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Stimulation to Learn and Teacher - Student Relationship

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ABSTRACT

Teacher-student relationship is the most basic interpersonal relationship in colleges. In the teaching process, creating a relaxed and enjoyable learning climate and cultivating harmonious teacher-student relationship can not only ease students' emotional obstacles and learning anxiety, but also can promote students' learning motivation and autonomous learning consciousness. In recent years, with the development of Pedagogy and Educational Psychology, the research on teacher-student relationship has greatly increased at home and abroad. Nevertheless, the research on how to establish, facilitate, and develop teacher-student relationship from the perspective of educational philosophy is little and not in-depth. The thesis adopted the qualitative research methods. The research samples are 86 non-English major sophomores from Taiyuan College of Modern Science and Technology. Qualitative analysis is mainly based on open questionnaires, diary, interview, and observation. The thesis is divided into five parts. The main frame is as follows: 1) The first part is literature review that stated the main theories on teacher-student relationship from different educational philosophers. 2) The second part is the methodology of this research which introduces the procedures of this study, including participants, procedures of data collection. 3) The third part is mainly about the process of establishing harmonious teacher-student relationship in and after class. 4) The fourth part is the findings from the research. 5) The last part is some implications for teachers from the view of point of educational philosophy.

INTRODUCTION: -

During the last 20 years, with affective factors being paid more and more attention in foreign language teaching, there has been a growing interest in examining the teacher-student relationship in the fields of developmental and educational psychology. A large body of relevant research has examined the relationship between teachers and students during the preschool and early childhood years. These studies mainly concern the impact of teacher-student relationship on children or middle school students' achievements and motivation, however, little research on how to build the harmonious teacher-student relationship.

In colleges, teacher-student relationship plays an increasingly important role in learning especially in autonomous learning. For a long time, in China, teaching is based on the teacher-centered model and students are familiar and tied to the traditional teacher-student relationship which is an unequal

relationship of superior and subordinate. Chinese students emphasized the core role of teachers in college settings and tended to regard teachers as authorities who impart and embody knowledge. However, the role of teachers should facilitate students' effective learning and create supportive, relaxed, equal and understanding learning environment to stimulate and inspire their self-directed learning, because the essence of education lies in sparking students to motivate themselves and teachers should endeavor to build lively interaction with students. Besides the responsibility of teachers to provide supportive learning climate for students, teachers should "exert a great deal of influence on establishing a good quality of teacher-student relationship" outside the classroom (Barry, 1999). Therefore, teachers should be the facilitator and counsellor rather than leader and controller in the process of college students' learning and building harmonious, caring and emotional teacher-student relationship is effective and necessary for students' autonomous learning at colleges.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY: -

(1) To know Relationship between teacher and student interplay and luxury.
(2) To study Relationship between the reasonableness of learning climate cooperation and solace learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: -

Dewey (1938) said that as an educator, you need to be able to discern what attitudes are conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental, and use that relational knowledge to build worthwhile educational experiences for students. He writes that "teachers are the agents through which knowledge and skills are communicated and rules of conduct enforced" (p.18) and, as such, it is the duty of the teacher to know how to "utilize the surroundings, physical and social, so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute" to building up worthwhile educational experiences. He says that "all human experience is ultimately social: that it involves contact and communication".

Vygotsky (1978) believed that higher mental functioning are socially formed and culturally transmitted. Cognitive development is mediated through language dialogues between one who knows (teacher) and one who is learning (student). Vygotsky posits that the instructional message gradually moves from teacher-student dialogue to inner speech where it organizes the student's thought and becomes an internal mental function. A skillful teacher could shape a student's thinking process through purposeful interaction – Vygotsky's concept of mediated development. According to Vygotsky, "learning awakens a variety of internal development processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers" (p. 90). Vygotsky viewed tests as an inadequate measurement of a child's learning capability; he thought the progress in concept formation achieved by a child through interaction with an adult was a much more viable way to determine 21 the capabilities of learners. His theory of the zone of proximal development required this type of interaction between child and adult in order for the child to come to terms with and understand the logic of adult reasoning in order to learn new concepts. Vygotsky describes the zone of proximal development as "the distance between the actual developmental level and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance".

Ravitch (2010) writes that “the goal of education is not to produce higher test scores, but to educate children to become responsible people with well-developed minds and good character”. She says that “accountability as it is now is not helping our schools because its measures are too narrow and imprecise, and its consequences too severe. NCLB assumes that accountability based solely on test scores will reform American education. This is a mistake”. Overemphasis on test scores to the omission of other important goals of education may actually weaken the love of learning and the desire to acquire knowledge (Ravitch, 2010). The significance of the affective domain in determining effective teachers and teaching practices is a component that the current teacher evaluation system does not give enough credence to. Student learning outcomes (measured by test scores) are considered, overwhelmingly, to be the deciding determinant of a highly effective teacher and a highly effective school.

Langer (1997) writes “if the source of information is someone we respect, we are more likely to be influenced and retain the information than if we view the source as untrustworthy” (p. 86). Initial gathering of information relies on the source of the information. “When we have learned information mindfully, we remain open to ways in which information may differ in various situations” (p. 87). In effect, by building solid relationships with students, teachers are creating discriminating, as well as lifelong learners. Although, over time, the source of the information may be forgotten, the information received is retained (Langer, 1997).

Cazden (2001) states that “children’s intellectual functioning, at school, as at home, is intimately related to the social relationships in which it becomes embedded. Familiarity facilitates responsiveness which plays an important part in learning”. Cazden believes in the importance of creating a learning environment that incorporates building an affective interpersonal relationship with students. Creating a learning environment that all the stakeholders are invested in will have a positive impact on the learning that will take place. As Cazden writes, “What counts are relationships between the teacher and each student, as an individual, both in whole class lessons and in 25 individual seat work assignments. Now each student becomes a significant part of the official learning environment”.

METHODOLOGY: -

Purpose

The purpose of qualitative research implemented by the author is to probe into the teacher-student relationship between teacher and students in detail and comprehensively. Through qualitative research, the author aims to explore: 1) what kind of teacher-student relationship is student desire? 2) What are the good teacher standards students think of?

Participants

Open questionnaires which are attached to the main questionnaire of quantitative research were delivered to all students from Taiyuan College of Modern Science and Technology. All the students (86 subjects) are required to keep a diary in a week. The case study is directed to 4 subjects the College.

Data Collection

The research data are collected through administration of open questionnaire, interview, diary and observation.

Administration of Open Questionnaire

In the end of the first semester, all students participated in the open questionnaire survey. The following are the questions from open questionnaire:

1) How do you think of the relationship between you and the author?

2) Are you satisfied with the current teacher-student relationship?

3) What kind of teacher-student relationship do you desire most?

4) Do you believe that good teacher-student relationship can promote your learning?

Procedures of Interview

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which starts with more general questions and allows both interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for detail or discuss issues. So in order to deepen the research and find out some insights, detailed information and general thoughts of subjects, the author conducted semi-structured interview to them. For the sake of research, the author made two hypotheses in mind and aimed to testify them. The first one is that previous teacher-student relationship experiences play a very important role in students' later learning. The second one is high--quality teacher-student relationship can nurture students' interest, change learning attitude and made students be more diligent, active and creative. In semi-interview, interviewer has the freedom to tailor their questions for the specific condition of every subject. The author mainly adopted face-to-face interview which is very directive, online conversation through which the author found the subjects are more likely to talk their inner thoughts and telephone conversation, then record and segment the content in detail.

Procedures of Diary and Observation

The subjects are all the author's students, so during the interval of the class, the author always chats with them in a casual way and observes their performance and reaction in class. During the first semester, the author required the subjects to keep a Chinese diary in one week.

Because the specific topic that the author wants to explore in the research should usually be thought about well in advance, the author listed some questions or wrote down a topic on the blackboard for students' reference to write the dairies. Of course, they are permitted to talk about their own thoughts freely.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION: -

a) Teachers student's interaction

The mean value of teacher-student interaction from the perspective of the students are shown in Table 1. Overall, the findings indicate that the understanding construct has the highest level of practice (mean = 4:37, SD = 0.62), followed by a friendly construct (mean = 4.29, SD = 0.62),

admonish construct (Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.84), uncertainty construct (mean = 4.27, SD = 0.77), dissatisfaction constructs (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.87), leadership construct (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.67), firm construct (mean = 3.99, SD = 0.66) and freedom construct (mean = 3.32, SD = 0.0.89)

Table 1. Mean value and standard deviation for teacher student interaction

No	Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Level of practice
1.	Leadership	4.22	0.67	Positive	High
2.	Understanding	4.37	0.62	Positive	High
3.	Uncertainty	4.27	0.77	Positive	High
4.	Admonish	4.28	0.84	Positive	High
5.	Friendly	4.29	0.62	Positive	High
6.	Freedom	3.32	0.89	Negative	Moderate
7.	Dissatisfaction	4.23	0.87	Positive	High
8.	Firm	3.99	0.66	Positive	High

Findings also show that the constructs of leadership, understanding, friendly, uncertainty, admonish, firm and dissatisfaction are positive. This shows that students perceive their teachers of having a high level of leadership whereby they are able to draw students' attention, care for students, friendly assists the students and exhibit firmness to ensure students conform to the rules during the learning process. Students also perceive that their teachers look confident, patient in advising student and also exhibit satisfaction during learning conducted in the classroom. On the other hand, students perceive freedom construct practices are at moderate level meaning that the students assume teacher of providing them less opportunities to take over the responsibility of their own learning.

b) The suitability of learning environment

The mean value of the suitability of the learning environment from the perspective of the students are shown in Table 2. Overall, the findings indicate that the learning space construct have the highest level of suitability (mean = 4.28, SD = 0.57), followed by lighting constructs (mean = 4.18, SD = 0.62), furniture and equipment construct (mean = 3.86, SD = 0.73), safety aspects (mean = 3.68, SD = 0.76), technology construct (mean = 3.12, SD = 1:06) and indoor air quality construct (mean = 2.23, SD = 0.80)

Table 2. Mean value and standard deviation for the suitability of learning environment

No	Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Furniture and equipment	3.86	0.73	High
2.	Learning space	4.28	0.57	High
3.	Lighting	4.18	0.62	High
4.	Technology	3.12	1.06	Moderate
5.	Indoor air quality	3.54	0.80	Moderate
6.	Safety aspects	3.68	0.76	High

The findings show that the learning space, lighting, furniture and equipment, and safety aspect have high level of suitability from students' perspective meaning that students thought learning space, lighting, furniture and equipment, and safety aspects provided in the classroom is suitable and can be adapted with various learning activities in the classroom.

c) The Biology students' learning commitment

The mean value and the level of students' learning commitment are shown in Table 3. As a whole, the findings indicate that students have a high level of commitment to learning in all three sub-constructs which are behavior (Mean = 4.14, SD = 0.67), followed by cognitive constructs (Min = 4.13, SD = 0.60) and affective construct (Min = 4:04, SD = 0.67).

Table 3. Mean value and standard deviation for students' learning commitment

No.	Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Level of practice
1.	Cognitive	4.12	0.60	Positive	High
2.	Affective	4.04	0.78	Positive	High
3.	Behavior	4.14	0.67	Positive	High

Students rate their learning commitment as positive in the aspect of cognitive, affective and behavior. This shows that students' learning commitment is higher than their thoughts, emotions and physical actions. The findings of this study suggest that students are very committed to the learning in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

a) Teachers student's interaction

Overall, students perceived that the teacher-student interaction practices were good and effective. This was important because according to Myint and Atputhasamy (2005) the quality of teacher leadership behavior was an indicator of the quality teacher-student interaction in the classroom. In fact, the teacher-student interaction was an important element to the students in the context of teaching, learning and assessment (Douglas et al., 2015). Fraser et al. (2010) described teachers who want to improve students' academic achievement should show strong leadership behavior and understand, and reduce the uncertainty behavior in the classroom. Ab. Samad & Jamaluddin (2005) also explained that the elements of leadership in the classroom as practiced by the teacher can determine the attainment of a classroom and also effect the students. According Wubbels and Levy (1991), teachers' behavior in a classroom setting is important because it can influence students' motivation and achievement. Students' perceived moderate practices of freedom due to teachers control and monitor learning in the classroom. Monitoring activities should be done to prevent students from becoming too independent and unmanageable. According to Cruickshank et al. (2009) when the teacher gives freedom to the students to learn by themselves and leave the classroom without proper control, the students will be less motivated to learn and are more likely to exhibit

negative behaviors such as not completing the task. Therefore, as a teacher, it is acceptable to be more assertive and monitor the learning so that students are serious and devote more attention to learning.

b) The suitability of learning environment

The findings indicated that the learning space, lighting, furniture and equipment, and safety aspect have high level of suitability from students' perspective. In other words, students perceived learning space, lighting, furniture and equipment, and safety aspects provided in the classroom is suitable and can be adapted with various learning activities in the classroom. The suitability of this learning space may be due to the wide classroom area that was appropriate to carry out various learning activities. Thus, allowed the students in the classroom to move around freely and perform the learning activities either individually or in groups. Besides that, lighting in classrooms was found to be good and appropriate due to combination of natural and artificial lighting. According to Barnitt (2003), combination of natural light and lamp provide quality lighting.

Furthermore, the brightness of the classroom can also be controlled with the use of a separate switch, blinds or curtains as required by learning activities conducted. Furniture and equipment and the safety element were also perceived suitable by students. The suitability may be attributed by the improvement of infrastructure facilities and equipment in the classroom studied. This was in line with the government's efforts to upgrade the facilities involved in all schools to support the educational needs of students from time to time (PIPP 2013-2025). However, this contrasted with the findings from Parveen Khan (2012) and Che Ahmad who found that the suitability was at the moderate level and must be addressed in order to provide a positive impact on students' learning and teaching. Furthermore, students also perceived technology construct at moderate level. It implied that there was insufficient number of computer or no computer in the classroom. Study by Che Ahmad (2011) also found that there were no computers for students' use in the learning space. The classroom should be equipped with technology such as computers and accessible to internet in order to facilitate the search for information during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, technology equipment in classroom needs to be improved from time to time to meet the needs of students. In addition, Rawlins and Kehrwald (2014) argued that ICTis an effective pedagogical tool and potentially in assisting teachers learning and teaching in classroom. With the flexibility and help of the technologies, teachers can design learning environments in which students can manage and construct their own representations of knowledge in their minds (Koç, 2005). In addition, the learning environment should create a good atmosphere to support the learning and teaching process. According to Zakaria et al. (2012) learning environment can impact students' behavior and self-esteem. The physical characteristics of learning environment could also influence teacher-student communication and have an impact on cognitive and affective domains. Thus, in order to create a conducive learning environment, student-centred and fulfil the needs of teacher and student, the environment must be assessed and improved to enhance the effectiveness of learning. The characteristics of a classroom will impact overall satisfaction. Therefore, students will be more enjoy and satisfy in a well-designed classroom. In fact, the quality of education not only be assessed by the subjects taught and the level of students' achievement but also the evaluation of the classroom learning environment.

c) The Biology students' learning

commitment Findings also revealed that students rated their learning commitment in the aspect of cognitive, affective and behavior as positive. This showed that students' learning commitment is

higher than their thoughts, emotions and physical actions. The findings of this study suggested that students were very committed to learn in the classroom. These students were very interest in learning and motivated in completing the tasks assigned by the teacher. The findings were in line with Wonglorsaichon et al. (2014) which stated that students who have learning commitment in terms of behavioral, cognitive and affective will produce more quality learning. It was also supported by Covell et al. (2009), which explained that the commitment of student learning will benefit various parties involved, directly or indirectly. According to Mohd Nihra et al. (2012), students who were less commitment likely to abandon a task, less preparing for exams and all sorts of things that can interfere with the ongoing learning and teaching session in the classroom. It seemed that students who fail to adapt to the learning will likely face many problems in terms of academic, social, emotional, and commitment to learning. Students involved and committed to learning when they felt appreciated, understood and engaged in learning that occurs.

d) Comfort learning

Students viewed the learning comfort construct as positive. This showed that students were comfortable with the learning in the classroom. The findings indicated that the process of learning and teaching biology in the classroom are at a pleasant situation. Students felt very satisfied with the learning environment in the classroom. However, Marzita et al. (2014) found that the classroom comfort was at moderate level. This may be due to the study's location which was carried out in urban areas with high population density. The high population density in urban areas may contribute to the high number of students in a class. Too many students will lead to congestion in classroom and thus reduce the comfort of learning. Students allocate most of their time in the classroom. Therefore, comfort is the key in encouraging learning effectiveness. Comfortable learning environment which meet the needs of students will encourage active participation and enhance the understanding of the concept. Learning effectiveness can be strengthened if the physical and psychological comfort is taken into account. The comfort environment is also related with learning productivity and it's also depend on the building's design and pararell with student's activities (Vale'ria Azzida GRAC Collet et al., 2007). Thus, according to Weilin et al. (2013) learning comfort could increase students' motivation to learn in the classroom.

e) Relationship between teacher student interaction and comfort learning

Analysis showed that there was a strong positive relationship between teacher-student interactions with the learning comfort meaning that when interaction between teacher's students are good, the learning comfort will exist. Teacher-student interaction was the most important element to a successful relationship during school. Furthermore, two-way communication between students and teachers play an important role in student's academic achievement. The interaction that occurred between teachers and students will increase the learning comfort because students felt that they were heard, understood and appreciated.

f) Relationship between the suitability of learning environment interaction and comfort learning

The learning environment had a significant relationship with the comfort learning in Biology classroom meaning that when the learning environment is suitable, in good condition and conducive, students will feel comfortable to learn in the classroom. This is because the suitability of a learning environment will influence students' acceptance and promote effective learning process. This result

is in line with Basey et al. (2008) statement that the environment can positively influence students' attitudes. The availability equipment, rules of safety, management and learning environment can also increase students' productivity and promising comfort in the classroom. Khadijah and Azimin Samson (2013) found that many classrooms did not provide a comfortable learning environment and meet the needs of teachers and students. This situation might reduce students' concentration and commitment in classroom learning sessions. Teachers need to shape the learning environment with regard to the design of the physical environment in terms of learning space equipped with the technology facilities to ensure students' comfort and increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Lei, 2010). According to Veal and Jackson (2005), the design of learning environments affects the level of students' interaction and involvement. This is because when the learning environment meet the needs of teachers and learning activities, various strategies and approaches could be used in learning and teaching. In fact, the physical environment of the classroom is an effective catalyst for the learning and therefore producing quality human capital.

g) Relationship between learning commitment and learning comfort

The learning commitment also had a significant relationship with the learning comfort in biology classroom. This means that when students were committed in their learning, then they will be more comfortable with the learning and teaching in the classroom. The findings reflected that students having passion for learning will tend to feel comfortable in learning in order to success in their life. This is supported by Dallimore et al. (2008), who stated that there is a relationship between learning comforts with a students' commitment. Students who are comfortable in their learning will be actively involved in the learning process. This involvement extremely beneficial in improving their discussions, negotiation of meaning and ultimate motivation in wanting to study Biology (Solas & Wilson, 2015). The involvement of
students will increase their mastery in content knowledge and further enhance student learning commitment. In fact, according to Ghorbani et al. (2013) student learning commitment will inculcate discipline and a greater sense of responsibility in them.

h) Contribution of teacher student interaction, suitability of learning environment and Biology learning commitment towards learning comfort

Finally, analysis revealed that learning commitment and learning environments were the two predictor variables that contributed significantly to students' learning comfort in Biology classroom. The finding is supported by Serafimova and Zdravkovska (2013), who argued that in order to increase the motivation, involvement and students' learning commitment, the students' confidence, mutual respect, active communication should be strengthened over time. This is also consistent with Ghafouri (2014) findings whereby students built their own learning experience involving emotion and cognition. In summary, the analysis found learning commitment and learning environments were predictor variables that contribute significantly to the variations of Biology learning comfort. Thus, in order to improve the effectiveness of the learning and teaching, teachers need to use the existing environment wisely in order to guide and educate students and enhance their knowledge.

CONCLUSION: -

The findings showed that the level of teacher-student interaction, the suitability of learning environment, the student learning commitment and the biology learning comfort were positive. There

was also a relationship between student teacher's interaction, the suitability of the learning environment and learning commitment with the learning comfort. Further analysis also showed that the two main factors that contributed to the learning comfort were learning commitment and the learning environment. Therefore, teachers should have employed multi methods and strategies in teaching biology in a more attractive way in the classroom. In addition, teachers could have group activities to improve communications and interactions among students and also promote active participation during lessons. Student centered teaching should be emphasized so that students are more confident and motivated to learn in the classroom.

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