

Strategies for Psychological Health Education in Primary School Teacher Education

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Abstract: Psychological health education in primary schools is of utmost importance in nurturing the emotional well-being of young students. The early years of primary education are a critical phase in a child's development, as they begin to navigate the complexities of social interactions, academic challenges, and self-esteem. It is during this period that students may encounter various psychological problems that, if left unaddressed, can have a lasting impact on their mental health.

The well-being of primary school students is a subject of growing concern, with various psychological challenges affecting their development and learning experiences. This paper explores the performance of psychological problems such as weariness of learning, reverse psychology, and inferiority complex in primary school students. It emphasizes the need for effective mental health education in the training of primary school class teachers.

1. Introduction

The field of education, particularly in primary schools, has evolved significantly over the years to recognize the importance of not only academic achievement but also the psychological well-being of students. Psychological health education in primary schools has become an integral component of modern education systems, reflecting a broader societal understanding of the critical role mental health plays in a child's overall development.

Historically, primary education primarily focused on delivering academic content, with limited attention given to students' emotional and psychological needs. However, as our understanding of child development and psychology has deepened, educators and policymakers have come to realize that a child's mental health profoundly influences their ability to learn, interact with peers, and navigate the challenges of school life.

2. The performance of psychological problems in primary school students

2.1 Weariness of learning

A primary indicator of aversion to learning in students is a significant drop in academic performance. Students who once performed well may start to struggle with their studies, leading to lower grades and test scores. This decline can be due to various factors, such as difficulty concentrating, lack of motivation, or increased anxiety related to learning^[1]. Aversion to learning often triggers negative emotional responses in students. They may express frustration, anger, or sadness when faced with academic tasks. These emotions can further hinder their ability to engage with the learning process and negatively impact their mental well-being. Aversion to learning can lead to a decrease in classroom participation. Students may become disengaged, avoiding answering questions, volunteering, or participating in class discussions. This lack of engagement can isolate them from their peers and exacerbate their aversion to learning. In some cases, aversion to learning may manifest physically. Students may complain of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical discomfort when confronted with academic challenges. These physical symptoms can be psychosomatic responses to their aversion to learning and can significantly impact their overall well-being. Aversion to learning often leads to avoidance behavior. Students may try to avoid school or specific subjects altogether. They might feign illness, skip classes, or refuse to complete assignments as a means of avoiding the source of their anxiety or discomfort.

2.2 Reverse psychology

Rebellious students may frequently challenge authority figures, such as teachers and school staff. They might refuse to follow rules, instructions, or guidelines. These students may display intense anger and frustration, leading to temper tantrums, yelling, or even physical aggression towards peers or adults^[2]. They may consistently resist participating in classroom activities, group work, or assignments, disrupting the learning environment for themselves and others. Rebellious students might engage in rule-breaking behaviors, such as cheating, lying, stealing, or damaging school property. They may have difficulty forming and maintaining positive relationships with peers, often getting involved in conflicts and disagreements. Rebellious psychology can negatively impact academic performance, as these students may neglect their studies or refuse to complete assignments. Some rebellious students may isolate themselves from their peers, feeling alienated and disconnected from the school community. Underlying self-esteem issues can contribute to rebellious behavior, as students may act out to compensate for feelings of inadequacy or insecurity.

2.3 Inferiority complex

Students with a heavy sense of inferiority may often underperform academically. They may believe that they are not as smart or capable as their peers, leading to a lack of motivation to excel in their studies. This can result in lower grades, decreased participation in class, and a lack of confidence in their academic abilities. Children who feel inferior may withdraw from social interactions and isolate themselves from their peers. They may fear rejection or judgment, leading them to avoid group activities, recess, or lunchtime interactions. This social withdrawal can further exacerbate their feelings of inferiority^[3]. Some students may develop perfectionistic tendencies as a response to their feelings of inferiority. They may set unrealistically high standards for themselves and become overly critical of their own performance. This can lead to anxiety and stress as they constantly strive for unattainable levels of achievement. Children with a sense of inferiority often engage in negative self-talk. They may constantly criticize themselves, focus on their weaknesses,

and ignore their strengths. This negative self-perception can erode their self-esteem and confidence over time. Students who feel inferior may avoid taking on new challenges or trying new things. They fear failure and believe they are incapable of success, so they prefer to stick with familiar tasks where they feel safe and unthreatened. In some cases, a heavy sense of inferiority can manifest physically. Children may experience symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, or sleep disturbances due to the stress and anxiety associated with their feelings of inadequacy.

3. Principles of mental health education in headteacher education in primary school

3.1 Permeability

Permeability underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach to teacher education. It suggests that psychological health education should not be treated as a standalone course or module. Instead, it should be interwoven into different aspects of teacher training, including pedagogy, curriculum design, classroom management, and student-teacher relationships. Permeability involves integrating knowledge about psychological health across different subject areas within teacher education programs^[4]. For example, psychological health concepts can be incorporated into courses on child development, educational psychology, classroom assessment, and special education. This integration ensures that future teachers are equipped with a comprehensive understanding of psychological health's role in education. This principle emphasizes that psychological health education should not remain theoretical but should also focus on practical application. Prospective teachers should learn how to identify signs of psychological distress in students, develop strategies to promote emotional well-being, and create a classroom environment that fosters psychological health. Permeability extends beyond initial teacher education. It suggests that ongoing professional development opportunities for in-service teachers should also include psychological health education. This ensures that teachers continue to develop their knowledge and skills in this area throughout their careers.

3.2 Pertinence

Teachers should be trained to understand the diverse psychological needs of their students. This includes recognizing differences in personality, behavior, and emotional well-being. By doing so, they can create individualized strategies to support each student's psychological health. Primary school covers a wide age range, from kindergarten to upper elementary grades. Psychological health education must be tailored to the developmental stage of the students. For instance, the curriculum and teaching methods should differ for kindergarteners compared to fourth or fifth graders. The targeted approach also involves being culturally sensitive. Teachers should be trained to recognize and respect the cultural backgrounds and values of their students. Cultural factors can significantly influence a child's psychological health, and educators need to adapt their approaches accordingly. Part of a targeted approach involves early identification of students who may be at risk for psychological health issues. Teachers should receive training to recognize warning signs such as changes in behavior, academic performance, or social interactions. This allows for timely intervention and support. When issues arise, teachers should have access to resources and strategies to provide targeted interventions. These interventions could range from one-on-one counseling to group activities or involving school counselors and psychologists.

3.3 Lead by example

Teachers are seen as authority figures and mentors by their students. When teachers exhibit

positive psychological health behaviors, such as stress management, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills, they set an example for students to follow. For instance, if a teacher effectively manages stress in the classroom, it can help students learn how to cope with stress in their own lives. Teachers who prioritize their psychological well-being contribute to creating a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. When students see their teacher as emotionally stable, empathetic, and resilient, they are more likely to feel safe and comfortable expressing their own emotions and seeking help when needed. Teachers who lead by example can help students develop emotional intelligence. By openly discussing their feelings, validating the emotions of their students, and demonstrating empathy, teachers teach students how to recognize and manage their own emotions and those of others. Demonstrating healthy conflict resolution skills is another aspect of leading by example. Teachers can model how to handle disagreements, solve problems, and communicate effectively, which can help students develop essential life skills and maintain healthy relationships.

4. Strategies of mental health education in headteacher education in primary schools

4.1 Strengthen attention and mastery of students' psychological needs

By incorporating cultural elements into the curriculum, teacher educators can encourage prospective teachers to explore and understand the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of their future students. This approach promotes empathy and a deeper connection with students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment. Moreover, by encouraging self-reflection through cultural exploration, teachers can better recognize their own biases and preconceptions, enabling them to provide more equitable and culturally sensitive support to their students. This strategy not only prepares teachers to be more culturally competent but also contributes to their own psychological well-being by promoting self-awareness and a more holistic understanding of their role in the classroom.

4.2 Strengthening Cultural Construction to Assist Students in Self reflection

One effective strategy for incorporating psychological health education into primary school teacher education is to emphasize the importance of strengthening cultural construction as a means to assist students in self-reflection. By integrating cultural awareness and sensitivity into teacher training programs, future educators can develop a deep understanding of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their students. This approach encourages teachers to create a classroom environment that respects and celebrates cultural differences, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance among students. Through culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogical techniques, teachers can empower students to engage in self-reflection and better understand their own identities, emotions, and mental well-being within the context of their cultural backgrounds. This strategy not only enhances teachers' abilities to address the psychological needs of their students but also promotes a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, ultimately contributing to improved overall psychological health outcomes in primary schools.

4.3 Promote family school collaboration and actively communicate with parents

Teachers should be equipped with the skills and knowledge to engage parents as partners in fostering students' psychological well-being. This involves creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment that encourages parents to actively participate in their child's education. Teachers can organize regular parent-teacher conferences, workshops, and informational sessions focused on psychological health topics, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Effective

communication channels, such as newsletters, emails, and digital platforms, should be utilized to keep parents informed about classroom activities and provide resources and guidance on supporting their child's emotional and psychological development. By strengthening the connection between home and school, teacher education programs can empower future educators to collaborate effectively with parents, thereby creating a more holistic and supportive approach to psychological health education in primary schools.

4.4 Focus on interpersonal communication and open up students' hearts

One essential strategy for incorporating psychological health education into primary school teacher education is to emphasize the development of interpersonal communication skills that can help teachers create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment. This strategy involves equipping future teachers with the tools to effectively connect with their students, understand their emotions, and establish trust. By fostering open and empathetic communication, teachers can create a safe space where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, concerns, and emotions. This, in turn, enables teachers to identify early signs of psychological distress or challenges in their students and provide appropriate support. Furthermore, by modeling healthy communication patterns, teachers can impart these skills to their students, helping them build strong interpersonal relationships and emotional resilience from a young age. Integrating this focus on interpersonal communication within primary school teacher education programs can contribute significantly to the overall psychological well-being of both teachers and students in the educational setting.

5. Conclusion

The principles of mental health education outlined in this discussion - permeability, persistence, and leading by example - serve as a foundational framework for teacher education in primary schools. These principles emphasize the importance of creating a nurturing and supportive environment where students feel safe discussing their emotional challenges, receive consistent and ongoing support, and witness positive mental health behaviors modeled by their teachers.

Moreover, the strategies for mental health education presented in this context provide a roadmap for educators to foster the psychological well-being of their students. Strengthening attention to and mastery of students' psychological needs allows teachers to individualize their support, addressing the unique concerns of each child. Cultural construction and self-reflection empower students to develop emotional resilience and self-awareness, skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

The promotion of family-school collaboration and active communication with parents bridges the gap between the classroom and the home, ensuring that students receive consistent support and intervention when necessary. Lastly, focusing on interpersonal communication and creating an atmosphere that encourages students to open up their hearts fosters healthy relationships and emotional growth.

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