

Encouragements works better than evaluation

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ABSTRACT : *It is understandable that parents want their children to have good results, but there is evidence shows that encouragements works better than evaluation. As confidence has a lot to do with success, we need to increase students confidence in studying in order to improve their grades.*

KEY WORDS : *Self-awareness, confidence, academic achievements*

1.Introduction

‘Chinese parents’ are famous for their strictness , and they insist believing that ‘Strict masters produce outstanding students.’ They set high goals for their children and push them so hard as if they have no choice but to go to top 10 universities. If their children did not reach the goal they set, they would be greeted with blame when they get home. Many people argue that this is natural as every parent hope their children will a bright future. However, there are opponents advocate that criticism hurts children’s self-esteem or even produce anti-school culture. I have found that students’ self-awareness will impact on their academic success. This means that better they believe they could do in an examination, higher grades they will get. We need to make they believe that they are clever enough to deal with an exam instead of blaming them for every mark they had lost in the exam. Therefore, encouragement works better than criticism. So that it is important to increase children’s self-confidence. In this essay, firstly, I will use some psychologists’ researches to briefly explain how self-awareness forms ,and then I will illustrate how self- awareness relate to students’ academic performance, thirdly, I will introduce my research method and prove that to improve a students’ grades, we need to increase her or his self-confidence.

2.How self-awareness forms?

The forming of self-awareness is a long term process. Every event happened in one's life together will affect one's self-awareness, but self-awareness is not formed by only one of them. "self-awareness does not occur suddenly through one particular behavior: it develops gradually through a succession of different behaviors all of which relate to the self." [1] Although some researches have found that infant can also separate themselves from others, studies demonstrate that self-awareness becomes more developed around 18 months. Lewis and Brooks Gunn studied how self-awareness developed. They applied a red dot on infants' noses and held them up to a mirror. If they point to their own noses instead of the reflection in the mirror, this means that they have at least some level of self-awareness. In their research, no children under one year of age would reach their own nose, and about 25 percent of the infants between 15 and 18 months reached their own noses while about 70 percent of those between 21 and 24 months did so. It is important to note that Lewis and Brooks Gunn's research only indicates infants have visual self-awareness. Researchers have proposed that an area of the brain known as the anterior cingulate cortex located in the frontal lobe region plays an important role in developing self-awareness. Studies have also used brain imaging to show that this region becomes activated in adults who are self-aware. The rapid growth of spindle cells in the anterior cingulate cortex also happens around the age of 18 months.

Psychologists also separate self-awareness into two kinds. The first one is public self-awareness. This type of self-awareness often compels people to adhere to social norms. When one is aware that one is being watched and evaluated, one often try to behave in ways that are socially acceptable and desirable. The second one is private self-awareness. For instance, feeling one's stomach lurch when one realize one forgot to study for an important test. Sometimes, people can become overly self-aware and go into a state known as self-consciousness. Based on the two types of self-awareness I mentioned before, there are also private self-consciousness and public self-consciousness. "People who are privately self-conscious have a higher level of private self-awareness, which can be both a good and bad thing. These people tend to be more aware of their feelings and beliefs, and are therefore more likely to stick to their personal values. However, they are also more likely to suffer from negative health consequences such as increased stress and anxiety. People who are publicly self-conscious have a higher level of public self-awareness. They tend to think more about how other people view them and are often concerned that other people might be judging them based on their looks or their actions. As a result, these individuals tend to stick to group norms and try to avoid situations in which they might look bad or feel embarrassed." [2]

3.Relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement

A student who has a negative self-awareness will not achieve good results. Parents are the first teachers in children's life. They teach their children to talk, to play, to connect with this world. Family has a significant impact on people's early

life, and children get their feedback mostly from their parents. A big part of evaluation comes from them. This means that if their parents keep telling them they are not good enough in their life, they would consider themselves as stupid or hopeless. As I mentioned before a student who is privately self-conscious has its own personal values. Studying in school is not the only way to success. Some people may have their talents on other things such as singing, dancing, playing sports... Deprive them of their spare time and take away their hobbies from them will drive them crazy. Especially when they are not good at studying. They may feel they will fetch up nowhere. As a result, these students will have a negative attitude towards learning. When everyone in a society believes that only people who going to universities can have a bright future, this becomes a group norms. People who are public self-conscious will perceive that they do not fit in social values, therefore they will feel awful and do not have a appropriate mood for studying. After the annual college entrance examination, news about students commit suicides keeps coming up. These children consider going to universities as the only purpose of their life. They are scared of their parents' blaming and teachers' disappointment after knowing their scores, so that they choose to end their life. What if every parent tell their children that they are good enough and they do not need to be excellent at studying, they can find their own shining points? These tragedies might not have happened. Although I think not everyone has to be good at studying, we cannot dismiss the fact that academic results have a lot to do with students' confidence. For instance, a student who had not passed any of its exams will definitely feel bad, and doubt itself as not well as others. This means that it is more difficult to build up confidence for children who are not that clever.

In an American elementary school class, there was a Chinese girl adopted by an American family. The girl was particularly pretty and had a cheerful personality. By rights, this girl should be extremely confident, but that is not the case. Because her adoptive parents paid little attention to her schoolwork, the girl almost always came last in math. Whenever she had math class, she bent her head down and did nothing, because she did not know how to do subtract in a dislocation. The American children in the class often looked down her and called her a fool. How can such a child become confident? [3]When I was in junior high, my English grade was one of the best in the class. Every time when no one can answer the question teacher asked but I, the pride made me feel satisfied. However, I was not good at math, so I never put my hand up in math lessons. According to my own experience, I understand that parents want their children to have good results and both of them would feel proud. Also, students will feel more confident on subjects that they are good at. This means that self-belief will affect academic achievements.

Henry Ford has said, "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right." This means that your belief in yourself is a determining factor in your success. Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in the mid-1800s. Her future was written in cotton. Everyone around her was either too scared to escape or worse. However, instead of accepting the fact that she would live and die as a slave, she believed in herself. She knew she had the confidence to escape her unfortunate life and create something better. In the end, she not only freed herself, but she also

granted over 750 enslaved African Americans the sweet justice of freedom. Michael Jordan was told he did not have the skillset for high school basketball, but he kept persevering and perfecting his craft. He knew he had something special and he was not going to let that hinder him from being great. Dr Seuss was rejected by 27 publishers early in his career, but he believed in his creativity and what he had to share with the world. Because of his confidence, he illustrated the childhood for millions of kids all over the world. All these examples illustrate that confidence is the key to success. Therefore if we make a normal student confident, will he or she get better results?

4.Research

Confidence is a matter of self-knowledge which is a self-regulating system composed of self-knowledge, self-experience and self-control. Self-knowledge regulates individual psychological activities and behaviors. As the core component of self-knowledge—self-evaluation is related to the enthusiasm of individuals to participate in activities and tasks. Self-evaluation can be divided into positive and negative. Positive self-evaluation means that individuals can view themselves rationally and objectively. This kind of positive attitude towards self is manifested as self-esteem and self-confidence in subjective experience, while negative self-evaluation is manifested as inferiority in subjective experience. Self-confidence is the emotional expression of self-consciousness and the subjective experience of positive self-evaluation. It can cause and maintain actions and motivate and inspire people to achieve success with their abilities and efforts. Therefore, confident people have more chances and possibilities to achieve success than those who are not confident.[4]

My research plan is to tell students that they are more intelligent than the others, make them believe that they can achieve higher academic results. Then record their results trend in order to prove that belief in themselves is a determining factor in their success. The first step is to communicate with the teachers. I have to tell them the true research I am doing and the true purpose, because I need their agreement and help. The second step is to choose five students in one high school class who have average school results. This is because high school students' brains are fully developed, so that there are less bias. Since they are in the same class, they would receive the same teaching. Also, the average students have more space to improve than the top students. The third step is to tell the whole class that they are going to do an IT test. But actually, the test is a cover. The real purpose is to make the five students believe that they are more intelligent than the others in the class. The last step is to record their test results for five months and investigate the pattern. This is a covert research which means that the research purpose is hidden from the people being studied. However, after the research is finished, I will tell the students the truth. So that they will not have a misunderstanding of their IT scores later in their life.

Dr. TC North listed 12 benefits that come from boosting your self-confidence including an improved performance at work. Bandura's theory states that self-

efficacy built on one's beliefs in the likelihood of future success; those who believe they can influence the events of their lives have high self-efficacy. These evidence support me to believe that the five students will improve during the five months. Therefore instead of blaming children, parents who want their children to have a good result should encourage them to increase self-confidence.

5. Conclusion

Self-awareness is a long term process. To make children have a positive self-awareness, parents should encourage their children since they are little. A confident person will have higher achievement and can bear more evaluation. It is natural that parents wish their children all the best, but we need to choose a more appropriate and sufficient way to make them work hard.

References

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