

The Application of Educational Psychology in Higher Education and Teaching

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Abstract: Educational psychology is one of the important disciplines in university teaching, with a wide range of applications, which can effectively improve the quality of education and teaching in universities and cultivate more professional talents. This article selects higher education and teaching as the object and takes the application of educational psychology in education and teaching as the starting point. Firstly, it elaborates on the significance of the application of educational psychology in higher education and teaching, then analyzes the current application status, and finally proposes specific application strategies for reference.

Keywords: Educational psychology; Universities; Education and teaching; Application strategy

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1. Introduction

In this era, many industries urgently need a large number of high-quality talents to meet the development needs of various fields^[1-2]. Universities are putting more focus on mental health education with the constantly growing psychological problems among college students. In this context, in order to improve the quality of education in universities and enhance the psychological quality of college students to cope with difficulties in learning and life, teachers should pay high attention to their psychological education. The article takes university education and teaching work as an example to discuss the application of educational psychology in this work^[3]. By applying educational psychology to education and teaching, universities will realize the importance of educational psychology and also exert importance on its application forms. The article starts from three aspects: application significance, application status and application strategies, in order to improve the quality of higher education and teaching.

2. The significance of educational psychology in the application of higher education and teaching

2.1. Helps to ensure student health

Psychology is an applied discipline aimed at mastering the psychological activity status of students. It can

assist teachers in analyzing students' psychological problems in the classroom of universities so as to guide teachers or class teachers, helping students to adjust their psychology and solve problems. In today's rapidly developing society, various external pressures have significantly impacted college students, which may lead to psychological problems and confusion ^[4]. In addition, college students are in an important stage of psychological development and their ability to withstand external pressure is relatively weak, leading to a series of problems. Students have a strong rebellious mentality, they are unwilling to express their opinions to others and even deliberately hide some psychological problems, pretending to be strong. Therefore, teachers should play the role of "friends," use psychological theories and techniques to explore the psychological behavior of students, identify problems in-time, provide guidance, answer the problems they face and work together with them to truly ensure the psychological health of students and promote their healthy growth.

2.2. Helps to improve the quality of teaching management

Psychology is a science specialized in studying human social interaction. The application of psychology in higher education can enhance emotions between teachers and students, make students willing to share their thoughts with teachers, help teachers better understand their psychological state, and identify their problems and find solutions. The increase in communication and interaction between teachers and students effectively shortens the distance between them, thereby improving the quality of teaching and education and making every effort to guide them on the path of healthy development ^[5].

2.3. Helps to enhance work foresight

Applying psychology to education and teaching in universities can help teachers better understand students' thoughts, future development plans, psychological activities, and preferences and concerns in daily life ^[6]. Teachers can adopt differentiated guidance methods based on their differences, promoting their development towards positive aspects and laying a solid foundation for their future development.

3. The current situation of the application of educational psychology in higher education and teaching

3.1. Poor psychological resilience of students

Students entering universities for higher education may find it difficult to adapt to college life due to being separated from their family environment and starting a collective life for the first time. Under various discomforts, students are prone to conflict. Many students grow up at home and cannot tolerate any injustice ^[7]. If conflict occurs, they may engage in bad behavior, causing negative effects. Some students may give up after small failures and are unwilling to take the initiative to try again, which indicates that their psychological resilience is poor.

3.2. Lagging of higher education and teaching courses

Psychological health education is an important task actively carried out by universities but the current education system is relatively lagging. During the teaching period of some universities, the focus is on explaining professional knowledge to students but the psychological health of students is ignored, or only psychological health education is given as an elective course, which is not given enough attention by school teachers. Some extreme behaviors are caused by students' psychological problems. Although the school will minimize the negative impression of the incident in the future, it has not found the root cause of the incident. In addition, the mental health education faculty in schools is weak and cannot provide better advice to students.

4. Strategies for the application of educational psychology in higher education and teaching

4.1. Adhere to the principle of student-centered and implement the student-centered status

Psychological theory suggests that a person's potential comes from their own efforts, such as being able to directly or indirectly eliminate the negative effects of others on their psychology and behavior through their own psychological cues. In educational psychology, students' ability to learn independently can directly impact their academic performance. In educational and teaching activities, teachers only need to provide students with certain guidance and assistance. Therefore, when applying psychology to student education and teaching, it is necessary to put students first, give sufficient attention to their opinions and perspectives in daily work, and guide students in class to discover their potential. For example, when designing a course teaching plan, teachers must base the course's design on the students' actual situation. In the pre-class preparation work, teachers should fully analyze the learners and deeply understand that students are not just passive recipients in the classroom^[8]. When analyzing students, it is important to recognize that there is a certain difference between the current learning situation and the educational purpose of this class and it is important for the educators to analyze the reasons for this difference from different perspectives. After determining the learning needs and levels of students, it is also important to determine the learning objectives of students at each level, which is the focus of curriculum design. At this stage, teachers can categorize students' learning objectives at each level based on the previous analysis results and Bloom's taxonomy educational objectives. Then, teachers can decide on students' learning content, tasks and progress. For example, for highly practical knowledge, students can first learn a simple version of the practice, guide them to handle specific steps in simple practice and then teach them more complex practical operations, following the basic principle of gradual progress to adapt to the current level of student cognitive development. After determining the learning tasks and activities, teachers also need to determine teaching strategies in teaching design, adjust teaching methods based on students' learning needs and specific situations and determine teaching methods that are student-centered and meet their learning needs.

4.2. Emphasize encouragement and cultivate student confidence

From a psychological perspective, the environment plays an important role in individual behavior. Therefore, managers can directly influence individual needs by setting specific goals, thereby generating motivational effects^[9]. For students, teachers are a closely connected group in school and every word and action can indirectly influence them. Sometimes, a motivating word and a glance from a teacher can make students feel confident. Therefore, teachers should be more motivated when educating students, strictly abide by professional ethics, improve the relationship between teachers, inspire them to solve problems they encounter in their studies and life, regain their confidence in learning and life and improve the quality of education. For example, college counselors are the group with the closest connection to students, responsible for ideological and political education, class construction and class management. College counselors should fully utilize relevant psychology knowledge and strengthen college students' management. In daily work, it is important to make full use of encouraging words and form a positive learning attitude and good behavioral habits through verbal, material or spiritual encouragement. In teaching and management, it is important to proactively communicate with students who have developed psychological pressure due to poor academic and living conditions. In communication with these students, it is important to use encouraging language to help them discover their strengths. Applying motivational theories from psychology to the cultivation of self-confidence among college students.

4.3. Using psychological cues to provide students with more encouragement

Psychological suggestion is a typical conditioned response that not only stimulates people's memory potential but also plays an important role in their thinking and action ^[10]. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should also flexibly use psychological suggestion methods to guide students' learning attitudes and behaviors, thereby promoting their physical and mental development. Take English as an example, many people have a poor foundation in English, and there is a great sense of inferiority in learning English as a foreign language, and their enthusiasm for learning is also very low. This requires English teachers to apply the relevant principles of psychology to English teaching and stimulate their learning enthusiasm. English teachers should treat every student equally, pay attention to discovering their strengths and achievements, praise any small progress they make and use physical actions such as praising and nodding to give children positive psychological cues. Previous studies have shown that the more subtle psychological cues are, the more pronounced their effects become. It includes the teacher's encouraging gaze and nodding movements, which are implicit psychological cues that help alleviate students' mental tension and enable them to face their studies with a positive attitude. In English class, many people find it difficult to concentrate and sometimes interfere with others' studies. If teachers blindly use verbal criticism and other means to correct students' wrong behaviors, it will cause great obstacles to the teaching process, hinder the protection of students' self-esteem, and make the teacher-student relationship more tense. In response to this phenomenon, English teachers can apply the theory of nonverbal cues from psychology to the classroom. For example, they can step down from the podium and gently pat their classmates as a reminder or use methods such as eye warnings to help students adjust their learning mentality. Through these nonverbal psychological cues, students can actively change their negative learning attitudes and behaviors ^[11].

4.4. Emphasize emotional communication and establish good partnerships

Psychologically speaking, the emotional experience is most profound when touching and touching the body. Positive emotional communication can inspire people better than boring teaching sessions ^[12]. So, university teachers, counselors or other teachers should strengthen emotional communication with students, which is a very important task ^[13]. Especially as university administrators or teachers, they play a crucial role in handling emotional communication with students ^[14]. The prerequisite for emotional communication between teachers and students is to show sufficient respect to students and view students equally in classroom and extracurricular communication, rather than blindly criticizing and denying their views. To show sufficient respect to students, teachers must examine their teaching work from the student's perspective, understand the class's specific situation and improve the shortcomings in education and management work so that students can feel the teacher's understanding and respect. With the passage of time, the emotional communication between teachers and students has also established a good foundation for interpersonal relationships. Teachers should respect their students while also trusting them. The self-control of college students still needs to be strengthened and they will also face many problems in their studies and lives. However, some students are unwilling to communicate with teachers due to their authority. After being criticized by teachers, some students gradually lose confidence in their studies and lives and the relationship between students and teachers is becoming increasingly tense. Therefore, when conducting education and teaching, teachers should give students sufficient understanding of their difficulties and firmly believe that students can improve through their own reflection and improvement under the guidance of teachers.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the application of educational psychology can improve the quality of teaching and has significant implications for the comprehensive development of students^[15]. Although there are still flaws in the application of psychology in higher education teaching, it is believed that there will be some changes through continuous reform and improvement. The article combines the current situation and proposes to adhere to the principle of student-centered and implement the student-centered status. Besides, educators can also emphasize encouragement and cultivate student confidence, use psychological cues to provide students with more encouragement, emphasize emotional communication and establish good partnerships to cultivate more talents and improve the quality of teaching in universities.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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