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Application of Educational Psychology in Classroom Discipline Management

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Abstract: This study explores the application of educational psychology in classroom discipline management. It begins by defining core concepts and reviewing relevant psychological theories to analyze their intrinsic connections. Drawing from practical teaching experiences, the paper identifies current issues in classroom discipline management, such as rigid approaches, neglect of student psychology, and lack of systematic strategies. It further examines psychological triggers at both student and teacher levels. Grounded in behaviorism, humanism, cognitive, and social learning theories, targeted management strategies are proposed to optimize classroom governance, resolve disciplinary conflicts, foster students' self-discipline, create an orderly classroom environment, enhance teaching efficiency, and support students' holistic development.

Keywords: Educational Psychology; Classroom Discipline Management; Application

Introduction

Classroom discipline serves as the foundation for ensuring the smooth conduct of teaching activities. A well-maintained classroom order not only enhances learning efficiency but also fosters students' character development. Currently, some teachers adopt rigid management approaches that prioritize punishment over guidance, neglecting the principles of students' physical and mental development, which leads to numerous disciplinary issues. Educational psychology, as a science that studies the laws of teaching and learning, can provide a scientific basis for discipline management and help formulate management strategies that align with students' psychological characteristics. This paper draws on relevant theories to analyze existing

problems and their causes, exploring scientific and effective management pathways to transition classroom discipline management from rigid control to humane and sustainable governance.

1 Definition of Related Concepts and Theoretical Foundations

1.1 Definition of Core Concepts

(1) The Connotation and Core Domains of Educational Psychology. Educational psychology is the scientific study of fundamental psychological principles in teaching and learning within educational contexts. It integrates both educational and psychological attributes, focusing on students' learning psychology, teachers' instructional psychology, and classroom interaction dynamics. Core domains encompass



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learning motivation, cognitive development, behavior shaping, and emotional management, aiming to optimize teaching activities through psychological principles aligned with students' physical and mental development patterns. (2) Definition, Types, and Core Objectives of Classroom Discipline. Classroom discipline refers to the collective behavioral norms and rules designed to maintain order and ensure the smooth progression of instruction. It is categorized into four types: teacher-imposed discipline, group-established discipline, self-discipline, and task-induced discipline. Core objectives include fostering an orderly, quiet, and focused classroom atmosphere, curbing inappropriate behaviors, safeguarding students' right to learn, and enhancing instructional efficiency. (3) The Connotation and Principles of Classroom Discipline Management. Classroom discipline management involves teachers employing scientific methods to uphold order and guide students in adhering to norms, balancing restraint with guidance. Core principles include scientific rigor, human-centeredness, preventive emphasis, fairness and impartiality, and positive education. It rejects harsh control and emphasizes cultivating students' autonomy and self-regulation ^[1].

1.2 Psychological Theories Related to Classroom Discipline Management

(1) Behaviorist Learning Theory. This theory emphasizes that behavior can be shaped through reinforcement and punishment, advocating the use of rewards to strengthen compliant behavior and mild penalties to correct misconduct. Through repeated training, it aims to cultivate students' positive classroom habits, serving as a common theoretical basis for discipline management. (2) Humanistic Psychology Theory. Centered on students, it emphasizes respect for their personality and needs, opposes harsh control, and advocates resolving discipline issues through care, understanding, and communication. It seeks to stimulate students' self-discipline awareness and foster qualities of autonomy. (3) Cognitive Development and Social Learning Theory. Cognitive development theory tailors discipline rules to align with students' age characteristics and cognitive levels. Social learning theory posits that students can acquire positive behaviors through observation and imitation, emphasizing the importance of role models and fostering a positive class atmosphere.

1.3 The Intrinsic Connection Between Educational Psychology and Classroom Discipline Management

(1) Psychological theories provide the scientific foundation for discipline management. Psychological principles help teachers accurately understand students' mental states, identify the root causes of discipline issues, and adopt more scientific and student-adapted management approaches, thereby avoiding arbitrary control.

(2) Discipline management serves as the practical vehicle for psychological theories. Various psychological theories require implementation through classroom discipline management, where their practicality is tested in real-world scenarios, achieving the integration of theory and practice.

(3) The synergy between the two enhances classroom teaching. Psychology-informed discipline management reduces conflicts, improves the sense of order, fosters a harmonious classroom environment, enables efficient teaching activities, and supports students' physical and mental well-being.

2 Current Problems in Classroom Discipline Management and Their Psychological Attribution

2.1 Existing Issues in Classroom Discipline Management

(1) Inflexible management approach lacking humanistic care. Some teachers adhere to traditional coercive control models, equating classroom discipline with absolute obedience. They frequently use harsh measures such as scolding or standing punishment to restrain students, positioning themselves as controllers while completely ignoring students' inner feelings. This management style prioritizes superficial order over addressing root causes of behavior, easily exacerbating teacher-student conflicts and provoking student resistance, failing to foster genuine voluntary compliance with discipline.

(2) Neglect of psychological needs with excessive emphasis on punishment over guidance. When addressing student misconduct, most teachers focus heavily on punishment while neglecting counseling. They tend to resort strictly to reprimands, rarely investigating underlying issues, and disregard students' psychological needs for emotional support and belonging. For minor infractions like distraction

or quiet chatting, they directly employ criticism and punishment without positive guidance or encouragement. This approach not only fails to resolve problems fundamentally but also dampens students' enthusiasm for learning.

(3) Unsystematic management yielding transient and unstable outcomes. Current classroom discipline management primarily involves post-incident remediation, addressing problems only after they occur without establishing a comprehensive system encompassing preventive measures, in-process control, and post-event counseling. Management methods are fragmented and disorderly, lacking long-term mechanisms designed according to students' psychological patterns. This can only temporarily suppress misconduct, and once supervision relaxes slightly, classroom chaos tends to resurge, making it difficult to sustain management effectiveness long-term.

2.2 Psychological Triggers at the Student Level

(1) Inattention and learning burnout. Adolescent students have limited attention spans and weak self-control abilities, making them highly susceptible to external distractions. Coupled with dull classroom content and monotonous teaching methods, students easily lose interest in learning, develop academic weariness, and subsequently exhibit disciplinary behaviors such as daydreaming, mental wandering, and fidgeting. (2) Weak self-discipline and inadequate emotional regulation. Students' physical and mental development is not yet mature, and their psychological resilience is incomplete, resulting in poor self-restraint and emotional management skills. They struggle to maintain standardized behavior for extended periods. When encountering setbacks or dissatisfaction, they are prone to impulsive loss of control, manifesting in behaviors such as contradicting teachers and disrupting classes, lacking the ability to properly channel negative emotions ^[2]. (3) Lack of belonging and prominent rebellious psychology. Some students feel a lack of presence and recognition within the class, failing to experience collective warmth and teacher attention, and thus resort to disciplinary behaviors to attract others' notice. Students in the rebellious phase resist rigid control; the harsher the suppression, the more deliberately they rebel, using violations of discipline to

vent their dissatisfaction.

2.3 Insufficient Psychological Awareness Among Teachers

(1) Lack of psychological knowledge leading to blind management. Many teachers have not systematically studied educational psychology and are unfamiliar with students' physical and mental development patterns as well as behavioral motivations. When addressing disciplinary issues, they rely solely on personal experience, adopting arbitrary and blind management approach that fail to address the core problems, resulting in inefficient management.

(2) Neglecting individual differences with one-size-fits-all management. Teachers apply uniform disciplinary standards and management approaches to all students, disregarding variations in personality, age, and psychological states. Using identical control methods for introverted-sensitive, active-energetic, rebellious-mischievous, and other types of students makes it difficult to adapt to their distinct characteristics, leading to poor management outcomes.

(3) Inappropriate teacher-student communication triggering psychological resistance. Teachers' communication methods are simple and crude. They are accustomed to one-way preaching and blaming, reluctant to listen to students' voices, and fail to understand students' thoughts and difficulties. Teachers' communication methods are simple and crude. They are accustomed to one-way preaching and blaming, reluctant to listen to students' voices, and fail to understand students' thoughts and difficulties.

3 Specific Application Strategies of Educational Psychology in Classroom Discipline Management

3.1 Discipline Norm Construction Based on Behaviorist Theory

(1) Establish clear and reasonable classroom rules to define behavioral boundaries. Behaviorism theory emphasizes the certainty of behavioral norms. Teachers should develop simple, understandable, and feasible classroom discipline guidelines based on the characteristics of the grade level and the actual situation of the class, avoiding vague and general requirements. The rules should cover various aspects such as speech and behavior in class, listening attentiveness, item placement, and interaction etiquette, clearly specifying

allowed and prohibited behaviors to make students aware of the behavioral bottom line. In formulating the rules, students' opinions can be incorporated to enhance their sense of identification and compliance, avoiding unilateral enforcement by teachers and ensuring that the discipline standards better align with the actual classroom environment. (2) Skillfully use positive reinforcement to set benchmarks for positive behavior. Positive reinforcement is a core method in behaviorism for shaping good behavior. Teachers should promptly recognize students' compliant behaviors and provide public affirmation and rewards. For positive behaviors such as attentive listening, proactive discipline adherence, and helping classmates, reinforcement can be applied through verbal praise, point rewards, and role model recognition to deepen students' behavioral memory. Compared to solely criticizing misconduct, positive reinforcement is more effective in motivating students to adhere to discipline, fostering a class-wide atmosphere of discipline and order, replacing negative control with positive guidance, and improving management effectiveness^[3]. (3) Apply disciplinary measures scientifically to prevent negative psychological harm. Discipline should serve educational purposes, avoiding extreme measures such as physical punishment or verbal humiliation that could damage students' self-esteem and trigger resistance. Disciplinary actions must adhere to the principles of fairness, moderation, and timeliness, with corresponding measures taken based on the severity of the misconduct, such as verbal reminders, written reflections, or additional tasks. Before implementing discipline, the reasons should be clearly explained to help students recognize their mistakes. Follow-up guidance and reassurance should be provided to ensure that disciplinary measures serve as a warning without damaging teacher-student relationships, upholding discipline while safeguarding psychological well-being.

3.2 Humanistic Management Based on Humanistic Theory

(1) Respect students' autonomy and address their psychological needs. Humanistic theory advocates a student-centered approach, emphasizing that discipline management should not merely focus on restrictions but must also respect students' dignity and demands, abandoning a condescending control mentality. Fully

consider students' psychological needs for belonging, respect, and a sense of achievement. Treat all students equally without arbitrary dismissal, recognizing each as an independent individual. While maintaining discipline, allow students a degree of autonomy, accommodate reasonable requests, and infuse warmth into discipline management to reduce resistance.

(2) Foster harmonious teacher-student relationships and create a supportive classroom atmosphere. A positive teacher-student dynamic is the foundation of effective discipline management. Teachers should set aside authority, actively engage with students, understand them, and bridge the gap with sincerity, patience, and care. Regularly show concern for students' academic and personal lives, treat everyone equally, and cultivate an inclusive, warm, and harmonious classroom environment. When students feel valued and respected by their teachers, they willingly comply with rules and maintain discipline. Emotional bonds, rather than rigid control, sustain classroom order and enhance harmony.

(3) Pay attention to students' emotions and provide psychological guidance. Disciplinary issues often accompany emotional fluctuations. Teachers should keenly observe changes in students' emotional states, refrain from immediate criticism, and instead listen to their concerns to alleviate negative emotions. Address emotions such as irritability, defiance, or despondency through timely communication and counseling to resolve underlying psychological conflicts. For misconduct stemming from high stress or poor mental state, offer understanding and guidance to help students readjust. Tackle the root causes at an emotional level to prevent minor issues from escalating into serious violations, thereby safeguarding students' mental well-being^[4].

3.3 Long-term Management Based on Cognitive and Social Learning Theories

(1) Cultivate students' self-discipline awareness and enhance self-management skills. Cognitive development theory emphasizes the improvement of students' internal cognition, with the ultimate goal of discipline management being the achievement of self-discipline. Teachers should guide students to understand the significance of adhering to rules, helping them internally recognize the value of discipline and

proactively restrain their own behavior. Through methods such as autonomous management, group supervision, and self-reflection, students gradually develop self-control and a sense of responsibility, moving away from a state of passive restraint and achieving a shift from "being told to follow rules" to "I want to follow rules," thereby strengthening the internal foundation of classroom discipline.

(2) Leverage role model demonstrations to guide positive behavioral imitation. Social learning theory posits that behavior can be acquired through observation and imitation. Teachers should lead by example, strictly adhere to classroom norms, and serve as positive role models through their own words and deeds. Simultaneously, select exemplary students who adhere to rules as role models, publicly praise their good behavior, and provide the entire class with figures to emulate. By harnessing the influence of peers, encourage students to consciously imitate positive behaviors, gradually correct bad habit, and foster a positive class atmosphere, making rule-following a consensus within the class^[5].

(3) Stimulate intrinsic learning motivation to reduce misconduct at its root. Student misbehavior often stems from insufficient learning interest and weak motivation. Teachers should optimize teaching methods, enrich classroom content, and enhance the interestingness of lessons to ignite students' curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Engage students fully in learning activities to reduce distractions, mischief, and other misconduct. Design teaching content that aligns with students' cognitive levels, providing them with a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Enable students to actively focus on the classroom, eliminate the idea of disciplinary violations from the root, achieve a long-term and stable classroom order, and improve the quality of classroom teaching.

Conclusion

The deep integration of educational psychology and

classroom discipline management is an inevitable trend in the development of modern teaching and a key measure to optimize the classroom ecosystem. Only by abandoning traditional rigid control methods and grounding their approaches in students' psychological characteristics can teachers flexibly apply various psychological theories to identify the root causes of problems and resolve management challenges. Effective discipline management requires both establishing clear norms and emphasizing humanistic care, ultimately achieving the transformation of students from passive compliance to active self-discipline. In future teaching, educators must continuously learn psychological knowledge, tailor strategies to actual student conditions, foster harmonious classrooms, and realize the dual goals of instruction and character development.

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