ABSENTEEISM: JEOPARDIZING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

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Absenteeism is a very alarming problem that needs immediate solution. These chronically absent students produce a ripple effect because this dilemma will not only affect the students but the teachers, administrators and society as well. As defined by Timothy Keter (2013), "absenteeism in school is the habit of staying away from school without providing a genuine or any reason for not attending classes." This habit can negatively affect their academic performance and hinders them in learning new skills and abilities, hence, giving them poor development in many aspects.

This negative habit among the students can be caused by several factors. One of the most usual reasons is their lack of interest in attending their classes. The student might find it hard to grasp information from the teacher's discussion or he or she cannot cope with the activities and school works which push him or her not to attend the class anymore. Another factor is demotivation. If the students encounter number of failures such as low scores in tests, cannot answer in an oral recitation or lack of support from parents, they are more likely to absent in class.

Further, a negative school environment can also be a factor. For instance, the student was being bullied by his classmates, the teacher scolds him or her from time to time or the teacher does not effectively teach the lessons. These could be some reasons why students resist going to school. Also, personal problems could also occur while studying such as family problem, financial struggles and some health problems which cause a student not to attend the class regularly.

If these problems would not be addressed immediately, these can lead to more serious problems. According to Loren Murcia (2015), those students are at a disadvantage both
socially and academically. She said that "they miss out on critical stages of social interaction and development with their peers, while simultaneously limiting their academic progress." This means that absenteeism can result into low self-esteem and students may encounter difficulties in academics.

One of the perils of being away from school is that these students may become liabilities to the community because they would not be able to contribute a lot to the progress of the society. They are the ones who are prone into committing crimes or involve in other destructive behaviors. In fact, Kate Kelly (2014) said that "missing school in the early grades can have a snowball effect. It sets kids up to fall behind in the fundamental reading skills they need in order to move on to more complicated work."

Meanwhile, there are still solutions or preventions to this particular problem. If the teacher notices that a student is often absent in class, it is important to notify the parents so that the teacher and parents would work together to take an action regarding this matter. The teacher must also avoid scolding the students or point out their mistakes because it may cause demotivation or lack of interest in studying. The teacher has to make sure that he or she is creating an interactive learning and commend those students who are doing well in class.

Although there are no specific strategies in order to decrease the cases of absenteeism in the class, the teacher must still consider the best techniques that he or she can apply in the class in able to encourage the students to go to school regularly and be willing to learn the lessons. Sometimes, what the learners need are just tap at the back and some words of encouragements for them to pursue studying. Teachers must always remember that they are not teaching just for their students to learn the lessons in the textbooks but also to touch many lives and inspire the students to pursue their igniting dreams.
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