

Researches on Experiential Teaching in College Mental Health Education Courses

—under the Guidance of Positive Psychology

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Abstract—Experiential teaching focuses on students' personal experience and inspiration. This paper proposes that course designs and methods should be taken consideration under the concept of experiential teaching, on the basis of necessities of applying experiential teaching to adopt specific methods. Furthermore, more attentions should be paid to the impressions of students in the process of cases, discussions, activities, self analysis and role playing, et al. Moreover, we also put forward some thoughts on the application of experiential teaching in the course of mental health education.

Keywords—experiential teaching; teaching design; mental health education

With the further deepen of quality education and gradual implementation of curriculum reform, the traditional classroom teaching, which ignores students' principal role, is no longer applicable. The experiential teaching which concerns personal experience, mutual exchange, reflection and application is widely used by teachers, and greatly welcomed by students. From the perspective of development of students, aiming at problems with passive acceptance, lack of experience, neglect of internalization and disconnection in the process of learning, It's urgent needs to satisfy positive input and experience of college students, getting out of the teachers' problem of "self-center". All the three problems are deserved to settle in the college mental health education courses.

I. THE CONNOTATION OF EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING

Experience is to involve in practice and reap inspiration from experience. What you experienced is believable and impressive. "Experiential teaching" place students themselves in a real or simulated situation which is constructed in light of

their cognitive characteristics, arousing thinking and emotional experience. We can explore, discover and comprehend the core contents and emotions of the course through the method^[1]. Experiential teaching has broken the traditional form of monotonous teaching, incompatible role of the teachers' dominance whereas students' passive acceptance, turning the students from the audience into the main characters of the class. It lets them to perceive, understand, comprehend and verify the class contents through their own experience, and thus truly internalize the external knowledge into their inner quality.

II. THE NECESSITIES OF EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING IN THE MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION COURSE

A. Requirements of curriculum nature

Different from the general subject curriculum, the key point of college mental health education curriculum is not to solve the problem of knowing/unknowing, but pay attention to the internalization of psychological knowledge and the mastery of various psychological adjustment skills. Thus the emphasis of teachers are not memorizing concepts and theories, but to guide students to self discovery and adopt of mental health knowledge^[1]. The class focuses on the their personal experience, and provides a relaxed buffer zone to complete a journey of self discovery without any pressure. It can internalize external psychological knowledge into their own good mental quality once related to specific experiences and emotions. It won't arouse the real emotion and sympathy if just stays in the cognitive level, can't guarantee their corresponding action of will for the unit of knowledge, emotion and will. "Experience is the medium of cognition and behavior in the course of mental health," so it is necessary to use the personal experience of students to activate their initial mentality experience, so as to generate their knowledge, emotion and will into a whole^[2].

Sponsor: National Innovation and Enterpriseship Training Program (201610412005).

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B. Requirements of curriculum goal

The core meaning of mental health education lies in "helping others to help themselves", and it can stimulate the inner mental energy and mental potential of individuals. Everyone's mentality is belonging to their themselves. If students can't open their hearts to the class, no matter how the teachers emphasize the importance or exert pressure from the outside, this lesson is meaningless for the students who are locked heart not to actively participate in learning^[3]. The superiority of experiential teaching is to guide colleges to open their hearts and let them voluntarily and wholeheartedly put into the classroom, take the initiative to pay attention to themselves, discover themselves, excavate their own positive resources and finally achieve the goal of "self-help"^[3].

III. EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING DESIGN

The basic idea of "experiential teaching" is inner emotional experience of students, voluntarily participation and input, comprehensive communication among teachers, students and resources within school. Based on this idea, the basic process of "mental health education" design is "topic introduction - situation creation - self-experience (self-connection, self-analysis) - sharing with others (communication, discussion, sharing) - scientific strategy - summary"^[4]. It's a virtual situation where one can experience with their own specific events. Part of "topics introduction" can be a case, an phenomenon, a story, a problem, etc., aiming to create a kind of thinking situation or psychological atmosphere. The link "topics introduction - situation creation - self-experience" is to solve the problem of "what". "self-experience - sharing with others" is to solve the problem of "why" and "scientific strategy - summary" is to solve the problem of "how". The ultimate goal is to impact students to utilize problems in a reasonable, valuable and conducive ways, proving to self growth. Obviously, Some contents may not reach a consensus conclusion, yet their mind would be touched and provided another new way of thinking, through communication and sharing between teachers and students^[7].

Taking the topic "adaptation and mental health" as an example to illustrates the specific curriculum design of experiential teaching. We can introduce our topic(theme) by using the bestseller <who moved my cheese> - Life is not static. What will you do when the change comes? Will you be Congcong, Xiuxiu, Hengheng or Jiji? Once the students make a choice, we immediately guide them into the realistic situation with a major turning in life from high school to university. The living environment, academic and interpersonal relationship have changed suddenly. How do you deal with this change? Followed by questions to the students with "how are you going in university?" Thus asking students to describe their college life for the stage of self-experience in the meantime. Now it's come to the "communication and sharing" for them to talk openly about their feelings after entering university and the problems they face. Others listen carefully and relate themselves spontaneously, as coming the new question: "what should we do when the environment changes? change the environment? change others? Or change ourselves? What to do and how to do is reasonable and realistic?" There may be lots of answers

within this moment until students answer "only changing ourselves is feasible". It's important to guide to think more deeply: how to change oneself? What is positive adaptation with how to change? What is called with scientific strategy. Finally, students realized only to play their initiative and actively adapt to the environment can we get growth and development for the outcome of joint discussion between teachers and students, which is what summary part wants to^[5]. It may be just an explanatory example, whereas diverse topics are slightly different in the topics introduction and situations creation but the basic idea of design is invariable.

IV. SPECIFIC METHODS OF EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING

Experiencing in cases and selecting typical cases to reflection and analysis. The cases need to reflect a certain psychological phenomenon or social reality. Once it appears in front of the students, it can attract attentions of them and arouse their interests in thinking and discussion. Cases can be regarded as the starting point of a certain teaching content, and can also be used as a carrier to illustrate a certain problem within teaching. Teachers guide students to think, analyze and discuss, and finally make the students understood^[5].

Experiencing in discussion and focusing on hot topics, and engaging in thematic discussions. Discussions are wide effective way of interaction, where energetic communications of various views occurred. Students will have a more profound and comprehensive understanding of problems. Hotspot issues are generally the interesting areas of students, which debatement and confusion constricted^[6]. We teachers can fully use the hot issues to arouse the enthusiasm and participation of students to discuss problems. In the process of brainstorming, students unconsciously gain the experience and understand a certain problem.

Experiencing in activities and introducing various kinds of games or interactive activities to gain personal experience. One of the goals of mental health education is to let students have a sense of happiness across the course of teaching. We should make full use of a happy atmosphere, which makes students swiftly participate in the class and prepare for the experience^[5]. What's more, psychological activities and psychological games can't only make students feel happy, but also enable students to gain personal experience and inner true feelings with happiness .

Experiencing in self-analysis and corresponding to psychological rules to analyze oneself. Self-analysis is process of dialogue with his own mind, which students can observe, examine, analyze, explore, reflect and find themselves as an object, moreover finding out the reason of problems to gain the self growth.

Experiencing in role play and arranging psychological dramas or shooting micro films, which we can manage role plays to understand the psychological activities of different roles. Teachers guide students to play some character roles and deduce some kinds of behaviors, methods and attitudes by arranging psychological dramas according to specific situations, which experiencing and evaluating inner emotional variations of dramatist for students can make a sense of being

in a real circumstance^[6]. All in all, this method can help students learn empathy and cultivate students' empathy ability.

V. REFLECTION ON EXPERIENTIAL TEACHING

Experiential teaching is a kind of mode what centered on teaching, widely in according with the course of "College Mental Health Education". However, in the practice of teaching, it is difficult to fully exert the effect of "experiential teaching" due to various practical factors. It is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

Too much class and too many people restrict the teaching effect of experiential teaching. As a result of successive years of enrollment expansion, the scales of colleges are growing bigger and bigger and the numbers of students are also increasing more and more greatly as easily to fifty or sixty. Such a large class is not good to the implementation of experiential teaching. On one hand, large numbers of students make it difficult for teachers to take care of every student and keep eyes open on everyone, which there will always be parts of students lost their interests for their desolated in group activities. On the other hand, some activities are impossible to carry out for the small classroom spaces. Thus, It remains a problem to further explore for how to make students participating, and thinking automatically and voluntarily in the big class.

How can we teachers do to activate their initiative and open their hearts into the class? Students vary a lot in their personalities, experiences and performances in the class, What's more, the degree of students' psychological openness is different, some are very positive, but some are more indifferent, and even some are always free from the classroom. It requires teachers to fully understand their situations and use some methods to narrow psychological distance with students and eliminate their sense of alienation and alerting^[5].

It's important for how we guide students to have positive experience instead negative experience. Even for the same situation, students will produce different mental experience because of different experience. Once the subject happens to touch the psychological sensitivity of them, it may produce negative emotional experience and insecurity in class. It does not only affects the participation of the class, but also affects their attitude to the course. Therefore, teachers should fully consider teaching design and carefully observe the emotional

responses of each student in the class, which is a big test for the quality of teachers^[6].

Briefly, the use of experiential teaching in the course of college mental health education can encourage students not only to use their eyes, listen with ears, speak with mouths, experience and observe with their bodies, but also to think with their brains and internalize their knowledge with their minds for what they have learned^[5]. It's not the inevitable requirement of teaching and learning, but also for its unique superiority. Teachers should try to excavate teaching resources, try actively, innovate actively, overcome difficulties and explore the way out, furthermore instruct students to enjoy the fun and value of experiential teaching.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper centralized on the teaching mode of experiential teaching, which promoting the initiatives and enthusiasms of students in class. By creating specific situations relating to one's own, they think with their own practices and behave corresponding to their similar emotions. Students gain the ability of adaptations and growths from the experiences. Thus, it proved to be an effective modes for changing the unbalanced roles of dominant teachers and passive students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Project supported by the National Innovation and Enterpriseship Training Program (201610412005).

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