

Report On  
Factors that Cultivate Teacher-Student Relationship to Maximize Learning

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## Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The internship report submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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## **Abstract**

This report is based on my experiences from the classes of an institute that I have observed during my internship. Based on the experiences, this report will highlight the aspects that are needed for building a positive relationship between teacher and students. During my internship period, I tried to observe how the teachers of that school practically handle and interact with their students. This report also includes few suggestions for the development of the teacher-student relationship which could ensure more success in learning both in academic and non-academic areas.

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## Factors that Cultivate Teacher-Student Relationship to Maximize Learning

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

There is a quotation by the writer Shakuntala Devi, where she says 'Education is not just about going to school and getting a degree. It is about widening your knowledge and absorbing the truth about life'. I personally believe that a teacher is not just a teacher for teaching curriculums but a teacher is a light who guides through knowledge, morality, ethics and truths.

In this report I am going to focus on the relationship-building between teachers and students for better learning experience and academic success. It is important to take into account the interpersonal relationship that students have with their teachers throughout their educational journey. In order to maximize the learning goals, both the teachers and students need to cooperate each other with respect, patience and endless support.

In ELT, the relationship between teacher-student refers to 'Rapport'. Rapport speaks of a friendly relationship in which people understand each other very well and in the academic context it means the relationship between the teacher and students (Ellsworth, n.d.).

An understandable teacher can learn about the shortcomings of his students and try to fix them with proper measure. When the students trust their teachers and seek suggestion apart from study, the fear of their learning starts to run away. They can communicate with their teachers without any fear, hesitation or confusion. This practice elevates the motivation of learning to achieve goals. When the students learn that their teachers are their main supporters, their confidence level goes higher and they become more focused with their goals.

This is needless to say that when the teachers successfully motivate the learners to learn, participate and think critically, the students find more ways to explore their inner capacity and abilities. Students or learners have emotional involvement while they learn anything. Hence, the teachers need to work on this with proper care without hurting any of the students' feelings.

When a teacher is flexible and friendly with his students there is a high chance that his learners will learn better and grow happily. They will be more creative, enthusiastic and attentive. They can support themselves confidently without relying upon anyone.

When I started my internship at Gateway International School, I was quite nervous. It was a completely new experience for me to work as trainee teacher. Secondly, the students were very young who kept asking me questions. One thing I realized that young brain produces many questions that need to be answered clearly, or else the learning of those children would not be proper. I always went to the classrooms before the subject teachers so that I can prepare my necessary stuffs to observe and take notes. It was quite hard to make them understand about my functionality over there but the students of the classes always treated me as teacher. They tend to greet me with respect and always conveyed salaam.

There were students who were always talking and gossiping but I never asked them to stop or remain silent rather I joined in their conversation and eventually they had the tendency to share their stories even after the class. I remember, one day a boy came up to me and said that I am very friendly which made him bring chocolates for me that day. The appreciation that I got from them is incomparable. I tried not to observe only the classes but also tried to learn the different mind-set of the students. It helped me to learn about their psychological requirements. I have found out that the students got very overwhelmed when I could clearly remember their names. They liked how the teachers valued them by remembering the accurate names.

The school was well decorated with bright colours and posters of fruits, flowers, animals and influential people from all over the world. In every classroom there is a wall poster where the birthdates along with the photo of the students were hanging. This was for celebrating the joyful event of the student's life. The way the students were treated was very pleasant to witness. Thus, this report will highlight some of the instances showing how teacher-student relationship can be made more positive and effective in a classroom setting.



## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2007) in their influential model described that teachers need to have knowledge of learners and their development in social context. According to Kabilan (2000), it is necessary for the teachers to develop mutual relationship with their learners. Without a positive connection the teacher would not be able to know what their students need. As I mentioned earlier a good teacher will always care for the betterment of his students. Good teachers make a difference that leads to better student outcomes according to York-Barr & Duke (2004).

This is why the teacher's goals also depend on how much he is making his students explore their capabilities. This makes the students learn how to face difficulty without depending on others. According to Cain (2001) students who get support from their teachers constantly are well prepared for facing their future with confidence. He added that learners learn most of the things from their teachers and this is one of the reasons the teachers need to be passionate, caring and empathic towards the students.

There are many factors that a teacher should acquire in order to develop a better relationship with his students. Not only in English language teaching but any subject teacher should practice and have the qualities for the best outcome.

There are many discussions on building positive teacher-student relationship in ELT. I have gone through some of those. I have sorted out few factors that I could relate to my experience during the internship. Those are following:

- Remembering names of the students

- Patience, empathy and kindness
- Ensuring positive classroom environment
- Providing clear-concise instruction in classrooms
- Including emotional intelligence for innovative learning
- Learning about student's desire for affection and approval
- Enabling students to think out of the box

An elaborated discussion on these factors can further help in understanding these concepts.

### Remembering Names of the Students:

When we call students by their names while verbally communicating with them or providing directions towards them—this is similar to the situation where we call children by their name and they instantly understand that we are directly communicating with them. Most of us have experienced the situation where we had been tuned out by a child because we failed to connect them to the interaction process. The same can happen in case of students as well. Just randomly saying things or making speech to a class as a whole is at times ineffective. Especially due to the fact most of students view this routine practice of a teacher and they do not take it seriously. Also pointing out a student without mentioning their name might confuse that particular student because he/she might not be sure if he/she is actually the targeted audience here. Mentioning a student's name while communicating towards that student actually includes, engages and involves them in the interaction. It makes the students become more connected to us. Also, it makes them feel identified, recognized and seen. It subsequently increases their chance to respond positively to whatever is communicated. This kind of connection creates an opportunity for the students to learn to make positive choices.

One of the essential parts is to remember the names of the students. In building rapport this factor has a great influence. It shows how much important the students are to their teachers. One of the important elements for a good teacher-student relationship is learning the names of the students. Students get to know how much effort their teachers are putting to remember all their names. They appreciate this very much.

### Patience, Empathy and Kindness:

All the learners are not the same. Some learn quickly without much description some need an extra care and patience. The teachers should understand when they deal with the students. According to Fleming (2003) the teacher's respectful silence is much needed when the students are speaking in the classroom. The teacher's respectful silence contributes to their confidence level. They feel that they are being heard by their teachers and their words matter to their teacher. This sense of understanding really boosts up the learners confidence and they learn that they need to express their feelings without hesitation.

Teacher's kindness eliminates the student's fear of failing. When the teachers comfort them with kind words they are actually given assurance of success. The students look for their teacher's validation. Relationships, whether positive or negative have effects on the quality of someone's life. According to Hamre and Planta (2001) the wellbeing is accomplished specifically by providing love, intimacy, reassurance of worth, tangible assistance and guidance. To support this I would like to mention from Grigg , Gagnon, Huelsman, Kidder-Ashly and Ballard (2009) that relationship that includes support, a sense of belonging or being able to say what you really think and opportunities to help others have positive impacts. Without love, care, kindness, patience any relationship will grow weaker. Therefore, to maximize the learning goals and student's confidence, the teacher has to be patient all the time. There is no shortcut for

building a good teacher-student relationship. It requires the teacher's immense support, patience and kindness for a positive and transparent relationship.

### Ensuring Positive Classroom Environment:

Glen (2006) mentioned about the behaviours and practices of a good teacher, which are: good classroom organization, maintaining positive rapport with learners, possessing knowledge about subject matter etc. These qualities are needed for ensuring a successful teaching and learning environment.

According to Jacobson (2000), sensitive teachers recognize that some attitudes and behaviours can devalue student in school. A teacher should try to overlook the student's mistake to ensure their active participation and enthusiasm to learn. A teacher should always try to think like his student to understand their personal experiences and needs. A teacher's knowledge of subject, pedagogical competence, instrumental effectiveness and classroom management skills help to establish a good mentor-teacher relationship (Doll & Foley, 2010). Students who have negative academic experience tend to be reluctant to participate in classroom discussion or task(Jacobson, 2000).

### Providing Clear and Concise Instruction:

Many a times the students are not given the proper instruction to fulfilling a task. Without clear and easily understandable instructions the learners fail to perform in the classroom. A learner might want to participate or have the potential to perform the assigned tasks but for the unclear instruction they fail to work. This is one of the important factors that a teacher must be careful about.

### Including Emotional Intelligence for Innovative Learning:

According to Joshith (2012), a teacher carries two components to the classroom that impact on his leaning. One is expertise in the subject and the other is knowledge of teaching-learning methods. Feelings have a crucial factor and significance in the complete development of students and their regular activities. Teachers realize the role and impact of feelings and emotion in their activities. Emotion as a factor influences various areas such as our social relationship, learning process, mental and physical health, and work performance.

### Learning about Student's Desire for Affection and Approval:

Students follow their teachers. Whenever they are being appreciated by their teachers they get more enthusiastic to learn more. Teachers can influence their students emotionally in many ways. Lowman (1984) have mentioned that the learners have an emotional requirement to be granted and approved by their teachers. Learners find it positive when they realize that their teachers are fond of them. By appreciating the students, the teacher minimise the stress and anxiety from their students.

According to Harmer (2008), it is a significant feature in the intrinsic motivation of the students depending on the perception of what teachers think of them and how they are being treated by their teachers. So, students get motivated when they know that their teachers are the source of their inspiration.

### Enabling Students to Think out of Box:

In today's time when students are becoming tech-savvy, their learning patterns are also changing. The students get busy on their phone, internet. When they are at home they like clicking, editing, snapping and watching YouTube or playing on computers. In short, they are time poor, according to Haseman(2002).

Teachers might handover the materials to their learners but the learners make connections either on their own or by interacting with their friends. According to Epstein (2007) teachers need to know when to use the different strategies in which the learners can learn. It is necessary to know that a student can see the purpose and connectedness of what they are learning. Teacher should be helping the learners with it. Good teaching is always learner- centered.

## **Chapter 3**

### **My Experience and Observation**

I worked at Gateway International School for around 14 weeks as a trainee teacher. It helped me observe classes in real life. In this section I am going to discuss how the methods that I learned about teacher-student relationship in my courses were related to my internship experience.

In initial four weeks I was assigned to observe the classes of KG to STD 2 with a number of 30 students aged 5-8. The classes had English, Bengali, Mathematics and Arts subject. In the following three weeks I did observe classes from STD 3 to STD 4 and students were about 11/12 years. I was allowed only to observe classes during the entire internship period as the institution had to follow their rules and regulations. However, I managed to gather knowledge relevant to my topic.

The students of KG to STD 4 were 5-12 years old. The junior classes were filled with beginner level students who used to speak in their native language in classroom. Although the students from STD 1, 2, 3 and 4 could speak in English with their teachers.

I found that the class teachers started the classes of KG with a rhyme. All of the students performed on those rhymes. Every time the teacher called up a student who went in front of the classroom and following him/her the rest of them recited. The teacher engaged all the students in the recitation. The students were very happy when they participated with everyone and got praises from their teachers. Whenever the teacher showed compassion and appreciation the learners got motivated for learning more. Morning classes were always energetic and lively at the school.

Teacher's affection and kind words helped students who faced difficulty in study. I experienced this when one day a girl from class 4 could not concentrate on the language class and the teacher went to her and had few talks. Later on the teacher told me that she scored badly in Bengali and was sad. She told me that she tried to reassure her that she can do better in the next exam and also enquired about her difficulties. The teacher gave her a slot to come and meet her. Later on when the teacher had a conversation she came to know that that girl used to miss out reading thoroughly and could not understand many things. The language teacher took it into account and assigned her to a special care timing where the girl could have 40 minutes to discuss about the problems she faced and the teacher would help her solving these. This approach was so helpful for that girl that eventually she did well in her exam. It is one of the responsibilities of the teacher to support his/her students when they need help and care. Giving the student a special care did help her with the problems. A teacher should not only be teaching rather she should also know and learn about the problems their students face.

The students were addressed with their names in the classroom and not only that the teachers also could remember their names even when they were not around. I learned that remembering names played an important role to get the student's support. In STD 3, whenever the teacher started taking class she used to check if all the students were present. If not then she instantly wrote the names of the students on the whiteboard. The teacher did that because she was missing her and she wanted to convey that every student mattered to her even if s/he is absent.

In most of the classes the students were well-known by their teachers. Whenever they met their teachers outside the classroom or school compound the teacher named them correctly.



This plants a positive impact on the students and they were glad that they are known by their teachers. It elevated their confidence.

During my internship, I learned that all of the teachers had prepared themselves before entering the classrooms. While waiting in the teacher's common room many a times I noticed that the teachers were reading out from their books and preparing themselves with the good command over the subject matter. They even rechecked if they had the materials with them. Asking one day about it a literature teacher told me that he does not want to give blank looks if any questions are asked by his students. He also added that it is a pleasure to answer correctly to his students. Learning has no boundary. They learn every day and they generate numerous questions in their head. If any teacher shows any reluctance in answering to their questions, they become demotivated. Eventually they even stop questioning and if this happens, the learning will not take place. Students come to school for not only academic purposes. They come to schools to get shaped with proper education that will guide them for the rest of their life. Only bookish knowledge cannot ensure one's learning. It takes also patience, love, support, constant assistance and reassurance that build a successful life.

When any student questioned the teacher, most of the day the teacher did not only try to answer to the question but also motivate the student to think broadly further. I can share one of my observations on this. It was STD 4 where the Bengali teacher gave a class work for forming sentences with given words. The teacher also asked them to write few thoughts on their own apart from the bookish description. I saw that all the students were writhing sincerely and attentively. A good teacher follows this path. A teacher does not necessarily always answer. At time he or she can motivate the learners to explore their own potentials. After the task the teacher read out all the writings and she found that each and every student has different style of writing.

They simply shared their own comprehension through few sentences. This way the teacher also managed to learn about her student's lacking. She took side note in her evaluation copy so that she can learn which areas need to improve.

Moreover, it is not possible always to reply to each and every question of the students. There was a strategy that few of the teachers of the classes maintained. The teachers who were not able to answer asked the students to write it on a paper and give her. Later on she came up with the answers in the following classes. This way the teachers tried to connect to every student and the student also did not feel demotivated. From KG to STD 4 the teachers had lesson plan for the entire week. This precise and well-planned lesson plan helped them to stay focussed with the lecture. The students look for right directions and the teachers are supposed to direct them. So if in any way the teachers were not ready the learning atmosphere became less enjoyable. In order to maintain the learning environment pleasant and positive the teachers always prepared lesson plan, brought reading materials provided colourful papers to use for writing. In KG the students were taught to make flowers. They all participated and learnt well with their teachers. The art teachers of KG classes helped them patiently with cutting and sticking the glue on the papers.

In a beginner level classrooms at times became hard to tackle because of such number of students with so much noise and questions but I have found that the teachers of these classes are mostly patient. These students take time to learn and this is why dealing them with patience is much needed. They require affection and support. For a couple of hours they stay outside their home where they felt insecure without parents. But with constant support and care the teachers tried to make them feel at home. The teacher never scolded them at classes. One day a small boy was crying in the classroom and was not writing the spellings on his class copy. The assigned

teacher took him on his lap and hugged him. Few minutes later the boy stopped crying. The teacher asked him to sit and offered him with colours and drawing books. He started doing that happily. From this I can say that it is not right to expect the students to follow all the instructions. A classroom should be their own place where they can learn in their own style. A teacher did not impose his ideas on them. Rather, the teacher helped the boy to feel better and followed his choice of colouring. The teacher realized what his student needed. He might did not like to write on class copy that time. If the teacher would have forced him or told him the boy would have lost all his motivation to join the class. The teacher empathized the boy and helped him to relax. This way their relationship got better. When the methods of teaching are right the goals for learning can be easily achieved.

At school the students learn the differences between families, professions, class etc. It is the teacher's duty to establish a respectful environment for everyone. A teacher has to be non-biased. In my internship period there were altogether 4 students whose parents were the class or subject teachers of the same school. In KG there a small girl whose father was the Mathematics teacher and in STD 3 there was another girl whose mother taught Bengali. I never have found that any of them paid extra care or extra marks in the classrooms. All the students were treated in the same manner.

One of the observations I found very lovely is when two sisters together drew a picture of a woman and named it after their literature teacher. They presented it to the literature teacher and the teacher was so overwhelmed that all of us were happy. She hugged both of them and promised them that she would frame it and cherish the gift for rest of her life. This approach has great impact on students. Students get to learn how much they matter in their teacher's life. They feel highly appreciated and loved by the teacher. When one student witnesses such warmth and

affection he also gets positive about his teacher. To build transparent and positive relationship teachers always need to show affection and love that their students desire from them. Teachers' interest to learn about students' personal thought help build a positive teacher-student relationship. To support this I would share my experience from my observation.

One of the important areas that belong to my observation is about the anxiety the students had. There were many students who do not wanted to enter classroom out of fear. Fear of study, fear of criticism. Perhaps those were psychological but still they were preventing the students from learning in a proper way. The teachers tried their best to give the students assurance they would not have to obtain highest marks in exams or they do not need to worry about parents they were leaving behind while coming to school. This is a common scenario when the students start crying when parents drop them at school gate.

I personally have experienced it during the entire internship period at Gateway International School. It took a lot of time to get those students back to the track however the teachers did it in a positive way. For example, when the student reached school along with his parent, the teacher greeted her student and held his hand. The teacher started talking to him about the new story they were going to read. This way the teacher was actually diverting his mind from the feeling of fear. Afterwards the teacher asked him about his idea for any change within the project. The boy took few minutes and said that he wanted to recite a poem from his book. In this way the teacher managed to hold his attention towards his classroom and reduce his anxiety. This how the teacher secured his fear with love, trust and safety. The more teachers showed affection towards the students the more they trusted their teachers which is why they started participating in classrooms, they communicated with their teachers with little amount of hesitation and mostly

they were seeking the teacher's instruction on whatever task they had to even outside the classroom. The teacher-student relationship gets better by this.

With a kinder tone and empathetic attitude the teachers started to notice the difference lately. Most of the students specifically STD 3 and 4 did not feel shy and express their opinion in the classroom regarding studies or teaching. They even asked the teachers frequent questions about the lessons in the classroom. The teachers' immense support and constant motivation had helped them express themselves.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Recommendation**

Not all the students expect to learn in the same way. Some may want to work in groups; some may like to work individually. It is greatly needed to value students' opinion and establish the learning environment accordingly. The teachers can assign the tasks based on their choices to ensure maximum learning. Learners' classrooms should be followed by learners' choices. Teachers should always find interest in their students' personal choice, opinion and perceptions. This helps them to know about the learners' different opinions, ideas. Teachers should always stay motivated to learn more from their students without which the learning goals will remain unachieved.

Besides, showing interest helps to find better methods while teaching. When the teachers get to know about the differences among students' ideas then they can easily apply the most functional methods in their teaching. So it is important that the teachers should have interest to learn about their students.

Teachers should not always be sugar-coating their students mistakes. Rather, the student should know both about his strength and weakness. The teacher should teach them which areas are weaker and which are their strengths. This will eventually motivate them to overcome their shortcomings. One might has good command over speaking but needs improvements in writing skills. The teacher should inform him/her about it and offer him/her assistance. The teacher needs to motivate them with compassionate attitude and affection so that the learner do not get embarrassed and learn through practices. Teachers should help them to become confident and more enthusiastic by approaching to them with honesty and respect.

Teachers must not scold or get upset on the students if their performances are not satisfactory. Being wrong is not a wrong thing itself. Anyone can make mistakes and there is no boundary to learn. Teachers should have such approach where he is open to any error and mistakes. Students can make mistakes and this is a common thing but a teacher cannot punish them. Rather the teacher should be respectful enough to make them aware of their mistakes. Teachers should never hurt any students' self-respect. To establish positive and friendly teacher-student relationship the teachers should be friendly and respectful towards their students in every circumstance.

Teachers should never feel disgusted, angry on their students. Not every learner is a quick learner; some may take time to understand. It is highly recommended that the teachers should not feel negative about their students. A teacher should be empathetic and supportive to learn about their student. Teachers should always listen to them with patience. Students learn from their teacher and it is not wise things if the teacher is neglectful towards his students. Teachers should be listening to their students' feelings, ideas or any personal thought because this approach helps them learn and they feel greatly appreciated.

Teachers should enable their students to think empathetically. This is because now-a-days children are more likely to be self-centred. They are tech-friendly and find their world in cartoons, animated movies. They should be taught how to become empathetic. Without practice one cannot learn it. Due to small family structures and working parents the students spend a long time alone at home. Teachers should utilize the opportunity to teach them about kindness, sympathy by being respectful. Teachers should establish a reading session where the entire student can gather and read books. Later on the teacher can hold a surprise test from the books

they read. This way they can learn to communicate with peers and learn to become respectful to others.

Teachers should be a good listener. When a teacher listens to his students the students get enough space to talk, to express themselves and ask question-answers. Teacher should design such lesson plan where students' need to talk about their own ideas and opinions. Even if the students are very young the teacher should still make them to voice their opinions.

Teachers should have knowledge about necessary methods and teaching techniques. The teachers should know about enough techniques so that they can replace it with others when needed. It is not encouraged to stay clueless if any student asks anything unusual. The teachers should try their best to deal with their students. Showing respect, being compassionate, being empathetic, giving assurance of success- these are the elements teachers should always try to achieve. The given recommendations can be used for establishing a positive teacher-student relationship.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Teachers influence the life of students. At an early age learners start to learn. At first their learning starts from home and later on the teachers become the designer. They teach them morality, ethics and culture. Students' learn about life through their teachers so this is important for the teachers to teach with love and respect. A teacher can set examples through his behaviours and attitudes. They must not ridicule their students.

A teacher's impact on the student's life is immense. Wherever he/she will go the teachings will reflect through his/her work. It is the teacher's duty to make the teaching well-intentioned. Good teacher actually makes difference in student's life. Being an internee trainer was a good opportunity to experience the life of teachers. This internship gave me the chance to understand the role of teachers on young learners. My internship period was for three months and within this time I tried to gather a remarkable experience.

As I did my major in ELT, I have tried to register the qualities the teachers must have. To ensure a positive learning environment and successful learning teachers need to be patient, caring, kind, humorous and compassionate to their students. There are many other factors that cultivate a positive relationship with the students. While observing the classes in different sections I realized that every teacher needs to be caring and considerate because the students were sensitive and desire for their teachers' approval. They get highly motivated and encouraged when the teachers appreciated them. It has widened my observation. I tried to follow the characteristics of the teaching patterns which were related to my topic.

This is true that every teacher does not follow the same pattern or has the same skills to teach but one thing that kept encouraging me to be a good teacher is having immense patience and compassion for the students. This will help me to interact with my students in future.

Teachers with improper rules and techniques fail to achieve learning goals. My experience at Gateway International School has helped me a lot with this. Teachers need to be prepared with different techniques and methods in order to deal any situations.

To build a positive learning environment and successful learners, teachers must cultivate the relationship with their students first. Without a transparent and friendly relationship it is difficult to impact students' life. The internship experience has helped me with lot of meaningful insights.

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