

Apply the Positive Psychology Theory—— Conduct a Preliminary Study on Improving the learning Habits of College Students With Academic Difficulties

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ABSTRACT

Learning habit is one of the important factors that affects students' academic level. It is of great significance to enhance the overall academic level of college students as well as the pertinence and effectiveness of college academic guidance to strengthen the learning habit of college students with academic difficulties.

This research attempts to introduce positive psychology into the improvement of the learning habit of college students with academic difficulties. Based on the idea of "providing positive learning hints-changing habitual learning behaviors-strengthening learning incentive mechanism", from the three aspects of "creating a positive learning environment", "strengthening a positive learning experience" and "develop positive learning character", the feasible path of constructing a new mode of college student academic counselling is to be explored.

Keywords: *learning habit, positive psychology, college students, academic difficulties*

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning habit is one of the important factors affecting students' academic level. Under the new situation of deepening the comprehensive reform of the education field and comprehensively improving the quality of higher education, developing the research on the learning habit of college students with academic barriers is undoubtedly of great significance for improving the overall academic level of college students and enhancing the pertinence and effectiveness of college academic counseling. This research will learn from the emerging concept of positive psychology to proceed a preliminary inquiry into the issues of improving the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties.

From the semantic perspective, "habit" is generally defined as: "People gradually form a consistent and stable mode of behavior in social life." [1] Specific to the field of study, there are different understandings in terms of the meaning of learning habit in academics. Some scholars believe that "the process of learning is the process of habit formation" [2], the term learning itself has the meaning of habit; other scholars emphasize that the habit of learning is a consistent, automatic and stable behavior related to learning which is formed by students. The learning habit discussed in this research is limited to the second level of its meaning, which aims to study the learning habits of college students.

2. THE BASIC SITUATION ON THE LEARNING HABIT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

2.2 Basic Situation and research status on the learning habits of College Students with academic difficulties

2.1 Overview of learning habits

Through the method of interview to college students with academic difficulties, and combined with the academic counseling work conducted by some colleges and universities where the author works, it was found that the reasons why students have

academic difficulties after entering the university are often resulting from various reasons. However, there is a common feature among college students facing academic difficulties, that is, poor study habits and even serious issues. The research findings of some scholars in other universities also reveal the close relationship between learning habit, scholastic attainment and attitudes [3], which proves the universality and seriousness of learning habits of college students with academic difficulties.

However, the prevalence of the leaning habits issue of college students with academic difficulties has not got enough attention, and the related research is also insufficient. In the process of traditional education research, the study on learning habit is usually focused on the primary education stage, while less study on college students' learning habits. Scholars seem to be inclined to believe that: primary school students in elementary education phase are in the period of developing their learning habits, and research on their learning habits has strong theoretical and practical significance, while most of the learning habits of college students have been solidified, therefore which lacks of the research value. In fact, influenced by the overall education mode of our country, compared with the primary and secondary education stages, the learning content and learning environment at the university stage have very significant changes, which objectively requires students to adjust learning methods after entering the university, and further to cultivate new learning habits. In addition, under the guidance of scientific conception, the original learning habits can actually be changed through appropriate methods.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTRODUCING POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INTO THE WORK OF IMPROVING LEARNING HABITS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO HAVE THE ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

3.1 An overview of positive psychology

Positive Psychology refers to "a current of thought in psychology that studies positive aspects of human beings, such as their positive aspects such as positive strengths and virtues through the experimental methods and measurements that have been relatively perfect and effective in psychology." [4] Positive psychology is based on the humanistic psychology pioneered by A.H. Maslow and others in the 1950s and 1960s. Martin E.P. Seligman, the president of the American Psychological Association, launched the positive psychology movement in 1998 and published an article of "Introduction to Positive Psychology" in

2000, sounding the clarion call for the establishment of positive psychology. [5]

Traditional psychology studies various mental diseases and psychological problems, mainly focusing on the "negative side", and the basic concept is "problem solving"; while positive psychology emphasizes on the various virtues and potentials of human beings, paying more attention to the "positive side", whose basic conception is "promote development". Compared with traditional psychology, positive psychology has achieved the fundamental change in philosophy, thoughts, and content.

At present, the research fields of positive psychology are mainly focused on the following three aspects: (1) Subjective level, which studies various positive experiences in human subjective experience, such as satisfaction, joy, happiness, sense of accomplishment, etc.; (2) Individual level, which emphasizes the positive traits contained in personality, such as perseverance, braveness, tolerance, creativity, etc.; (3) Group level, which researches the active organizational systems, such as sound schools, happy families, harmonious communities, and stable society. [6]

3.2 The significance of introducing positive psychology into the work of improving study habits of College Students with academic difficulties

3.2.1 Expand the research space for the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties

As mentioned above, at present, there are few research results on college students' learning habits, among which, there are fewer specialized research on the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties. Most of the existing research results are mainly focused on the concept, composition and formation mechanism of learning habits. The focus of the research is on the analysis and research of "habits", which are mostly in the state of "analyse habit based on habit itself." In addition, as for the learning habits of students with academic difficulties, the existing problems are the mostly analyzed, and the main idea is to "problem solving". Introducing positive psychology into the study of learning habits of college students with academic difficulties, on the one hand, is conducive to jumping out of the state of "analyse habit based on habit itself", and moreover analyzing and thinking about learning habits from a richer perspective; on the other hand, it is beneficial to take off the "colored glasses" of negative thinking, avoid excessive analysis of various problems in the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties, and further to shift the emphasis of

research to “cultivating good habits”, achieving the innovation in research approach .

3.2.2 Enhance the effectiveness of academic counseling in colleges and universities

The student’s academic development is an important indicator and the primary concern that students pay attention to, which reflects the running level of colleges and universities and can measure the quality of talent training. In recent years, educational authorities at each levels have strengthened the guidance of academic counseling in colleges and universities, and launched a series of measures to promote academic counseling in colleges and universities. In addition, colleges and universities also actively issued various academic counseling activities combining their own actual situation, so as to help students enhance their academic level. The attention of the education authorities and the efforts of various universities have strongly promoted the development of academic counseling in universities, but the effectiveness of academic counseling in universities still needs to be improved. At present, the focus of academic counseling in various universities is mostly focusing on solving the problems of insufficient learning motivation, poor learning methods, and inability to meet the needs of individual development, a scientific and objective evaluation index system has not been established, and a normalized long-term counseling mechanism has not been formed yet. Researching how to improve the learning habits of students with academic difficulties is not only conducive to the focus and breakthrough of difficulties in academic counseling work in colleges and universities; but also promotes the improvement of the long-term academic counseling mechanism due to the automatic and long-term characteristics of learning habits, and ultimately to enhance the effectiveness of academic counseling.

3.2.3 Promote innovation in the mode of education in colleges and universities

For students with academic difficulties, most colleges and universities will set up academic warning and other related systems to promote students to attach importance to their academic conditions through the educational administration department. In addition, the school student affairs department would implement activities on study style building to guide the students who suffer the academic difficulties to correct their learning attitudes and increase their motivation. However, the current student academic management model in colleges and universities cannot entirely meet the needs of students’ growth, and there are problems such as weak departmental coordination and low professionalism in work which can only provide

limited practical help to students with academic difficulties. The measures of introducing the concept of positive psychology into the academic counseling work of college students with academic difficulties, and designing new educational activities around improving the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties, is conducive to straightening out the academic counseling work mechanism of colleges and universities, improving the professional level of college academic counseling work, and promoting the innovation of educational mode in colleges and universities.

4. A PROBE INTO THE WAYS TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING HABITS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES BY ADOPTING THE THEORY OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

To improve the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties, the most important rallying point is to grasp the mechanism of habit formation. Western psychologists have conducted more in-depth research on the formation mechanism of habit, and most scholars agree that the formation of habit “is the result of the establishment, consolidation and even automation of conditional reflex.” [7] On the basis of the traditional SR connection theory, the cognitive psychology school proposed a relatively complete mechanism for habit formation, and pointed out that “the formation process of learning habits is from simple to complex, from unstable to stable, from external domination to internal control.” [7] Based on various academic research results, American scholar Charles Duhigg combined a large number of practical cases, summarized the neural logic circuit of habit, and put forward that the habit loop includes three parts: suggestion, habitual behavior and reward [8], which provide a feasible path to improve learning habits.

In order to effectively improve the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties, according to the related concepts of positive psychology, the basic idea: “provide positive hint - change the conventional learning behavior - reinforcement learning incentive mechanism”, from the three aspects of “creating a positive learning environment”, “enhancing positive learning experience” “cultivating the learning character”, and ultimately to create a new mode of academic guidance for college students.

4.1 Create a positive learning environment with positive psychology courses and the system of self-study at night for freshmen

College students with academic difficulties often lack self-confidence, and some students even have a

self-abandoned mentality and adopt an indifferent attitude towards academic issues due to poor learning conditions.

Compared with traditional psychology courses, positive psychology courses mainly introduce how to mine personal potential, obtain positive experiences, shape positive characters, etc., which can help college students with academic difficulties break out of the limitation of thinking about “discuss issues with issues” and enhance academic self-esteem and confidence, so as to lay the foundation for follow-up academic guidance and construction activities of study style.

In addition, the free and loose learning system of universities is quite different from that in middle school phase. The drastic change of learning environment is an important reason why many students are stuck into academic difficulties after entering university.

In order to help students adapt to the university learning environment and create a learning atmosphere of diligence, studiousness and enjoyment, the author’s school has implemented a system of self-study at night for freshmen since 2013, requiring students to participate in self-study at night every Monday to Thursday during the freshman year. According to student needs, during the night self-study period, activities such as English micro-courses and advanced math exercise classes have been conducted, and a flexible and orderly attendance system has been implemented, which provides a favorable environment for improving the learning habits of students with academic difficulties.

Positive psychology courses primarily provide psychological motivation and support for college students with academic difficulties, while the night self-study system for freshmen provides institutional guarantees to cultivate good study habits for college students with academic difficulties. These two measures are the entry points, and the main purpose is to create a positive learning environment for college students with academic difficulties, and then form positive and continuous psychological hints to them, which has also become the starting point for improving the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties.

4.2 Enhance the positive learning experience based on academic counseling courses and the outstanding lecturer group system

Based on positive psychological hints to college students with academic difficulties through the learning environment, the school academic counseling center can organize professional forces to set up academic counseling series of courses. In addition to providing counseling for specific learning subjects, it

also focuses on introducing learning methods during university to guide academic difficulties with emphasis on the study methods of the college, guiding students with academic difficulties fully aware of their usual learning behavior and grasp the good study habit formation mechanism, so as to clearly improve the direction of their study habits.

In addition to academic counseling courses, it is also necessary to employ the concept of positive psychology and establish a system of pedagogical lecturers, give full play to the power and advantages of peer counseling, and select the so called “Straight-A student” among students with excellent academic performance, scientific learning methods, and good learning habits, so that they can provide “one-to-one” academic assistance to college students with academic difficulties, through these measures to encourage college students with academic difficulties to earnestly learn from the good learning habits of others, and prompt them to reflect on and adjust their daily learning behaviors.

The academic counseling course aims to provide general guidance for enhancing students’ learning habits, while the outstanding lecturer group system focuses on showing the learning behaviors and habits of academically outstanding students, and provides personalized assistance to improve learning habits with the help of peers. These two standpoints mainly emphasize on the regular learning behaviors of college students with academic difficulties, and through general guidance and forces of example to promote students with academic difficulties to reflect and adjust, so as to make the students obtain a more positive and positive learning experience, which is the key to improve the learning habits of college students with academic difficulties.

4.3 Cultivate active learning character with the focus on constructing activities of learning style and the system of rewarding and appraising excellence

It is an important task for colleges and universities to cultivate excellent academic atmosphere and put emphasis on the construction of academic atmosphere. However, as far as the current situation is concerned, the effectiveness of the construction of the style of study in some colleges and universities is not strong, and most colleges and universities have not carefully sorted out the relationship between academic guidance and construction of the style of study. In fact, doing a good job of academic guidance and strengthening assistance to students with academic difficulties are important points and breakthroughs in advancing the construction of the style of study and enhancing the effectiveness of the construction of the style of study. In recent years, the author’s college has coordinated the promotion of academic counselling and study style

construction, combined with the personality characteristics and growth needs of “95” and “00” students, and organized a series of students such as “Looking for Campus Talents” and “Competition for Challenging Straight-A students”. The construction of learning style activities that are what students would like to join in to have effectively improved the academic level of college students with academic difficulties.

Apart from focusing on the construction of academic atmosphere, to improve the reward and evaluation system and give full play to the incentive and guiding role of the system are also the important focus for improving the academic habits of college students with academic difficulties. In recent years, many colleges and universities have made adjustments and innovations in the award and evaluation system. They have particularly set up academic awards such as “Academic Progress Scholarship”, “Excellent Study Style Class”, and selected honorary titles such as “Learning Talent” and “Advanced Individuals in Academic Progress”, increasing the academic difficulties of college students to make progress for efforts and building the good habit of self-help study. Put the study style construction activities and the reward and evaluation system as the main focus, the main purpose of this measure is to strengthen the “reward” part of the habit loop, and by improving the normalized and long-term incentive mechanism, to help college students with academic difficulties persist in their improved learning behavior, making it become a self-conscious habit, and eventually internalizing it into a lifelong positive learning character.

5. CONCLUSION

It is of great significance to enhance the overall academic level of college students as well as the pertinence and effectiveness of college academic guidance to strengthen the learning habit of college students with academic difficulties. Based on the idea

of “providing positive learning hints-changing habitual learning behaviors-strengthening learning incentive mechanism”, from the three aspects of “creating a positive learning environment”, “strengthening a positive learning experience” and “develop positive learning character”, we can construct a new mode of college student academic counselling.

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