teacher undertakes to build relationship with their students in order to effectively provide the necessary lessons for learning.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

In this research study, we seek to explore the emotional field of teacher effectiveness using a single case study design. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which a researcher reviews one modern limited system (one case) through life, through a detailed data collection (Creswell, 2013). The unique case study strength is its ability to deal with a variety of evidence sources, such as documents, objects, interviews and observations, beyond of that what may be available in other types of qualitative methods. She states that the use of a case study strategy has a distinct advantage when one is considering a question "how" or "why" about a modern occurrence on which the researcher has little or has no control at all. The case study method allows researchers to maintain comprehensive and meaningful features of real-life events (Yin, 2009). Yin writes that "case study research involves study in a context of real life or its environment".

Stake (1995) argues that researchers of qualitative researches seek to understand one case to evaluate its uniqueness and complexity, its persistence and interaction with its contexts. The real work of case study is individualization, not generalization - we take a special case and we familiarize it well. Quality study capitalizes "common ways of understanding". According to Stake, cases rarely exist alone, if there is an occurrence in one, there is probably more elsewhere.

Creswell (2009) says “often the difference between qualitative and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative)”. Being so, the use of a qualitative research method to determine the affective intellect of a teacher, compared to his or her evaluation of the student test results would seem to be the “best adaptation”.

2.2. Theoretical frame

2.2.1. Social Constructivist

Most of the modern qualitative researchers promote the belief that knowledge was built instead of being discovered (Stake, 1995). Social constructivists seek the understanding of the world by using open questions, so that participants can build a sense of a situation (Creswell, 2009). An important principle of a constructivist researcher is to see interaction processes between individuals, by focusing on specific contexts in which people live and work. The purpose of the researcher is to have the meaning or to interpret the meanings that the others have for the world.

The qualitative method in this study is derived from a constructivist point of view. Blumer (1978) believes that man should immerse himself in a situation in order to know what is happening in it. Creswell (2009) discusses some assumptions related to constructivism that have a direct impact on the way the research review has been drafted. A premise of the theoretical constructivist framework is that “meanings are constructed by human beings while they engage with the world they interpret”. Constructivists focus on the deep understanding of the specific cases of one phenomenon of the research.

The purpose in carrying out this study is to provide more specific and empirical evidence on how these relationships are created. Identification of the specific factors related to teacher-student interactions will provide valuable information for an educational teaching community. Upon completion of an ecological study, teacher-student relations and behavioral problems, O'Connor et al. (2011) concluded that with regard to the education of teacher, their study shows the importance of “promoting the awareness of elementary school teachers about the role of their relationship with students and providing teachers with information on how to support high quality relationships with their students”.

Currently, research on teaching aspects regarding the quality in classrooms suggests that teacher attitudes and beliefs for children are important factors in predicting the perfection of education (Pianta et al., 2002). Personal interactions of a teacher with students can bring significant change to students who are at risk for learning failure, but the importance of teachers' relationships with these students cannot be exaggerated (Downey, 2008).

The use of a clarifying case allowed this researcher to observe how teacher demonstrates the practice of building relationships of the students and teachers, and thus other educators can learn from this exemplary and informative case. Only one case research design allows the use of repetition logic in the description of the findings. The aim is to highlight the view of the participants about what are important and essential components for developing strong relationships of students with teachers.

Qualitative interviews are conversations in which the researcher kindly guides a conversational partner in an expanded discussion, by drawing depth and details on a research topic by following the responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Rubin & Rubin are discussing a range of structures of qualitative interviewing depending on the focus. Due to the nature of focus questions, we chose a semi-structured (or focused) format where questions are developed and are used when “models start to emerge to get more specific knowledge about the research topic” (idem). Through the valuable questions, an interviewer will determine the next question based on the careful listening of the previous answer. Qualitative researcher is one who can quickly adapt to a situation that was completely unexpected (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002).

Qualitative research is sometimes defined as interpreting research, a review that heavily relies on the observers that are defining and redefining the meanings of what they see and hear (Stake, 2010). He recommends that the researcher should offer an opportunity for permanent experience, by using a narrative reporting style, with rich ingredients for this permanent experience.

The triangulation of the collected data will help in the increase of the belief that, what is observed and heard is properly interpreted. In this study, triangulation of data involves conducting interviews with the teacher, observations in the classroom to confirm interview data, by looking at students work samples after teacher intervention, by observing and recording teacher-student interactions, and by reviewing the correspondence.

The purpose of this study is to study the factors of those relationships between teachers and students that contribute to the development of a student’s learning environment. This study addressed the following research questions: How does the teacher describe the process of building relationships with his students? Which specific components of teacher-student interaction are most essential for a learning environment?

The results of this case study are of a practical nature and include a description of the affective characteristics and strategies used by teachers that influence the learning environment.

3. Ethical consideration

Deyhle et al. (1992) arguments that “research in education, whether quantitative or qualitative, essentially is a research carried out. The results of such research almost always have immediate or potential applications or impacts”.

Ethical issues are serious concerns for all qualitative researchers, mainly because of the relationships that are being developed. “Unique ethical considerations are inherent in the design of a qualitative study because the success of such research is based on the development of specific types of relationships between researchers and informants.” The relationship with these participants in the study started as another teacher and was the development of a close personal relationship that allowed me to receive important information. Being aware of Deyle’s care, etc. (1992) on how the

information was obtained and published, I was explicit in describing the purpose of research to these participants of study.

While the qualitative researchers (Stake, 1995, Yin, 2009, Deyle, et al., 1992) understand that there are no “ethical rules” set for qualitative researchers, best practice dictates that conscious and reflective strategies should be at the forefront of the design of the study. For this purpose, my interaction with the participants of the study included the possibilities for questions, clarification of the process and securing of confidentiality.

Recommendations

Through this study we recommend that teachers be encouraged to learn about the lives of students outside the classroom as a way to connect students to a deeper level to build relationships with them. We claim that the emotionally and socially positive climate in school contributes to an atmosphere of cordial relationships between students and teachers. This assertion is corroborated by the findings of contextual categories and the findings related to Question 2 of research where study participants describe the process of building relationships with teachers. The atmosphere of affection is created by building trust with the students, by cooperatively creating class activities and procedures based on respect, active listening and exchange of teacher’s personal events with students.

Conclusions

Although this work carried out through this study can contribute to teachers in general, it can ultimately contribute to improving the teaching of the school in all subjects in all classes. The potential is there to provide strategies for maintaining a good relationship between teachers and students and using appropriate communication approaches and learning strategies in collaboration, while teaching influences learners and improves their performance.

Teachers should think differently and use strategies to improve students’ achievements in the classroom. We are convinced as teachers, each of us will contribute in different ways to help in the efficiency of the teaching process.

The study began with the questions

1. How do the teachers describe their process of building relationships with his students?
2. Which specific components of teacher-student interaction are essential for a learning environment?

By reviewing literature and surveys, it was clear that a learning relationship between the teacher and the student benefits from the learning process. Students feel that they perform better when a teacher or a teacher is constantly in a relationship with them.

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