

Exploration and Practice of Life Education Curriculum Based on Embodied Cognition Theory

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Abstract: In recent years, the suicide rate of adolescents has been increasing year by year, and life and health problems have become the most important in education. It is urgent to promote the construction of the curriculum of life education effectively. In view of the “vacuity” and “fragmented” state of traditional life education, this paper combs the teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching methods, and teaching evaluation of life education from the perspective of embodied cognition theory, to explore the construction of positive experience of life education curriculum.

Keywords: Embodied cognition; Experiential; Life education

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1. Introduction

The safety of students’ lives has always been an important educational issue for the state, the society, and the parents. In recent years, the suicide rate has been increasing year by year. In our country, 19% of young people die of suicide every year, and 10.86–30.5% of them consider taking their own life^[1]. Traditional learning in schools has traditionally focused on knowledge and skills, with few opportunities to systematically learn about life issues, and develop awareness, practice, and experience. Even if life education is carried out, it is often in a state of “vacuity” and “fragmentation,” lacking systematicity, depth, and width, and separated from the physical and mental development law and real life of college students. However, life education is a kind of whole-person education. Therefore, based on the embodied cognition theory, this paper carries out the exploration and practice of life education curriculum.

2. Related concepts

2.1. Embodied cognition theory

Embodied cognition theory is a new cognitive approach that introduces the body as the subject into the cognitive process, and changes the former idea that the cognition of detached cognition depends only on the brain and thought. It holds that cognition is the result of the interaction of body, mind, and environment, and

its focus is on the interaction of body feeling, body experience, and situation ^[2]. It also accords with the whole-person education idea of life education.

2.2. Positive experience life education

Positive experience life education is based on the concept of positive psychology. In the process of life education, educators create reasonable situations and set up corresponding activities, aiming at life education, and carry out life education activities in a planned way ^[3]. In the process of experiencing life education activities with the experiencer, the educator guides the experiencer to experience the connotation, essence, and characteristics of life independently and trains the students to make independent choices and judgments, to help students understand, appreciate, respect, and cherish life, improve survival skills and quality of life, realize the value of life education model.

3. Problems in traditional life education curriculum

The detached cognition, which deviates from embodied cognition, deviates from the essential requirement of life education ^[4]. The following problems exist in the teaching method from the perspective of disembodied cognition: the teaching goal is fixed when the teaching goal is set, students' physical and mental experience is neglected, especially the status of the body in the teaching, the teaching content is de-contextualized, the belief and infatuation to the objective and static scientific knowledge, the formalization of teaching process, the replicable and predictable teaching contents, teaching methods and teaching situations, and the closed teaching environment, the desalination of life education by teaching methods ^[5]. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to "body" and change teaching methods.

4. The embodied possibility of life education

The traditional life education is separated from the students' life practice. Life education should go from being detached to being embodied. The embodied coupling of life education is embodied in the integration of body and mind, the continuity of growth, and the contextuality of experience ^[6]. The unity of body and mind is the affirmation of the whole body and mind, the unity of body and mind. Embodied cognition emphasizes the continuity of the subject's physical and mental development in time and space, which is consistent with the characteristics of the object of life education; in the course design, the curriculum of life education is constructed according to students' physical and mental development law, running through each basic education without interruption. Embodied cognition theory holds that cognition is based on the body and rooted in the situation, and the situation is one of the key conditions to ensure the generation of cognition ^[7]. Life education should provide the true situation, enable the student to temper the labor quality, the idea, the custom in the situation experience, and promote the comprehensive development of body and mind. Therefore, the embodied trend of life education should focus on the integrity of body and mind, follow the order of development, pay attention to individual experience, and emphasize the authenticity of the situation, to help students develop in an all-round way ^[8].

5. Positive experience of life education curriculum construction

Education is the education of life. Facing the current "great changes in a century," college students not only need to learn a variety of professional knowledge and skills, but also need to learn how to face the uncertainties

of life, cope with loss and expectations of failure, and improve mental resilience and quality of life^[9]. On the basis of the existing practice, this paper sums up and condenses, according to the embodied cognition theory, starting from the students' actual "real problems," and following the law of students' physical and mental development, it emphasizes the exploration of curriculum reform in teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching strategies, and teaching evaluation, and forms the "4 + 8 + 5 + N" positive experiential life education classroom system.

5.1. Teaching goal: The teaching goal of knowing and doing four-in-one

Embodied cognition theory holds that the basic core of cognition and emotion formation is the fulcrum of communication between humans and the environment. People and their environment should be paid attention to so that students' minds, bodies, and environment become an organic system. The goal of life education should be to understand, explore, practice, and expand life^[10]. Emotion promotes cognition to be further internalized, and cognition helps emotion to be further sublimated and finally practiced and applied to life.

5.2. Teaching content: Eight major project-based curriculum structure

The essence of education is education about life. In the new era, college students not only need to learn all kinds of professional knowledge and skills but also need to learn how to face all kinds of uncertainty in life, cope with loss and expectation failure, and improve mental resilience and quality of life. Therefore, the positive experience life education revolves around life and survival "three-life education," taking the student's life perplexity and the difficult question as the cut-in point, the theme-based curriculum will be set as the eight modules of meaning of life, life growth, life inheritance, life loneliness, life connection, life resilience, life loss, and life choice^[11]. Through discussion and sharing, models, and case stories, "The Meaning of Life" project helps students answer how to find their own life value and meaning, to explore what kind of life is worth living. The "Growth of Life" project helps students understand how life forms develop and change from birth to death by exploring self-access. The project "Life Inheritance" helps students understand the relationship with family, understand the desire to attach to and escape from family, and explore how to make family inheritance a resource rather than a constraint. The project "The Loneliness of Life" helps students to establish their inner self-boundary and learn to enjoy loneliness. The project "Life Connection" focuses on the common and confusing topics of interpersonal relationships, love, and intimate relationships, and helps students develop the ability to love and be loved. "Resilience of life" focuses on stress management and frustration education, and helps students enhance the resilience of life through quality development programs such as speed 30S and the life and death power grid. The "Loss of Life" feature talks about life and death, as well as loss in daily life, through debates, classic film appreciation, and so on, separation, lovelorn, lost items or pets, and so on, to help students correctly understand death, establish a scientific concept of life and death. The project "Life Choice" returns to the autonomy of life and helps students to further consolidate their autonomy and choose the value and meaning of life.

5.3. "5P" positive experience teaching mode

Life education is a kind of education mode that takes human life as the center and pays attention to the education of life values, life skills, and life consciousness^[12]. The positive experience teaching method is a student-centered, experience-centered teaching model. The introduction of positive experience teaching methods in life education in colleges and universities can make students better experience and understand the nature and meaning of life, and improve their consciousness of cherishing and protecting life, cultivate a positive attitude towards life and values. Combining the characteristics of life education and students' cognitive development,

the teaching model of “positive situation introduction, positive activity experience, positive feeling sharing, positive action development, and positive quality evaluation” is developed. In experiential teaching, teachers can guide students to reflect on the questions raised by role-playing, situation simulation, group discussion, group games, and other ways to help students grow. Teachers play an important role in teaching, not only in creating learning situations but also in guiding students to gain understanding and experience. Teaching evaluation adopts the methods of self-evaluation, others’ evaluation, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation, and pays attention to the cultivation and promotion of students’ positive qualities.

5.4. Multiple implementation paths

The life education of positive experience is based on curriculum education, which includes practice education, activity education, culture education, and cooperation education ^[13].

Curriculum education is the main position of life education. The curriculum is the main carrier of life education content, but also an important implementation position of life education. The curriculum education of life education is mainly carried out in such aspects as the development of specialized courses, the infiltration of subject courses, and the development of school-based courses. Offering special courses is a direct way to systematically impart knowledge of life education, cultivate healthy life values, and implement the goals of life education. At the same time, life education is integrated with various disciplines to understand life from different angles ^[14]. At the same time, we should develop a school-based curriculum to guide students to understand and deal with the relationship between individual and others, individual, family, and society, individual and country, individual and nature.

Practice education helps to enhance the life education experience. Practice is an important source of enhancing students’ life experience and education experience. The practical education of life education mainly includes two aspects: the leading of theme activities in school and the experience of practical activities outside school ^[15]. Theme activity is an important carrier of life education, which helps to deepen students’ life experiences and strengthen the effect of life education. For example, Life Education Painting Contest, Life Cafe, Life Experience, and other activities can enhance students’ life experiences. Secondly, we can carry out the experience of practice activities outside school. The students are guided to put the concept of life education into practice and apply it to life.

Cultural education is committed to creating an atmosphere of life education. One is to construct the spiritual culture of school life education; to enhance the quality of life of school teachers and students as the spiritual core, based on the school teachers’ and students’ life experiences, the pursuit of idealized, higher-level life education spirit; to integrate the concept of life education into the construction of school spirit, teaching spirit, and study spirit; to guide students to connect learning with the promotion of life quality and the realization of life value; and to realize the importance of shaping their own life, thus clarify the learning goal and direction, and enhance the sense of mission and responsibility of students. The second is the construction of school life education material culture. Based on the school-running characteristics and development objectives, the school is committed to building a regional, artistic, and humanistic campus, to transform the existing natural environment, improve infrastructure and equipment, and embody the breath of life education. At the same time, we should start from the details, make good use of each small element of life education, and choose the appropriate presentation according to the characteristics of each place in the school. For example, planting flowers and trees on the schools’ land to create a good natural environment; using multi-function rooms to build life education activity rooms and experience rooms; introducing advanced related educational equipment to meet the needs of life education, etc., we can also make use of the advanced educational technology media

to develop the learning platform of Internet + life education, build the excellent cultural resources of life education, and at the same time integrate the life education resources into the excellent Chinese traditional culture, creating a good atmosphere for life education.

Furthermore, we need cooperation in educating people to strengthen life education. Life education is an organic whole, while taking school as the main body to carry out life education, it needs to give full play to the educational function of family and community, taking family as the foundation and society as the platform, constructing the implementation network of cooperative education^[16]. One is to carry out life education hand in hand on the basis of family to reach a common understanding of life education with families and promote home-school co-education. The second is to rely on the community to create an atmosphere of life education. The school can share resources with the community, rely on the community environment, and cooperate with the community to carry out life education. The school can link with the community, unite the fire department, the medical department, and so on in the community according to the different life education content and the activity theme, and enhance the student life education experience through the lecture, observation, experience, and so on; it can also coordinate with different educational institutions in the community to carry out lectures, salons, and other activities to normalize life education work.

6. Conclusion

Life education is a system engineering that requires the concerted efforts of all sectors of the community to promote the mental health of young students and their understanding of life. The exploration and practice of life education curriculum is an important entrance to life education in our country. We hope that the whole society will pay attention to the life education of teenagers through the reform of curriculum teaching.

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