

Research on Strategies for Cultivating Correct Self-consciousness of Junior High School Students: A Case Study of the Mental Health Teaching Material Published by The Jiangsu Phoenix Science and Technology Press

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Abstract: Junior high school students are in a sensitive period of physical and mental development. Their rapid physical growth forms a sharp contrast with their relative immaturity, leading to significant contradictions and instability in self-consciousness. If not properly guided, this cognitive imbalance may result in cognitive bias, which will have a long-term impact on students' personal growth and psychological health. Developing appropriate self-consciousness mechanisms in junior high school students is crucial to promoting the overall development in junior high school students is of great significant for promoting the overall development of students' personality and establishing a robust foundation for them to adapt to the learning environment and daily life more effectively. The present analyzes the Mental Health Teaching Materials published by Jiangsu Phoenix Science and Technology Press. Based on this analysis, effective ways for junior high school students at various developmental stages to establish correct self-consciousness are proposed, including promoting students' comprehensive and objective self-knowledge and evaluation through methods such as self-reflection exercises and peer-assessment feedback, as well as mastering self-emotion regulation strategies and cultivating the habit of self-reflection. These insights are expected to offer practical and actionable references, enabling middle school mental health educators to design more effective and targeted curriculum content that can truly help students in their self-development process.

1. Introduction

The development of self-cognition in junior high school students is a crucial but challenging task. The Chinese Ministry of Education emphasizes the significance of mental health education at the junior high school level. This includes helping students adapt to the learning environment, develop a learning mindset, enhance learning abilities, determine the direction for further education, understand themselves, manage their emotions, strengthen self-awareness, communicate effectively with others, cope with changes in life and society, and cultivate the capacity to withstand setbacks. It is clearly stated that middle school students should be helped to strengthen their self-knowledge and evaluate themselves objectively. The process of individual self-knowledge involves in-depth self-assessment

based on one's own self-understanding and knowledge, which encompasses the understanding of one's physical characteristics, mental abilities, values, and other dimensions [1]. Junior high school students are at the peak of their physical and mental development. They gradually begin to pay attention to their own inner world and have a more in-depth understanding of themselves. However, because of their strong sense of self-esteem and high sense of independence, they often find it difficult to realize a comprehensive and objective knowledge and evaluation of the self [2]. However, due to their strong sense of self-esteem and increasing sense of independence, they often find it difficult to realize a comprehensive and objective understanding and evaluation of themselves. Existing studies have shown that there is an imbalance between mental growth and physiological changes in adolescent, and the development of self-consciousness has been divided into multiple stages, with different rates of progress in each stage [3]. The development of self-awareness is divided into multiple stages and progresses at different rates in each stage. Typically, the development of self-awareness (or self-consciousness) is more gradual between the first and second grades, while a significant acceleration is experienced from the second to the third grades [4]. The development of self-concept in middle school students has been a major challenge over the past few years. However, at present, in the area of self-perception of junior high school students, there are still problems such as insufficient self-perception, self-negating emotions, and self-confusion. Some studies show that 5% to 10% of middle school students have a negative view of "me" and "my life", and they feel pessimistic, miserable, empty, and having a regressive feeling [5]. For junior high school students, a good self-perception can help them build stable self-esteem and self-confidence, maintain a positive mindset, improve their mental health, form a positive outlook on life and values, and enhance their adaptability and quality of life.

With regard to the cultivation of self-cognition, scholars in China have conducted extensive research on this issue and put forward a variety of cultivation strategies. Huo (2015) has improved the self-reading ability of elementary school students through the teaching of picture book reading and guided them to form a positive self-evaluation [6]. In the self-awareness teaching of mental health class, Zhao and Wang (2018) had students draw self-portraits to project their self-evaluation [7]. This effectively applied the self-portrait projection technique to the self-awareness teaching of mental health class and reduced students' defensive psychology. In the field of secondary education, Wang (2019) points out that educators can use context creation, self-evaluation and case study to help junior high school students develop self-awareness, enhance self-knowledge and self-orientation, and verify the effectiveness of these strategies in practice [8]. Through practice, the effectiveness of these strategies was verified. Sun (2020) summarized the strategies of "task-centered, self-evaluation, context-carrying, and group-based [9]. Liu (2017) believes that educators can guide students to think about the role of the self through context creation, self-evaluation and psychological counseling [10]. Song (2012) points out that strategies such as emotional control and teamwork can help higher vocational students develop proper self-management skills and improve their quality [11].

In summary, for the cultivation of self-knowledge in junior high school students, domestic research has made some progress and proposed diversified cultivation strategies, which mainly include picture book reading, self-portrait, context creation, self-evaluation, case study teaching, psychological counseling, emotional control, teamwork, and other methods. However, less attention has been paid to the systematic application of teaching materials and guiding suggestions for teaching implementation in previous studies, and the teaching methods of self-cognition for different stages are relatively homogeneous. Therefore, based on the three problems of insufficient self-knowledge, self-denial, and self-confusion that exist among junior high school students at present, this paper will take the Mental Health Teaching Material published by Jiangsu Phoenix Science and Technology Press as a blueprint. It will carry out an in-depth analysis of the textbook's content and structural interpretation and put forward targeted methods of self-knowledge cultivation based on the

characteristics of the psychological development of junior high school students at different grades.

2. Analysis of teaching materials

The cornerstone of mental health education programs for primary and secondary school students lies in the teaching materials, and the construction of these materials is a key step in strengthening this area of education [12]. The Mental Health Teaching Materials edited by Professor Fu Hong, closely follow the directives of the Outline and implements the spirit of the Outline to the fullest extent, emphasizing inquiry and experiential learning methods, focusing on self-reflection and the cultivation of personalized experiences, and equipping teachers with more specialized guidance tools and teaching media. The content of the textbook is extensive. It covers six major areas: self-knowledge, learning methods, interpersonal communication, emotion management, life and social adaptability, as well as career planning and life education. And it is presented in a step-by-step manner in accordance with the psychological and physiological growth patterns of adolescents in junior high school and their real-life needs.

The curriculum structure of this textbook is well -designed. Each chapter covers four core sections. The first is “Touching My Heart”. It aims to stimulate students’ interest and thinking through pre -designed scenarios and activities and to directly address their inner questions and confusions. The second is “Mindfulness Classroom”. It guides students to in -depth discussion and self -reflection and realization through inspiring practical activities. The third is the “Mindfulness Guide” section. It summarizes and elaborates the relevant theories, providing students with a systematic knowledge framework and practical strategies. The final section is “Mindfulness in Action”. It emphasizes the application and transformation of knowledge, encouraging students to apply what they have learned to their own lives. The four teaching modules constitute an interlocking and complete educational process, which shows the full picture of the program to educators and learners.

The following is a compendium of the chapters and key points of this textbook on self-knowledge, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Self-awareness theme curriculum for the whole middle school of the Mental Health Teaching Materials

Grade	Lesson	Activity	Intention
Seven	Lesson 3: What Youth Looks Like	Physical Changes During Adolescence; Me in the Mirror	Correctly look at the physical changes of puberty
	Lesson 7: How I see myself;	Recognizing the Physical, Psychological and Social Self; My Johari Window	Comprehensive understanding of self
	Lesson 14: Adolescent Psychology is Different;	Discovering Adolescent Psychology; Talking about Self-Independence	Recognize the psychological changes during adolescence and learn to be independent
	Lesson 16: Be Your Own Protector	My territorial boundaries; What to do in the face of danger?	Examine the relationship between oneself and the outside world

	Lesson 18: Standing up for your own responsibility	My responsibilities; Responsibilities Need Boundaries	Build up an awareness of self- protection
Eight	Lesson 8: Facing others' judgment correctly	Judge Me; Be Objective About Other People's Judgments	Correctly deal with the judgment of others
	Lesson 13: Accepting Yourself	Accepting Yourself as You Are; Reminders of Shortcomings	Learn to evaluate and accept oneself objectively
	Lesson 17: Cultivating Self-confidence	Understanding self-confidence; Improving self-confidence	Learn to develop self-confidence
	Lesson 2: Cherish Yourself	Reasons to love yourself; Loving yourself through action	Learning how to love oneself
Nine	Lesson 20: Independence is the best	Remove the stumbling blocks to independence; Independence has principles	Learn to be yourself and remain independent

As can be seen from Table 1, the curricula of the three different school years were carefully designed to promote the development of self-awareness around the students' respective stages of psychological development. The overall goals of the courses were to enhance students' self-understanding, improve their objectivity in self and other evaluations, and gain a deeper understanding of the physiological and psychological changes that characterize adolescence. In the textbook, the core concepts are reflected in the presentation of the course theme titles [13]. For example, in Grade 7, "What I see in my eyes", in Grade 8, "Accepting Myself", "Cultivating Self-confidence", and in Grade 9, "Cherishing Myself" and so on. By accurately refining the key words of the theme of each lesson, students can quickly grasp the main points of the curriculum; and by arranging teaching activities that are closely related to the theme, students can experience, comprehend and learn effectively in the process of participation.

3. Strategies for Cultivating Correct Self-consciousness in Middle School Students

In view of the unique stage of psychological development of junior high school students and the problems faced by this group in the field of self-knowledge, this study will use the Mental Health Teaching Materials published by Jiangsu Phoenix Science and Technology Press as a blueprint, focusing on exploring the cultivation strategies for students to form a correct self-knowledge in three aspects: firstly, to enhance students' ability to make a comprehensive self-knowledge and an objective assessment; secondly, to help students master an effective way of self-emotional regulation; and thirdly, to encourage students to actively participate in practical. The third is to encourage students to actively participate in practical activities and cultivate the habit of self-reflection.

3.1 Guiding students to fully understand and objectively evaluate themselves

Students in junior high school are going through the second key stage of self-consciousness development, with strong self-esteem and desire for independence, which may sometimes hinder their knowledge and evaluation from a comprehensive and objective perspective. Therefore, in formulating teaching strategies, educators should be based on the characteristics of students' psychological development stages and guide students to self-knowledge from a comprehensive and objective perspective. Taking the seventh grade (all one book) lesson 7 "Self in My Eyes" of the Mental Health Teaching Materials as an example, the course firstly displays the self-introductions of three students through the link of "Touching My Heart", aiming at revealing that self-knowledge is often one-sided and incomplete due to the limitations of the individual's vision. The aim is to reveal that due to the limitations of individual vision, self-perception is often one-sided and incomplete. In the "Mindfulness Classroom" section, two practical activities were designed: the first activity centered on the three dimensions of physical, psychological and social selves, guiding students to explore themselves in terms of their physical appearance, inner abilities and interests, as well as their self-orientation and evaluation by others. The second activity introduced the "Johari Window" model, explaining to students that self-knowledge is a process that deepens over time and requires constant adjustment, encouraging students to take the initiative to broaden their "open area". The "Mindfulness Guide" section provides students with a variety of self-awareness paths, including self-reflection, introspection of personal behavior, comparison with others, and acceptance of external feedback, encouraging students to look at themselves from multiple perspectives. The "Heartbeat Action" sets up a series of close-to-life scenarios to encourage students to think about and practice how to make effective self-presentation, realizing the leap from theory to practice, consolidating learning outcomes and promoting the application of knowledge. The whole curriculum is in line with the psychological growth characteristics of Grade 7, which are the initial awakening of self-cognition but not yet comprehensive enough, the high reliance on external feedback to construct self-image, and the extra attention to the evaluation of peers. In particular, guiding students to recognize their multi-dimensional selves can help them build a comprehensive and balanced self-knowledge system.

As for the curriculum design of self-understanding in the seventh grade, firstly in terms of teaching content, the Mental Health Teaching Materials is analyzed through many examples, such as the personality demonstration of three students in the classroom meeting in the introductory section of Lesson 7, "Self in My Eyes", the adolescent troubles of Zhang Ming in Lesson 14, and the safety challenges of Xia Lin and Qian Ying in Lesson 16, "Be Your Own Flower Protector". "Zhang Ming's adolescent worries and the safety challenges encountered by Charlene and Qian ying in Lesson 16, "Be Your Own Flower Protector", and Lesson 18, "Standing on Your Own Responsibility". "Lin Kai, Binbin and Ya Jing's roles in modeling behavior These cases allow students to deeply appreciate the diversity of self-perceptions among individuals. Educators can use this to guide students to analyze the cases in depth, aiming to emphasize the vital importance of self-knowledge and encourage students to self-examine multi-dimensionally, so as to build a comprehensive self-knowledge system. Secondly, in terms of teaching and learning activities, enhancing the sense of fun and participation is the key to improving students' mental health (Shen, 2016). Therefore, we can choose "My Self-Portrait", "My Strengths and Weaknesses Tree", "My Keyword Palm", "Uge Minute Applause" and other interactive activities、 games and art、 creation activities, prompting students to realize a comprehensive insight into their own personality、 interests and strengths through personal experience and exploration. To enhance flexibility in teaching methods, the focus should shift from the teacher to the students, placing them at the center of the classroom. Teachers can employ various interactive approaches, such as debates, group competitions (PK), role - playing, and psychodrama. These methods can create an atmosphere where students feel free to express themselves, which in turn

promotes a deeper level of self - understanding.

3.2 Helping students master self-regulation methods

When developing teaching strategies, educators need to adopt a holistic and integrated emphasizing in-depth perspective, understanding of knowledge and the implementation of skillful teaching methods. In the face of challenges and pressures, middle school students are prone to self-denial and lack of self-confidence. In this context, teachers not only need to master a series of self-adjustment skills and teach students how to apply them to their daily lives to enhance their self-management ability, but also need to realize that purely theoretical lectures are difficult to promote students' absorption and practice, so teaching practice should focus on the internalization of skills. For example, in Lesson 2, "Cherish Yourself", the core topic centers on "Caring for Self with Practical Actions". According to the main theme of the course, teachers should focus on inspiring students to recognize the unique value of individuals and guiding them to take practical actions to care for themselves, including cultivating a healthy eating pattern, positive self-affirmation, tolerance of personal mistakes, and engaging in interest development for personal growth as mentioned in the textbook, etc. These measures can deepen students' understanding of the self, and help them master self-regulation skills so as to enhance their sense of self-efficacy. In addition, it is necessary to explain to students that when they encounter difficulties in self-regulation, they can turn to the local psychological assistance hotline, family members, teachers or friends to provide multiple options for support.

3.3 Encourage students to participate actively in practice and to be good at self-reflection

Educators should guide students to take the initiative to engage in practice, integrate personal development traits in practice, and encourage students to learn by doing and think by learning, so as to cultivate correct self-knowledge. Taking the self- knowledge section of the Mental Health Teaching Materials as an example, the "Heartbeat Action" section at the end of each theme encourages students to connect with the realities of life and realize the transformation of classroom knowledge into the application of real-life life problems. For example, in Lesson 7, "What I Think of Myself", in the whole of Book 1 of Grade 7, a variety of close-to-life scenarios are designed to guide students in exploring the art of self-presentation; In Lesson 16, "Be Your Own Protector", students collectively create a youth self-protection handbook to record and share ways to cope with dangers and enhance their awareness of self-protection; in Lesson 18, "Standing Up for Your Own Responsibility", students create personal responsibility cards and display them in public to strengthen their self-knowledge of their roles and their sense of responsibility. In the 8th grade series, Lesson 8, "Facing Others' Evaluation Correctly" uses peer assessment to deepen self-understanding; Lesson 17, "Cultivating Self-Confidence" advocates students to follow role models for a semester to observe the process of self-confidence; Lesson 13, "Accepting Yourself" is an example of a student's self confidence in the classroom. Lesson 17, "Developing Self-Confidence", encourages students to follow role models for a semester to observe the process of self-confidence enhancement; and Lesson 13, "Accepting Yourself" employs a unique sentence structure to facilitate the construction of students' comprehensive self-knowledge. As for Grade 9, Lesson 2, "Cherish Yourself" requires students to write essays on related topics to deepen their thinking about caring for themselves, while Lesson 20, "Independence is the Most Wonderful Thing" advocates the establishment of a personal independence record sheet to encourage the continuous practice of independent behavior. Therefore, educators should embed practical activities in the design of the curriculum to extend theoretical learning to the practical level, with the aim of consolidating knowledge, promoting application and enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Meanwhile self-reflection is an important way to form correct self-knowledge. When guiding students to self-reflection, teachers should emphasize the principles of spontaneity, fairness and moderation. In terms of instructional design, teachers can guide students to review their personal behaviors and thinking patterns, think about their strengths and weaknesses, and plan for future growth paths by designing self-reflection questions during the course. In addition, teachers can encourage students to maintain the habit of keeping a self-reflective journal, which not only helps to cultivate students' self-reflective consciousness, but also effectively enhances the depth and breadth of self-knowledge.

4. Conclusion

Correct self-perception plays a crucial role in the development of middle school students' mental health and the enhancement of their social adaptability. In this field, the Mental Health Teaching Materials published by Jiangsu Phoenix Science and Technology Press has become an indispensable knowledge base and guideline for cultivating adolescents' correct self-perception. In teaching practice, educators can draw on the educational model of the Mental Health Teaching Materials, incorporate efficient teaching techniques, and promote students comprehensive and objective understanding of the self, emphasize the learning of self-regulation strategies, encourage self-reflection, and practice skills through a multidimensional approach, thus strongly promoting junior high school students' construction of a positive self-perception system, improving self-management ability, mastering reflection methods, and enhancing their practical skills. This series of measures is not only beneficial to students' personal growth and progress, but also significantly improves their mental health and social resilience.

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