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UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION THEORY AND THE FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOL

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Uncertainty reduction theory, proposed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese, aims to explain the way acquaintances and strangers go through the process of getting to know one another, reducing uncertainty or doubt that may exist. The theory describes this phenomenon using 8 axioms and 28 theorems. This paper seeks to explore the ways the principles of this theory can be used to create a safe, welcoming, and healthy culture of learning between students in the same class during the first days of school when students are getting to know their classmates. Educational theory and philosophy point to the necessity that a safe and welcoming learning environment is quintessential to student success and learning. Research methods used to explore URT in the classroom setting include a literature review and collection of peer-reviewed articles related to uncertainty reduction theory, educational theory, philosophy, and practice, as well as adolescent culture and psychology. Results of the review of relevant literature indicate an extensive amount of literature surrounding uncertainty reduction theory. One of the most common angles that exists in the literature examining uncertainty reduction theory is the position of poking holes in it, or rather, exploring the ways in which it falls short. Additionally, this literature review also provides possible applications for the principles and concepts found in URT to classroom settings, specifically for reducing uncertainty between students and their classmates during the first days of school. Findings include real-life, practical applications of URT for educators to use for the purpose of helping students feel safe, welcome, and comfortable in the learning environment by facilitating relationships between the students and reducing any uncertainty that may exist between them. The significance of this research is to discover the real-life applications of URT and how the principles of this theory function in a real-life situation where it is vital for the strangers/acquaintances (the students) to reduce the uncertainty between/among them in order to foster a healthy learning environment.