Students' Apathy In Elementary School

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Introduction

North Davis Elementary School is one of the best and above-average-rated schools in the state. It is located at 555 East 14th Street, Davis, California. North Davis is a public school with a total number of five hundred and sixty-two students of different ethnicities: white, Asian, Hispanic, and other races. The school also supports learning for students from different backgrounds, poor or rich, and disabled children. In essence, students at North Davis Elementary School are guaranteed to make a year-over-year academic improvement. Students make strong progress with high test scores, whereby they gain more academic skills and knowledge than their peers and maybe friends from other schools in the state. The school has enough resources that are suited for students at different levels. For example, as an intern for a third-grade class of twenty students, I had access to materials and resources to aid in teaching and carrying out various experiments.

Despite the students' improvement and engagement at North Davis Elementary School, teachers are likely to face or endure various problems and challenges. When I joined North Davis Elementary School as an intern, I was afraid that I would not meet the academic standards of this institution. Afterwards, I realized that some of the students had some issues that had a negative impact on my performance, and they needed immediate guidance. These problems may be a result of different reasons or causes. One of these problems is students' apathy. More specifically, this paper discusses a problem that is most common in elementary schools: students' apathy, actions taken to resolve the problem and the outcome of the actions taken.

As an intern at North Davis Elementary School, student apathy is one of the problems that I encounter on a daily basis among my students. Over the past few years, education standards have been known to be very low at different academic levels. Researchers concluded that one of the problems contributing to low education standards is apathy. Apathy is referred to as students' lack of emotional connection to learning or education. Reinforcing and emphasizing standardized tests have inadvertently led to student apathy. Some teachers use 'testing' rather than 'learning' as a way of reforming education. A number of students in my class reared on standardization believed that ''learning'' is a function for ''tests.'' Standardization was started during the Industrial Revolution to provide easy and suitable ways to test a large number of students. Questions asked required precise answers, and this process led to the development of Western standardized testing. Most teachers seek to ensure that ''learning'' occurs, whereby many students are led to think that the test is what they need most to improve or progress in life. This problem caught my attention because students are

studying only to pass the tests rather than to obtain useful knowledge and skills that are substantially helpful in life (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Like any other concerned teacher or, in my case, an intern, I took this matter seriously and evaluated means and ways to help my third-grade students learn and obtain more knowledge to use in their lives. Students are sometimes hard to deal with, but this should not raise any alarms. However, if there is any cause for concern, it is necessary to take immediate action and resolve the issue. I took immediate action to prevent student apathy, which apparently could prevent accomplishing collective class goals. Sometimes, they were disinterested, and to get their attention back on track, I applied various strategies that helped to fight the development of student apathy. Some of these strategies included giving students duties and responsibilities to teach accountability, acknowledging and celebrating the students' success, teaching relevant topics in class, modelling positivity and good behaviour, upholding consistency and fairness in class, allowing students to take part in decision-making and, lastly, taking my time to learn and understand my students' backgrounds and traits, which enabled me to interact with them at a personal level. Some of these strategies helped the students interact with each other and learn together, promoting teamwork. Occasionally, I requested a fellow teacher to help me congratulate and celebrate the success of the top-performing students and the class in general.

The strategies I used brought positive results and also helped the students to learn with a purpose rather than just to perform well in tests. Most of the students improved their academic performance compared with the previous semester. These students taught me that with effort, hard work and a bit of convincing, anything is possible. Some teachers find it difficult to engage with students; however, from my experience as an intern, students need a good role model in class to perform better. In essence, students need a teacher who understands them and brings out the best in them. In my opinion, a teacher should encourage and teach students important and essential subjects in life rather than focus on passing tests, which encourages student apathy. Further, a teacher should always empower and try to build essential relationships with his or her students (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Questions

What is students' apathy?

As an intern or a teacher, how can you help your students overcome their apathy?

References

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