

Application of Humanism Theory in the Teaching Approach

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Abstract

Humanism psychology is a psychological trend of thoughts which rose in America in 1950s and 1960s, with Maslow and Rogers as its main representatives. In 1960s, they applied the humanism psychological theory to the education field, and then formed the new humanism teaching theory, and it had a profound effect on the education reform movement, also it gave a new inspiration to the educators. They had a new view on the type of study, motivation of study, principle of study and the method to promote study. It is a challenge to the traditional education. After we have the inspiration to apply the humanism teaching theory to teaching approach, how to use it becomes a new question for study. This text will elaborate the application of humanism teaching theory in teaching approach from the aspects of teaching aim, teaching process, and teaching principle to improve the relationship between the teacher and the student and the student-centered teaching method, and will comment on the advantages and disadvantages of the theory.

Key words: Humanism theory; Humanism teaching theory; Teaching method; Inspiration application

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1. THE ORIGINS OF HUMANISM THEORY

The origins of humanistic psychology can be traced as far back as the Middle Ages when the philosophy of humanism was born. The basic belief of this philosophy is that every person has worth and rational thought.

The early humanism movement began in 15th century, Europe as a protest against the closed-minded religious dogma of the church's scholars and philosophers. Modern humanism psychology emerged in about the mid-1950s as a reaction by clinical psychologists, social workers and counselors against behaviorism and psychoanalysis.

2. HUMANISM TEACHING THEORY

2.1 The Content of the Humanism Teaching Theory

The theory of teaching is rooted from the basis of the theory of human nature. They believed that the humanism being is natural reality but not social reality. Human nature is rooted from the nature, and it is the characteristic of human being. All the organisms have internal tendency, that is to develop their own potential using the method which can help to maintain and strengthen the organism themselves. They emphasize that human being's basic need is decided by their potential energy. But they also believe that the natural human nature is different from animal's natural belonging. The human being has the instinctoid-need that is different from animal's instinct, and the instinctoid-need including psychological needs, safety needs, belonging needs and self-actualization needs, these elements are the basic needs of inheritance. Based on this, psychologists believe that the instinctoid-need is human nature, and it is good and natural. The noisome is not native, it is resulted from the failure of basic needs or resulted from the bad cultural environment.

2.2 The Inspiration of Humanism Teaching Theory

2.2.1 Types of Learning

Just as we introduced in the significant learning, there are two types of learning: insignificant learning and significant learning.

(1) Insignificant learning

The insignificant learning is similar to the learning of syllable. It is a difficult task for the learner to remember these insignificant syllables. Because the syllables are dreary, unimportant and easy to forget. On one hand, they are difficult to learn, on the other hand, they are easy to forget. In Rogers' view, some contents which were learned by the student have insignificant nature. Almost every student will find the fact that a certain part of the content is without any personal significance. Rogers believes that one of the tragedies in modern education is to regard the cognitive learning as the most important factor.

(2) Significant learning

It does not refer to the learning of the accumulation of facts, it refers to a learning which can arouse a significant change in individual behavior, attitude and personality when choosing a plan for future behavior. It does not refer to a learning of knowledge accumulation, but refers to a learning which can combine everybody's experience together. For example, when a baby touched a heating machine, he will learn the word "hot" and at the same time he will learn to be careful for the similar heating machine in the future. He will remain the content he has learned in a unforgettable, significant and concentrated method. Another example, if we move a five years old child to another country, and let him play with other children everyday without any language teaching, he will master a new language in a few months and he will have the native accent. Because he learns it in a method which is significant for him, then the learning speed is fast. If a teacher is sent to teach him, and the materials are significant to the teacher, then the learning speed will be slow, ever stand still.

Why is it easy for the child to learn by himself? And the learning is with a highly actual significance, when we use another method related with intellect to teach them, the situation is bad. Rogers thinks that the crux is the latter one is without relationship with the personal significance, and it is only related with the whole person, therefore he will not concentrate on the learning.

Since we have a rough idea about the type of learning, the inspiration for us is to use a proper approach to teach student and the final aim is to direct them to have a significant learning, that is to say, to encourage them to find a right approach to learn which is suitable for themselves. Take my personal experience as an example, when I was teaching in the east campus, the task is to teach phonology. It is dull to teach those phonetic symbols, as soon as I wrote the symbols that we would learn on the blackboard, I encouraged the students to think about the words which contain the symbols. The

atmosphere turned hot, the students thought out words actively. And I gave them some words which can arouse their interests, such as words referring to human beings, fruit and animals. Using this approach, we can make the students remember the symbols easily, because they join in the process of learning with their own effort. So it will be difficult for them to forget. It is an effective approach in teaching.

3. THE APPLICATION OF HUMANISM TEACHING THEORY

3.1 Teaching Aim

"Self-actualization" is the education aim which is pursued by all of the humanism educators including Rogers. Rogers points out that what is the reason for people to learn, the only reason is to satisfy the self-actualization needs. "Self-actualization" is people's instinct need and it is the most important inner motility, even the power to promote the society. The aim of education is to promote "selfhood" to be realized. Therefore "self-actualization" becomes the basic education aim. The education ideal is to foster "self-actualizer." He emphasizes that in the world which we have been living in, the aim of education is to foster open-minded, dynamic and adjustable people who know how to learn, and continue to learn.

Rogers regarded the traditional relationship between teachers and students as "kettle and cup". The teacher is a kettle and the student is a empty cup. The teaching is to pour the water from the kettle into the cup. The student is passive absolutely. He thought if we want to change the present bad situation, we must establish the thought with the student as the subject, and respect the student, encourage them to think independently, at last make the student be independent and volunteer to do things, and they will become more confident.

To reflect the theory in concrete teaching aim, we should not take the students as "accepter" who are passive, negative, automatic and do not care for their emotion. We can not only state pure knowledge or skill aim, and cannot consider to controlling the aim or achieve the aim either. As Rogers says "a man is a running program, not a cluster of solid material, he is a group of great potential changing all the time, not a group of solid character." On the basis of this concept, when we establish teaching aim, we should emphasize the integration of knowledge and ability.

3.2 Teaching Process

Rogers encourages the students to develop freely, it does not mean to encourage them to "learn freedom", he believes that it is not given by outside, it is a character which can make people have the courage to try some unknown, uncertain field. He thinks that the teaching process should contract a safe psychological atmosphere where the student can set out their inner potentiality.

In traditional education, we pay much more attention to teaching the knowledge on the book, and the teacher pays more attention to teaching the textbook. They regard teaching well as the premise of learning well. In fact, if we want to make progress in teaching, we should not only research on how to teach well, but also should research on how the students can learn well. This is just one of the teaching processes which were emphasized by humanism teaching theory, that is to develop freely. To learn well, we must give the students chances to develop freely. Nowadays, the development of science and technology offers us a wider space, the students can make use of the modern computer skill, they can choose teacher from the network freely. This method offers the students a better choice to learn. They can choose any subjects to learn if they are interested in, and the ability of recognition and operation of advanced education concept and advanced science and technology will send the students to the front of subject knowledge. The advantage of the outside factors will compensate the students' individual limitation.

The modern education changes the process which the students realize things in the learning process. Traditional teaching process is made up of knowing the textbook, understand the textbook, strengthen the knowledge and using the knowledge and these moments are formed continuously in a stable procedure. The usage of science and technology makes cognition, understanding, strengthen and using into one, and makes the content of education colorful and interesting. It is good for the student to obtain a strong realization, and it also can lead the student to resolve the nature of things and the inner relation. This will be more helpful for the student to develop freely.

During the process of teaching, the teacher can offer the students various learning resources, such as useful websites on the internet. This will be helpful for learning and in this way both of learning and teaching process will be vivid and interesting.

3.3 The Relationship Between Teachers and Students

Maslow believes that the emotional communication between teacher and students is the most basic type of behavior for people. The relationship between teachers and students is a special interpersonal relationship and this relationship is made through cognition and emotional communication. The psychologists believed that with the formation of human beings, they have the need to get other's care, to get other's warmth, love, sympathy, respect, recognition from the people who are related to them. The effective education teaching must take harmonious relationship between teachers and students as premise. Therefore the teacher should have sincere emotion and express brief, understanding and unconditional care for the students' psychosomatic health, they also should respect the students' emotion

and appreciate their advantages and soon. In this way, the relationship between teachers and students can be harmonious and this kind of relationship can satisfy the students' desire for care. It will promote the students to learn happily and actively. It will be helpful for the student's imagination and creation. On the contrary, in the exam-oriented education, the teacher is the incarnation of knowledge and the owner of scientific truth. The teacher teaches knowledge, the students learn the knowledge, and the teacher is the absolute pundit without any doubt. The students are object and passive learners. At present, this kind of typical relationship is still prevailing in most of the schools throughout the world. In this kind of relationship, the teacher's management is over-strict. They criticize, scold even beat the students, and the students' dignity is ignored absolutely. It arouses hostility and malice to the teacher, and it made many students suppress their real selfhood then form dual personality, at last will lead the education to failure. Therefore the emotional relationship between the teachers and students emphasized "the power of love" substantially.

If we want to develop the emotional relationship between teacher and students, here are some factors to be remember: (1) Genuineness, that is to say, the teacher should not have any cheat, lie and deceit, and the teacher and students should treat each other genuinely. Both of them should express their emotion directly without any cheat and false. Only in this way can the students obtain real-awareness and understanding to others. (2) Acceptance, the teacher and students should accept each other's emotion and concept. What the teacher said, the students can accept; what the students did, the teacher can accept. "The people who have the acceptance character will not complain about water for the water is wet, and will not be anxious for the stone for it is hard." This sentence told us that the meaning of acceptance. The teacher can accept the students' fear and hesitation when they meet new problems, and should accept their satisfaction when they achieve their aim. The teacher can also accept the student's glancing apartness, and their wrong thoughts and his efforts to realize his aim.

3.4 Student-Centered Teaching

Student-centered teaching and be regarded as the core of education principle. It was put forward by Rogers in 1953. Rogers put his psychological therapy into education and created the "self-directed" learning.

Rogers believes that for the students have learning potential and the motivation to "self-actualization". Therefore the teacher's task is not to teach the students how to learn, but to offer learning methods, and the students learn by themselves. The teacher should not live as "teacher" but a "facilitator". Only by doing so, can we temper the psychological intense atmosphere. It is good for the students to apply their potential. In teaching, the teacher is not a director or a controller but only a consultant, which is "student-centered".

In Roger's view, the "student-centered" in teaching is the same as "client-centered" in hospital. The teacher should get the student's trust as the doctor treat the client. No matter how the students think, the teacher should treat their views with sympathy and establish emotional communication with them. To apply the theory to teaching approach, we should follow some basic steps:

(1) Let the students decide the content and the motivation of learning by themselves.

Learning can be the most lasting and profound learning. If the students don't have the motivation to learn, they will learn nothing. When the teacher considers the content of teaching, he should pay attention to the students' needs. The teacher can guide the students to arrange their learning activity and at the same time, the teacher can offer some useful and necessary conditions.

When we will learn a lesson in Intensive Reading course, the teacher can ask for the students' opinion about the lesson. Let them preview the lesson, in next class the teacher will discuss with the students about the content of the lesson, they can communicate on how to learn and why to learn. The teacher can give the time to learn by themselves with some materials. After their "self-directed" learning, the teacher can check the result of learning and give some necessary advice.

(2) The students master their own learning approach

The teacher's important task is to teach the student how to get the approach to obtain knowledge. The teacher should not regard the students' brain as a depository stuffed a lot of knowledge, but should regard it as a manufactory to make new things. The nature of various subjects is different, and the content of the textbook is different, too. The approach of learning has some similarities and its own character. Therefore the students should not only master the general learning approach, but also a special learning approach for a certain subject.

(3) Let the students evaluate themselves

Students' self-evaluation is the vital consideration to establish learning independence. It is intervention to the students for the teacher uses mark or other primitives' method to educate their learning.

It is inadequate to measure the student's learning achievement by using standard test. Because these tests just order the students to give right answers and remember what they have learned. The closed-test only encourages the students to remember knowledge absolutely.

In self-evaluation students will not compare with other students but only with themselves. Using marks to measure the student's learning achievements will make the higher mark students feel proud and the lower mark students feel shameful. That we use marks to evaluate students will make them learn for marks but not to satisfy their need. Using self-evaluation can make the students know how he learned and whether they have achieved their aims, and how to make progress. The significance

of using self-evaluation approach is to make the students have their learning plan but also discuss with the students about the standard of evaluation, at last help them master the self-evaluation approach.

4. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HUMANISM TEACHING THEORY

4.1 Advantages

4.1.1 Taking the Student's Inner Thought into Consideration

The humanism teaching theory considers the research on cognition, emotion, interests, motivation and potential of the students during the process of learning. It encourages the teachers to think for the students and promote them to feel the interests and enthusiasm in learning. Humanism believes that the student's self-actualization and the creative ability are their vital factor for their behavior. The material, social and cultural environment will promote or stop the realization of the potential. In conclusion, humanism considers the understanding of students' inner thought and admits their difference in interests, needs, experience and individual personality. Humanism also considers exploring the student's potential to stimulate the mutual effect between cognition and emotion; it has active significance on the improvement of education career.

4.1.2 Taking the Relationship Between Teachers and Students and Teaching Style into Consideration

Humanism psychologists consider not only the student's individual differences and self-concepts, but also the relationship between teachers and students and the classroom atmosphere, especially considering the question like promoting the teachers to think the interpersonal emotion and relation, self-concept and self-respect, continuance of learning and so on. It promotes the teachers to understand himself rather than the content of textbook. It promotes the research on teachers' psychology and has a significant meaning on perfecting the teaching style and attitude.

4.2 Disadvantages

4.2.1 Emphasizing the Student's Potential Unilaterally, Ignoring the Effect of Environment and Education

The humanism psychologists claim that the education and teaching should amplify the student's creation is right, but they believe these psychological characters are all connatural potential, and ignoring the vital effect of society and culture is a kind of unilateral concept which consider inheritance only. The actual school will change their teaching aim, policy and model all the time according to the social environment, and it is inevitable

that the student will be influenced by the social group and family. So if we consider the student's connatural potential, education will lead random "learn freely".

4.2.2 Emphasizing the Center Position of Students Excessively, Influencing the Sufficiency of Education and Teaching

Humanism teaching theory encourages the student-centered teaching approach, this is a shock to the traditional education. However, considering the learner's free activity as the center of teaching, it will ignore the systemic logic of textbook and the teacher's leading role, and it will influence the quality of education and teaching.

4.2.3 Extending the Students' Interests and Hobby Excessively, Underestimating the Power of Society and Education

Humanism teaching theory extends the students' interests and hobby excessively and ignores the effect of good society and school education. We encourage the education measure should correspond with the student's psychological level, and should be helpful for the exploration of their instinct level and particularity. It means that under the good social education and self-education, we can improve the instinct intellectual level and perfect their particularity, at last foster the "whole person".

4.2.4 Underestimating the Effect of Teacher

Humanism psychologists put forward the emotional relationship between teacher and students offers a new model for the communication between both parties. But humanism psychologists regard the teacher as a facilitator or even a servant, thus underestimating the teachers' effect. That humanism psychology emphasizes the emotional communication between teachers and students is reasonable, but letting the teacher humor the concept of students is unacceptable.

CONCLUSION

Humanism teaching theory is based on the humanism psychology, its claim is being practiced in many fields as in the education field. Humanism teaching theory has some new views on teaching approach such as self-actualization, significant learning, emotional relationship between teachers and students and student-centered teaching. All these new views have the instructional effect on the present education and teaching. There are some differences with traditional education concept. So it is a shock to the traditional teaching approach. The claim such as emotional relationship between teachers and students opens a new sight for the teachers, and they can learn some new concepts and then put them into practice which is good to the teaching career. And the student-centered teaching approach promotes the teacher to care for the student's inner thought and treat them equally, and encourages the students to discover their own learning approaches and have an active learning motivation, all of these are helpful for the students to learn. But each coin has two sides; the humanism teaching theory has its disadvantage. What we should do is to make use of its advantages and put it into teaching practice to prove whether it is suitable or not, at the same time, we should avoid its disadvantages and improve the present method to make satisfied progress.

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