

# A Case Study on the Function of Psychological Counseling of Weekly Logs

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**Abstract.** Mentor's work is not only to establish a routine of classes but also to offer students psychological counseling. Under the system of a school, it is still unclear between mentors and school counselors. To the extent that what a mentor should do is to be first aid in emergency. Weekly logs can be a good helper for mentors to read important messages which are not perceived by students themselves. This study aims to analyze two current mentors of vocational high schools by engagement motivation, ecosystems theory, and theory of narrative therapy. The result shows that weekly logs seem to be zero psychological distance between the mentor and the student, but to get involved into students inside heart, through them, is a long way to go. Weekly logs work only if they are carefully evaluated with enough attention.

**Keywords:** weekly logs, narrative therapy theory.

## 1. Introduction

Adolescence is known as a stormy period of life, with varying degrees of rebellious tendencies, and for the incomplete independence ability, but desperately trying to break free from the control of parents and teachers [5]. This is the process of learning to become an adult called emerging adulthood which is also a preparatory period for socialization. However, they are often self-awareness, self-centeredness, rebellion against authoritarianism, emotional instability, pessimism, negativity, or cynicism, and other outward behaviors that seem to be the norm of society. Research on adolescent problem prevention has shown that ineffective routine training strategies include harsh scolding, sarcasm [11]. On the contrary, attitudes such as prevention, patient correction, and non-retaliation against students are the keys to maintaining good student behavior [4].

Weekly logs are an effective establishment of classroom management for building a good teacher-student relationship. It is believed that from the written expression in weekly logs. It can not only get closer to the real mood of students, but also inadvertently obtain important messages that cannot be observed to effectively solve students' difficulties and problems associated with learning. The content and format of weekly logs affect whether students complete them with care or formality. Another influencing factor is whether teachers are attentive to the correction of weekly notes.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Engagement Motivation

From the mentor's point of view, he/she must closely observe the student's behavior, maintain good communication with the parent or guardian, and cooperate harmoniously with him/her, which is a job responsibility under the law and a defensive participation. From the perspective of the school system, the main mentoring function is to deal with the difficulties of students' adjustment to school, remind parents or guardians of their responsibilities to care for their children, and use resources to assist students at any time, so that students' personalities can develop normally and soundly. The main aspects of mentors' participation in student counseling are to keep in touch with parents (including class situation, social situation, and grades), daily counseling (including life counseling, study counseling, teacher-student relationship building, and individual counseling), and cooperation with administrative units (including actively liaising with mentors and participating in

case conferences) [9]. Therefore, under the school system view, the role of mentors in student psychological counseling not only has a primary preventive function, but also practices the school system view [7].

## 2.2 Ecosystem Theory

Ecosystem theory, which are independently divided into 4 systems named microsystem, intermediate system, external system, and macro system [6], refers to the network between individual development of ecological environments, including individuals, environment, and interactions with environment [12]. The concept of ecosystem theory is that the process of interaction is not just in the same level of the system, but in the multi-layer environmental system. Ecosystem theory emphasizes that the growth and development of individuals is directly involved in the current system by others, and indirectly influenced by broader ecological forces. According to Gunderson [1], ecosystems consist mainly of family emotional connections and external environmental systems, which refers to the participation opportunities of support networks and institutions outside the home, while the ecosystem can withstand changes in individual experiences and structural systems [2].

From the perspective of ecosystem theory, adolescents are tolerant of structural changes in ecosystems. The transformation of adolescents' individual experience requires the support of educational resources and the intervention of educational resources, and early warning of deviant behavior in adolescents can be observed from the intermediate system [12]. When intermediate systems are not effectively linked or conflicted, adolescent problems arise. Therefore, sound and effective counselling channels, strengthening the connection between school and family, and the connection between family and community are very important strategies of prevention.

## 2.3 Narrative Therapy Theory

Recently, narrative therapy theory, is postmodern psychotherapy originated in Australia in the 1980s, was proposed by Epton, and subsequently gained popularity in North America, has gained considerable popularity in psychological counseling and is widely used to treat adolescent irregularities, such as stealing [8], attrition [10] and other common deviant behaviors. At that time, scholars found that people's lives were not happy forcing people's spiritual crisis to be gradually highlighted, and modern medicine was committed to the treatment of physiological diseases so that people would not know how to solve psychological problems [13].

Unlike modernism emphasized the process of experience and empirical evidence, postmodernism focuses more on the process of the formation of individuals and societies than on the process of forming theories. The narrative sees the problem of the person the story is intervened by the dominant culture, creating a displacement of subjective bias that shapes the framework of how others perceive themselves [3]. Therefore, through narrative therapy, it is possible to find the mechanism of resistance by looking for the mainstream culture and its influence of students' cognition, and exploring the value of oneself under the uncertain mainstream culture could be the key to defense what it is meant to be.

## 3. Research Design

"Functional Questionnaire on Mentor Cognition Weekly" was self-developed as a research tool. The questionnaire was with 10 open-ended questions in total. Two high school mentors were selected. Mentor A is a four-year teaching experience teacher, and Mentor B is a senior teacher with more than ten years of school teaching experience. They both imply weekly logs for more than one year and it is still running. The data analysis was based on the content of interviews and reflection of literature to understand and verify the two mentors' views on the meaning and function of weekly logs.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Weekly logs can shorten the psychological distance between mentors and students

Both mentors believe that weekly log is the proper bridge between teachers and students, and it is also an effective communication platform. In terms of class management, weekly journal is a small helper, which can not only know the current situation of students immediately, but correct students' mistakes immediately after knowing, which is a good tool for class management.

*Weekly records are the best communication bridge between students and teachers, and they can immediately correct their wrong behaviors after knowing them, so I think it has a far-reaching impact on class management. (A-3)*

*The significance of the weekly journal for teachers is to provide a private channel of communication. (B-3)*

Mentor B further pointed out that he found a shy student in his class written in the weekly logs about feeling inferior and even wanted to commit suicide because he was bullied by some bad classmates. Fortunately, the ending was good without any unnecessary consequences.

*Weekly log is the best bridge between the mentor and the students, so that they can understand what is happening in the class and what the students are thinking. (B-3)*

*Students feel that writing a weekly log is very similar to writing a diary, where they can freely express their thoughts, and I am the guardian of the diary, and all the contents of the weekly logs can be sealed. (A-3)*

### 4.2 Weekly logs can heal/correct minor learning deviations in students

Both mentors mentioned that weekly log help them to solve problems between students, such as stealing, cheating, fighting, and other relevant incidents that the mentor is not easy to detect.

*A female student in the class lost a thousand dollars, and without direct evidence, I explained the incident to the class, asking the class to make the incident the theme of the week's weekly logs, and to begin with an opinion that said, "If my money is missing in the classroom, I will..." (A-3)*

*Some students in the class behave badly, such as cheating, fighting, etc., and other students dare not accuse them in person, and they are afraid that they will tell the teacher in person and be seen by other students, so they will write it in the weekly logs. (B-3)*

Interestingly, they both believe that weekly log is of great significance to the psychological counseling function of students: to help to expose students with slightly deviant behavior, and counsel or reassure students with minor deviant behavior.

### 4.3 Grading weekly notes is a work pressure, and it needs to be reviewed carefully

Mentor A believes that marking is time-consuming and labor-intensive, requiring a lot of time and effort to respond to students' writings, whereas mentor B may have more experience in grading. Although he has some complaints about the working hours of grading, from the perspective of mentoring students, correcting weekly diaries is a "sweet burden".

*For weekly logs in which the students take special care to describe their inner feelings, I will take time to review and give feedback carefully so that correcting them can be quite a time-consuming task. (A-5)*

*Seriously, there is some pressure and some burden because I have a lot of responses. Sometimes I can talk to students about a lot, or students are serious about responding. It is worth as a "sweet burden". (B-5)*

When further asked about the tips for grading, mentor A was worried that the written response was not objective enough, which would lead to misunderstanding. He would be particularly cautious when marking students' weekly logs. Mentor B paid more attention to whether the content submitted by the students was solid, and then responded according to the situation.

*Correction of the weekly logs must take time, mind, and care to reply. (A-6)*

*For students who "have something to say", I will encourage them, and for students who are more perfunctory, I will give more advice. In doing so, students will normally improve, and will become more serious about writing them. (B-6)*

#### **4.4 The newcomer mentor thinks weekly log needs a theme, while the senior mentor thinks that it is not**

When asked whether the mentors had set a theme, mentor A said students would be given appropriate or progress-appropriate topics according to the progress of the semester, for example, before the mid-term examination, students would be asked to write about their feelings about preparing for the mid-term examination. Mentor B believes that writing is a free task that should be open to students' active self-exploration and self-determination of the events to be shared with.

*Before and after the mid-term exams and before the final exams, students will be specially advised to write on the theme of preparing for the exams to remind them that the exams are approaching. (A-9)*

*I always give students the freedom to play and ask students to record interesting or special things they encounter in their home life or school life and share them with their teachers. (B-9)*

## **Conclusion**

The two mentors have different and similar viewpoints of the function of weekly logs in the psychological counseling of students. The main difference is the effect of shortening the psychological distance between teachers and students. The newcomer mentor tends to believe that the best distance between teachers and students is not zero, in which the most suitable distance for mentoring students is to maintain the commanding heights of position so that the communication between teachers and students forms a natural barrier, and the external advantages of the mentor's educational mission are used to enable students to accept the mentor's professional advice. In the meantime, the senior mentor tends to see the best psychological distance between teachers and students is zero distance. Neither mentor denied that the psychological counseling function of weekly logs has a certain degree of values and if they are viewed carefully and respond carefully, students may perceive the warm.

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