

An Analysis of the Conversation Art and Skills of College Counselors

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ABSTRACT

The communication between college counselors and students is the most direct and effective method for ideological and political education. The college counselors themselves should get well prepared for the communication, during which some rules and strategies should be followed. It is exactly the art and skills of conversation that assist college counselors in guiding students, realizing ideal education performance.

Keywords: *College Counselor; Student Work; Art of Conversation; Skill; Education Effects*

1. INTRODUCTION

Counselors are the backbones of the ideological and political education for college students. They organize, implement, and instruct the education and students' administration work. They should be encouraged to become both the tutor and the friend accompanying students' growth and healthy life. [1] This is the requirement put forward in the Regulations on the Construction of Counselor Team in Ordinary Colleges. College counselors are responsible for the students' ideological and political education, of which the ways and forms are diversified. Face-to-face communication is direct, adaptive and can monitor real-time performance, so it is one of the most direct and effective methods in ideological and political education. Therefore, it is important work for college counselors to communicate with students, which is a good way to interact with and educate students. Through communication, counselors can get a deep understanding of students, know their ideological ideas, so that the counselors can carry out education accordingly, guide students to think and behave properly and promote the all-round development of students. In a word, college counselors should adopt lifesome, personalized approaches to talk with students regularly, know what students are thinking and stand in their shoes to figure out how to solve problems in school life and learning. In this way, they can truly become tutors and friends of students, realizing effective education.

2. PREPARATION FOR COMMUNICATION

2.1. Get to know about the objects and choose the right place

College counselors should take different measures to obtain a deep understanding of students. For example, they can observe in daily work, communicate with teachers, and talk to students' parents if necessary, through which they can accumulate students' basic information like family background, habits, characteristics, mental and physical health, learning foundation, methods to deal with others and so on. Some certain behavior of students can be caused by the current reality, or shaped by past events, some are even deep-rooted in their growing journey. The information can lay a good foundation for the conversation. If a counselor does not have a complete understanding of what the student is thinking about, the communication can become empty talk. Therefore, it is an important step for a successful conversation to choose and harness the condition for different objectives. If the student is shy or the conversation may concern privacy, a place gathering lots of teachers or students is not suitable. Finding a comfortable place that can make the objective relaxed will narrow the psychological distance between the two. In this way, students feel trusted and respected, and the teachers can understand students' feelings, capture what they are concerning via delicate movements to find suitable countermeasures. The places can vary from office, classroom, hall, battlefield, playground, dining hall, to dormitory. As General Secretary Xi Jinping stated at the national university ideological and political work conference that we should make unremitting efforts to promote the harmony and stability of colleges and universities, cultivate a rational and peaceful state of mind, strengthen humanistic care and psychological counseling,

and build colleges and universities into an exemplary place of stability and unity. [2]

2.2. Get prepared mentally and enrich the substance

Communication, in the form of word exchange, is the exchange between the minds of the two. To read other people's minds by your thoughts requires the long-term accumulation of cultural literacy and psychological emergency response capacity. College counselors need to improve their psychological qualities. For instance, some get easily excited and impatient, and they are prone to lose their temper when students commit a mistake. Some are such kind men that are easy to be persuaded to do what you want. It may fail the goal of the educator. There are also some counselors taking simple measures and not standing firmly on their ground, then led by the students. However, some excellent can open students' mind, pass positive energy through remarks or a meaningful look, becoming a beacon for students. There are some cases where counselors don't unravel the knot in students' heart, but add on the load on their minds, resulting in negative mentality. To sum up, human psychological activity follows a certain rule. Only by grasp the rule, can we adjust psychological states of ourselves and the students. The conversation seems to be easy, but the purpose can't be achieved if we don't learn psychology, or reasoning skills. There are rules to follow in the conversation with reasoning. The counselor needs to be skilled in reasoning for some difficult problems. Otherwise, it is often difficult to achieve the purpose of the conversation if without certain reasoning knowledge and skills.

3. PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNICATION

3.1. Show respect and sincerity to students

Respect is a prerequisite for a successful conversation. Counselors should correct their own attitude, become cordial, sincere, and natural, which is not only conducive to the elimination of tension and antagonistic emotions, but also make students feel the counselor's care and love them, so as to enhance their respect and trust of the counselor. This requires counselors to find their own roles. Teachers and students are equal while discussing. Students can express their own ideas, and sense the fairness, patience and love to disarm themselves. Only by establishing a good rapport, can the students be lightened to understand and accept teachers' intention. If the students are optimistic and generous, counselors can get things straight. For those who are shy and sensitive, counselors can be euphemistic to let them reflect on themselves. In the collective activities such as theme class meeting when students are required to speak, there is always some students who don't want to go to the stage

because of a variety of reasons. At this time, counselors can adopt different ways of mobilization and motivation for different students. If students are not ready, we can say that even the speech is not ideal, it is also a good chance to challenge yourself and speak, and if successful, it is a commendable experience. Would you like to have a try? For those who are coy and deem themselves as not good at speaking, we can say that people who are pretty inwards winning by their sincerity rather than words. I prefer solid perception of flowery words. I'm sure you have real thoughts that touch people's hearts more than flowery words.

3.2. Persuade students through the reasoning

Conversation education requires respect for people's personality, and emphasizes convincing people by reason.[3] It may become counterproductive if students can't be convinced. Only through reason, can students have rational thinking, and finally make a correct judgment, then change the attitude. The "reason" here includes the human nature, the thinking, and the fact. Human nature refers to the daily moral ethics. We can show students moral and ethical norms, so that students reflect on their own behavior. The entire conversation should be based on objective facts without exaggeration, otherwise, the counselor's words will be pale and weak, hard to play a good effect.

3.3. Care for students with the love

Bai Juyi, the Chinese poet of the Tang dynasty, wrote that nothing touches the heart but the true feelings with words and righteous tones. Whereas, an unwitting frown may let students be looked down upon. Counselors should combine reasons and human feelings, adhere to their own principles case-by-case, in order to sincerely convince students. It is the pursuit of college counselors to become student's life tutor and friends. No pains, no gains. It is no exception in emotion. It is necessary to constantly promotes the psychological compatibility between educators and students, and the two-way integration of speech and behavior, ideological quality, personality and moral character, so as to form psychological harmony, emotional integration and resonance. [4] However, it is not enough just to highlight the emotional atmosphere during the conversation. It is necessary to give students sincere love in thought, work, study and life. When the students are in difficulty, counselors should help actively; when the students are confused, guide them patiently; when the students get good grades, congratulate... Of course, the emotions work basically for reasoning. Only by achieving a change in attitude when students are in a rational state will this change be firm and stable. To be good at observing the changes in the emotions of students, analyze the reasons, find out what students are concerned about, and make the students feel that the teacher's concern is

real and sincere. Then the two are naturally getting close, and the conversation will get twice the result with half the effort.

4. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

4.1. Chat to narrow the gap

A heart-to-heart talk requires one master people's mental growth rule. One needs to make use of pedagogical, psychological, ideological, and political theories and practices to learn the needs and puzzles of the other one, guide him or her to express the true feelings and thoughts while talking.[5] People tend to open themselves to people who are honest with them. When students are emotional about what they want to talk about, they can shorten the distance between the two sides in the "idle talk" to understand each other's thoughts and behaviors, and then get on the right track. A seemingly casual chat can also directly or indirectly help understand some students. Only the two-way communication with sincerity can produce resonance effect and have emotional reward. Counselors can properly tell something about themselves, such as the experience of their struggle, the lessons of success and failure, some confusion in their growth, and so on. It is the attempt to look for resonance, form a relaxed happy atmosphere among teachers and students in the topics of common interest. Shorten the psychological distance, make students feel the counselor amiable, and get close to the counselor and trust them.

4.2. Learn to listen and encourage students to speak their minds

The ideal interpersonal relationship is based on the exchange of ideas. The conversation is a two-way activity. If students don't want to talk, they will fall into an awkward situation which may impede the conversation. Whether the average student or the student cadre, they tend to report good news instead of bad ones. Therefore, guiding students, to tell the truth, is the first step for a smooth conversation. At the same time, the counselor must learn to listen to the desires and needs of students, listen to their emotions and their thoughts, pains, differences, and relationships with others. [6] Therefore, instructors should become delicate, friendly, cordial, and magnanimous, and learn to appreciate, to create a good conversation situation and eliminate students' fear and tension. Kind words can be used to arouse students' desire to speak. If they change the attitude from "ask me to say" to "I want to say", the conversation is half successful. In the practical work, make friends with students, when students have difficulties, we take the initiative to help; when students are confused, we guide them enthusiastically; when the students get good grades, we congratulate them.

4.3. Hold the balance degree in the conversation

As the saying goes, a good word warms three winters, a harsh word makes a cold June. The criticizing may incur students' reverse psychology. The key of the communication is not focusing on students' wrong doings but kindly helping analyze the reasons behind the mistakes. It is believed that every student has shining points worth appreciating. We need to acknowledge their progresses on thinking, acting and learning, help them complement the weakness with the strengths and leverage potential positive elements. If creating a harmonious, equal, democratic atmosphere, the counselors can subtly influence students' thoughts. The conversation can be concluded when the puzzles are solved, the right opinions are accepted by students and an agreement is made between the two sides. After that, it is necessary to make a timely and careful summary to see whether the purpose has been completely achieved, whether there is any thoughtlessness in the conversation, and whether there is any disrespect or even harm to the students. Carry out self-criticism for the mistakes in the conversation, or sincerely apologize to the students, which is very necessary for the student to work in the future.

5. CONCLUSION

Traditional preach is less effective for students in the new era. For that, college counselors engaging in front-line students work need to acquire higher quality and stronger capacity. They should constantly make adjustments and update the educational concept. Keep up with new developments, adapt to new requirements so as to make new achievements. This puts higher requirements on the counselor who should know the basics of conversation, master the talking skills in a bid to achieve the desired results. It can be understood that the communication between counselors and students is not merely a simple work, but a task requires many efforts like the art and skills of conversation. The key is to grasp students' heart, convince students with rich knowledge, warm them with love, impress them with genuineness, guide them with actions. Only then can the students get rid of the fear, settle them down, find the right direction for development. That's the effective guide which can realize ideal education performance.

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