


Chapter 8


Enhancing Teacher– Student Engagement: The Role of Intellectual Humility

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ABSTRACT

The book chapter explores the significant role of intellectual humility in cultivating strong teacher-student engagement within the landscape of education. It proposes that teachers modelling intellectual humility by admitting their mistakes and uncertainties signal students to take intellectual risks by asking questions or expressing their perspectives. Furthermore, the chapter also highlights that intellectually humble students are more open towards diverse viewpoints, are eager to learn from new information and expand their cognitive capacity, which are pivotal for active participation. Lastly, the chapter suggests various strategies for fostering intellectual humility in both teachers and students as well as for enhancing the advancements in the educational environments.

INTRODUCTION

In an academic world, teacher-student engagement stands as a bedrock for proficient knowledge acquisition, cultivating an environment where students feel encouraged and valued, increases their curiosity and active participation in their

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scholastic journey (Porter et al., 2024). This engagement is an effective interplay, influenced by a host of factors extending from teaching strategies to classroom environment. Emerging researches point out the pivotal role of intellectual virtues in constructing these interactions, and intellectual humility among them emerges as a prominent characteristic (Meagher et al., 2021).

Intellectual humility is defined as *the ability to recognize the limits of a person's knowledge and appreciating other's intellectual strengths* (Bağ et al., 2022; Dewaele & Moskowitz, 2020; Porter & Schumann, 2018; Wong & Wong, 2021) which goes beyond the boundaries of humility or mere modesty. It includes a willingness to accept one's fallibility, respecting other viewpoints and valuing them even when they differ from one's own opinions and being open to revise one's own beliefs when faced with new evidence or arguments (De Brasi, 2020; Dewaele & Moskowitz, 2020; Fortes et al., 2024; Porter & Schumann, 2018). Cultivating this virtue is very important especially in the field of education, as it holds significant implications in teacher-student interaction and engagement with each other and its influence in learning outcomes (Fortes et al., 2024; Porter et al., 2024).

From a philosophical and theological window, humility, including IH, has a history in education (Bağ et al., 2022). Western scholars, like Nietzsche and Spinoza, historically, considered humility to be negative, which is in contrast with the current viewpoint predominantly viewing it as a virtue (Briffett-Aktaş et al., 2024). Philosophically, IH was perceived as a virtue, characterizing an ideal teacher/scholar, reflecting a moral attitude, also considering it from an epistemological feature related to cognition (Bağ et al., 2022; Lam, 2023). IH's importance in education gained its focus lately (Bağ et al., 2022; Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2020), and is represented as an epistemic or intellectual virtue existing within a good learner (Baehr, 2016; Wong & Wong, 2021), or can also be viewed as an attitude (Bağ et al., 2022). Additionally, IH is perceived to be significant for wisdom-centric education (Huynh & Grossmann, 2020), enhancing learning process by promoting feedback engagement and enriching the learning outcomes (Wong & Wong, 2021), strengthening interpersonal relationships and healthy social engagement (Meagher et al., 2021), openness to revising one's own beliefs and acquiring new knowledge, and achieving educational goals (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2020; Wong & Wong, 2021).

In order to achieve such academic goals, studies have found that teachers who practice IH have the potential to transform the entire classroom dynamics. By modelling intellectual humility in class such as admitting one's mistakes, confusion, or ignorance, teachers can create a safer and comfortable learning environment for students. Such an approach signals students that intellectual limitations are universal and it is acceptable to not be informed about everything. Evidence from research highlights that teacher expressing intellectual humility in class, encourages students to feel more supportive and accepted along with a feeling of belongingness with

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