

Exploration of the Integration of Moral Education and Mental Health Education in Junior High School Class Management

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Abstract

In the context of the new curriculum reform requirements, it is important to emphasize the comprehensive development of students' morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. And mental health education in primary and secondary schools is one of the major ways to cultivate moral character. Moral education and mental health education are two important tasks of class management in junior high school. The integration of moral education and mental health education is of great significance for the growth and development of adolescents. This article explores the feasibility, current situation, challenges, and corresponding strategies of integrating moral education and mental health education. Intended to promote the goal of "cultivating morality with the heart and nurturing the heart with morality", and to promote the integrated development of moral education and mental health education.

Keywords

Middle school class management; Moral education; Psychological health education; Integrated education.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of society and the deepening of education reform, the mental health problems of junior high school students have become increasingly prominent and have attracted widespread attention from all sectors of society. For example, problems such as excessive academic pressure, confusion in self role cognition, and interpersonal communication. These issues not only affect students' academic performance, but also hinder their physical and mental health development. Moral education is an important way for primary and secondary schools to promote the physical and mental health development of young people. Moral education can help young people establish good ideological and moral qualities, cultivate their correct worldview, outlook on life, and values.[1] However, mental health education can promote middle school students to have a correct understanding of themselves, help them form good interpersonal relationships, and help them understand and deal with problems from multiple perspectives. Therefore, effectively integrating moral education and mental health education into class management has become an important path for current middle school education. The middle school stage is a critical period for students' physical and mental development, playing a crucial role in shaping their values, cultivating their character, and nurturing their mental health. [2]As the fundamental task of education, cultivating moral character requires that middle school education not only focuses on imparting knowledge, but also pays attention to students' moral cultivation and mental health. The integration of moral education innovation and mental health education is an important way to achieve this goal. However, in the actual process of promotion, there are many difficulties and challenges that need to be deeply analyzed and effective solutions sought.

2. Feasibility of Integrating Moral Education and Mental Health Education in Education

2.1. Policy orientation and theoretical alignment

The "Special Plan for Strengthening and Improving the Mental Health of Students in the New Era (2023-2035)" issued by the Ministry of Education and 17 other departments in 2023 clearly puts forward the principle of "moral education" and emphasizes the leading role of moral education in mental health education.[3] From a theoretical perspective, Kohlberg's theory of moral cognitive development points out that moral judgment needs to be based on rational thinking, and mental health education can provide psychological support through emotional management and cognitive reconstruction; Humanistic psychology emphasizes "holistic education", which is highly compatible with the comprehensive development goal of moral education.

2.2. The homogeneity of educational objectives

Although moral education and mental health education have different focuses, their ultimate goal is to promote the comprehensive development of students. Moral education aims to cultivate a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values; Psychological health education focuses on improving abilities such as emotional management and interpersonal adaptation. The intersection of the two lies in promoting the externalization and practice of students' inner qualities through emotional resonance and behavioral guidance.

2.3. Complementarity of course content

The current moral education curriculum covers topics such as patriotism and social responsibility, but lacks attention to individual psychological needs; Although mental health courses involve self-awareness and stress adjustment, they are less integrated with moral values. The integration of the two can compensate for the limitations of a single curriculum, such as incorporating role-playing activities into the theme of "responsibility education", which not only strengthens moral cognition but also exercises psychological resilience.

3. The Current Situation of The Integration of The Two in Class Management

The integration of moral education and mental health education in junior high school has achieved initial results and has also gained recognition and support from the education sector. Unclear boundaries and unclear content are presented.[4] Even though the education sector generally recognizes and advocates the integration of moral education and mental health education, there are still some unreasonable phenomena in the implementation process. Firstly, most homeroom teachers lack theoretical knowledge in psychology, and most teachers in schools who provide mental health education are part-time teachers. Teachers play a leading role in the integration of moral education and mental health education. Lack of knowledge in psychology makes it difficult for teachers to perceive students' psychological states and problems, which affects the effectiveness of the integration of moral education and mental health education in class management. Many schools only focus on the integration of the two at the theoretical level, and in class management, the education of students is simple and crude, without paying attention to their actual situation. When teachers face problems with students' learning attitudes, values, and moral deviations, although they carry out some moral education, the form is often tough. Criticizing or preaching to students without truly understanding them deeply can lead to a loss of motivation. In the management of the third class, the integration of moral education and mental health is simplified. In the actual education process, moral education is carried out through simple preaching, and mental health is achieved through

simple campus construction, which is simply pieced together without deep integration. The construction of the fourth class and the faculty team have resulted in a lack of integration between the two, with not all members and the entire process being achieved. It is believed that moral education and mental health are only the work of class teachers and mental health teachers, lacking the cooperation of subject teachers and parents.

4. The Dilemma of Integrating Moral Education Innovation and Mental Health Education In Class Management

4.1. Insufficient professionalization level of the teaching staff

The integration of school moral education and mental health education cannot be achieved without the support of mental health education teachers and class teachers. However, the reality is not optimistic. Most middle school teachers mainly focus on subject teaching or a single field of moral and psychological education in their professional background. [5] This leads to a lack of interdisciplinary knowledge reserves and teaching skills for teachers when carrying out integrated teaching of moral education and mental health education. On the one hand, moral education teachers may lack professional methods and practical experience in mental health education, making it difficult to effectively pay attention to students' psychological dynamics and provide targeted guidance in moral education classrooms; On the other hand, mental health education teachers may not have a precise grasp of the connotation and value system of moral education, and may not be able to integrate moral education into psychological counseling and educational processes, thereby limiting the quality and effectiveness of their integration.

4.2. Lack of unified teaching synergy

In the junior high school curriculum system, moral education courses and mental health education courses mostly operate independently. The content of moral education courses is relatively abstract and theoretical, lacking attention to students' psychological experiences and emotional resonance; The mental health education curriculum focuses on imparting psychological knowledge and training psychological counseling skills, but lacks guidance on moral values. The separation in curriculum design makes it difficult for the two to permeate and promote each other in the teaching process, and cannot achieve effective integration and optimization of curriculum resources. And in class management, moral education and mental health education are often seen as the "exclusive responsibilities" of class teachers and psychological teachers, with insufficient participation from subject teachers and parents. Although some schools have attempted to establish a "home school community" collaborative system, the utilization rate of community resources is low and the activity design lacks coherence.

4.3. Single fusion form

The integration of moral education and mental health education appears to be singular in middle school class management, mainly relying on persuasion and education from class teachers, or conducting themed class meetings on moral education and mental health education. [6] This form may be straightforward and crude. But it is not conducive to students' internalization and absorption, and improper methods can easily lead to students' resistance and challenge the teacher-student relationship. Although some classes carry out integration activities, the activities are superficial and cannot make students feel their essence. And in the management process, the student's dominant position was not highlighted, only the teacher's leading role in the class management process was reflected. Students placing themselves in a passive state of being managed further hinders the integration and effectiveness of moral education and mental health education.

4.4. Lack of scientificity in the evaluation system

At present, the evaluation of moral education and mental health education in junior high schools mostly adopts independent and single dimensional evaluation methods.[7] Moral education evaluation is mainly based on students' moral cognition and behavioral performance, ignoring their internal moral emotions and psychological motivations; The evaluation of mental health education focuses on the assessment of psychological symptoms and the examination of psychological adjustment abilities, lacking correlation analysis with the development of moral qualities. This imperfect evaluation system cannot comprehensively and accurately measure the effectiveness of the integration of moral education and mental health education, and it is difficult to provide effective feedback and guidance for educational and teaching practices, which in turn affects the in-depth promotion of the integration of the two.

5. Strategies for Integrating Moral Education and Mental Health Education in Junior High School Class Management

5.1. Build professional faculty and improve integration efficiency

Teachers are the key to the integration of moral education and mental health education, especially those who possess professional knowledge in psychology, which is crucial for their integrated development. Schools should organize and carry out multi-level, multi-level psychological health education teacher training. And carry out psychological health education and training in conjunction with daily work; Select key teachers to participate in the on-the-job training and assessment of mental health teachers in various regions. For example, intermediate training for full-time and part-time teachers - for teachers who have obtained a mental health education teacher certification, advanced training is conducted every academic year. Training for the improvement of psychological backbone - The school's mental health education backbone team is led by external experts to conduct practical training. By improving their professional level, teachers can gain timely insights into students' learning and psychological states, and thus carry out moral education and mental health education in a more timely manner, thereby accurately and effectively promoting the integration of moral education and mental health education.

5.2. Adhere to the principle of "three pronged education" and coordinate the efforts of all parties involved

Three in one education is an indicator to measure the quality of class management, which can promote innovation and development in class management. Based on the Browning Brenner ecosystem theory, construct a collaborative education system of "all staff, whole process, and all domain". At the micro system level, the homeroom teacher needs to coordinate the implementation of ideological and political education in the curriculum by subject teachers, such as integrating life education into Chinese language teaching, cultivating resilience in mathematical problem-solving, and achieving the trinity of "knowledge imparting value guidance psychological cultivation". Simultaneously, moral education and mental health education are long-term and continuous tasks, and their impact on students is multifaceted. Firstly, in class management, the class director should coordinate the efforts of teachers from various subjects to integrate moral education and mental health education, fully explore the ideological content of teaching resources in teaching, and seize the opportunity to educate students so that they can nourish their hearts in teaching. Secondly, the role of family education cannot be ignored. Families and schools should collaborate to educate students, and parents should cooperate with the school's work. Schools should also play a leading role in educating students and provide parents with scientific and effective guidance. Finally, by leveraging the power of the community, a tripartite pattern of "home school community" will be formed. For

example, organizing a series of community service activities to cultivate students' good moral cultivation and perseverance in serving the community.

5.3. Focus on classroom channels, supplemented by activity channels

The classroom is the main battlefield of education. In order to achieve the integrated development of mental health education and moral education, teachers should fully utilize the educational value of classroom teaching in this main battlefield. For example, in the classroom, we can explore ideological ideas and provide students with subtle moral education, thereby enriching their inner world. Teachers can also use ideological and political courses to strengthen the foundation of moral education, and combine them with mental health education to guide students to improve their moral cultivation and judgment, learn to adjust their psychological state, and cultivate good psychological qualities.

Although the classroom is the main channel for integration, the important role of activities cannot be ignored. Schools educate students through social practice activities. From a psychological perspective, moral education is a process of multiple beginnings of 'knowing, intending, and acting'. Students start from 'knowledge' but cannot transform the learned knowledge into practical actions, which indicates that moral education is incomplete. If we start from the concept of 'action' but do not understand its meaning, then moral education is only superficial. Through activities, students transform the principles of learning into actions, and feel and strengthen their psychological qualities through these actions, further improving their psychological resilience and character.

5.4. Transforming management strategies and emphasizing personalized development for students

In the process of class management, teachers should not act alone, especially class teachers, and should truly delegate management power to students. For example, a class convention that incorporates psychological elements can be developed to allow students to experience being the masters of the class. This not only stimulates students' sense of identity, but also allows them to experience a sense of belonging to the class collective. Abandon some preaching methods of moral education and treat students with sincerity, respect, empathy, and other humanistic approaches.[8] Moral dilemma stories based on students' developmental characteristics can be adopted to cultivate their moral qualities and provide them with subtle moral education.

In the process of class management, it is not only important to value collective work, but also to pay attention to personalized guidance for students. The constructivist view of students mentions that students are independent individuals, not just entering the classroom with their heads empty. Each student's growth and development process is different, and their own experiences are different. Therefore, in the classroom process, teachers should enhance their sensitivity, keenly detect students' psychological and moral situations, and seize the opportunity to provide guidance and encourage students to self guide.

5.5. Improve the evaluation system and value student experience

Establishing a scientific and reasonable evaluation mechanism is an important link in ensuring the effective implementation of the integration of moral education and mental health education. The evaluation indicators should cover multiple aspects of students' moral cognition, moral emotions, moral behavior, as well as their mental health level and psychological adjustment ability, comprehensively reflecting their development status in the integration of moral education and mental health education. The evaluation methods should be diversified, using a combination of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, teacher evaluation, and parent evaluation, fully leveraging the advantages of each party's evaluation, and improving the objectivity and accuracy of the evaluation.

Emphasize process evaluation, pay attention to students' performance in daily learning and life, timely discover students' progress and problems, and provide targeted feedback and guidance. For example, through process evaluation of students' classroom performance, homework completion, and participation in activities, we can understand their learning attitudes and growth changes in moral and mental health education; At the same time, combined with summative evaluation methods such as exams and assessments, a summary evaluation of students' moral and mental health education achievements during a certain stage is conducted. Based on the evaluation results, adjust and optimize the strategies and methods of integrated education, and continuously improve the quality of education.

6. Conclusion

The deep integration of moral education and mental health education is a systematic project that requires the coordinated promotion of policy support, theoretical innovation, and practical exploration. In class management, the integration of the two should be centered on student development, and a comprehensive and collaborative educational ecosystem should be built with full participation, full penetration, and full domain collaboration. Only then can the organic unity of "morality" and "nurturing heart" be truly achieved, laying a solid foundation for cultivating new era youth with both noble character and sound personality. Despite facing many challenges such as cognitive biases in ideology, limitations in teacher competence, limited educational synergy, singular forms of integration, and imperfect evaluation systems. However, by implementing a series of strategies such as strengthening ideological guidance, enhancing the comprehensive ability of teachers, constructing an integrated curriculum system, and establishing a scientific evaluation mechanism, the organic integration of the two can be effectively promoted, and the difficulties can be temporarily alleviated to inject new vitality and connotation into junior high education. The integration direction of future moral education and mental health education should focus on curriculum development and integration based on moral education and mental health education, study various forms of their integration, and explore in-depth evaluation methods for the integration of moral education and mental health education, in order to improve the evaluation system.

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