



Which Criteria Do Young People Use to Perceive Teachers as Authentic or Fake?

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Abstract

Both cultural optimists and pessimists see schools and mass media competing for the attention of children and adolescents. Mass media are however winning this confrontation. As the media provide entertainment as well as challenges, both parties see a clear danger for schools to be perceived as a dull place, where teachers try to force tedious information unto pupils. But maybe the reality is more nuanced, as we suspect pupils have different expectations towards the formal and the informal based on the main selection tool for information: authenticity. We expect the way pupils perceive schools and teachers as authentic, is essential in explaining why they value the school as a source of information.

Understanding authenticity will make a fundamental contribution to the better understanding of the interactions going on inside the classroom. Through the analysis of empirical data based on qualitative research, we examined the following question: which criteria do young people use to perceive teachers as authentic or fake?

We found 4 important criteria that pupils use to perceive their teachers as being authentic: a profound knowledge of the subject, a passion for the job, the importance of a unique experience and a well-balanced distance between pupil and teacher.