

Sunday, September 30, 2007

Professional Self-Development

Learn from your Students: Pay Attention When teachers think of "teacher survival," their thoughts migrate to all the attitudes, knowledge and skills that constitute "Master Teacher" levels of instructional delivery. Unfortunately, something more important than instructional delivery is often overlooked. What is that?

Answer: A teacher relationship with students trumps instructional delivery as a component of teacher success. Sidebar For a free sample of the attitude, knowledge and skill approach, check out these eBook resources & hellip; Elementary Teachers' Survival Kit Secondary Teachers' Survival Kit This is not a recommendation for the purchase of these books because Classroom Toolkit offers many of these same types of teacher tools at no cost. So, why are these instructional delivery tools not enough? Free Agents Consider each student to be a "free agent." This means that they have their own (unique) interests and motivations. The days of compliant, "Let's struggle at learning because doing so will please the teacher" never were; but modern students are more vocal at describing just how "out of sync" such a belief is.

Instead, teachers need to establish a relationship with their students. Then, teachers need to listen to what their students are saying. This includes "listening between the words" to

Establish a connection with students, communicate, person-to-person, let real caring and commitment shine through during personal interaction and instructional dialog. Talk to a classroom group of students, but still communicate one-to-one. Avoid lecturing, let the dialog be

Students pay minimal attention when teachers talk at them, and when teachers care more about the instructional content than about the "instructee."

It is short-sighted for a teacher to preach that dogma of "caring about students," then commit sins (i.e., do and show) that demonstrate that the caring is only a scheme to manipulate and trick students into cooperation. Even students with challenged academic ability see through these ploys and are not fooled. And, teachers cannot afford to lose the trust of their students by acting out a deception.

For the teacher that thinks that insincere manipulation will motivate student learning here is one bit of advice, "Find another profession where deception is the norm (maybe politics or selling used cars) because anyone who believes that students can be fooled about what is in the heart of their teachers lacks the "Intrapersonal intelligence" needed to perform the job. The Real Key to Learning Research shows that the teacher, rather than & hellip; Technology Philosophy

The Amount of Effort and Extra Hours the Teacher Devotes The Amount of Materials in the Classroom

The Number of Students in the Classroom

& hellip; is the key (independent) variable that is responsible for increased student achievement. But, what teacher characteristic exactly accounts for the improvement?

Answer: It is the relationship that teachers have with their students that makes the difference between mediocre student learning and stellar student outcomes and outstanding performance.

And, one of the best ways that teachers can relate to students is to listen to them, listen to each student as an individual, listen from the heart. This is "no tricks, no manipulation" listening. This is "no rules, no formula" listening.

This is take the messages as you find them, alter your teaching style when addressing each students.

This is in-the-moment, fully present (my-mind-is-here-now) awareness of the interaction, and no distraction of thinking about the future or the past.

And don't worry if this interaction fails to fit into any of the theories of education that you learned in your college classes. (What do college professors know and what do textbook author-committees know about the personal lives, loves and motivations of your particular students?)

In fact, what do you know about your students until you listen to them, until you suspend pre-judgment, and until you know who they are.

Sidebar At best, the professors and the textbooks can give you a clue to "what your students are." What you need is to know "who your students are."

If you will "be you," your students will like you and respect you.

Students see teachers mostly as "phonies" and role-model actors during their school careers. It is amazing how students flock to real people, almost the way that moths head for a light bulb.

This student behavior would seem to indicate that students are "hungry" for personal, human contact. Give your students this personal contact by listening to them.

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