Foster Students' Core Literacy through the Hidden Functions of Curriculum

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［**Abstract**］The mission of education is to train students into qualified citizens and modern builders, in which curriculum practice can play an important role：face to all and emphasize quality education；overall goal, reflecting flexible and open implementation；subject-oriented, respecting the differences between students；activity teaching, guiding experience participation；process evaluation, emphasizing all-round development；course development, applying what have been learned.

［**Key words**］curriculum culture；curriculum education；quality education；foster virtue through education

1　Problem presentation

Educator Lyu Xingwei once raised the issue of Chinese education：the teaching content is rigid, and the teaching requirements have not changed for many years；the main focus is on knowledge education, with emphasis on the transfer of existing experience, neglecting practical experience and the cultivation of students' hands-on abilities；excessive evaluation of students based on test scores；contempt for humanistic education, inability to implement the concept of quality education, etc. . These situations exist in schools at all levels. In the current era of information and network, students have too much to learn. Due to time, energy, and acceptance ability, the learning effect of ordinary middle school students is not satisfactory, often showing difficulties in completing tasks and homework. Therefore, the evaluation of student learning, the assessment of learning effectiveness, the grasp of practical teaching, and the monitoring of practical ability are often conceptualized without being implemented. There are often significant differences between the macro setting of curriculum and teaching design and the actual situation and acceptance ability of students. The implementation effect of teaching is not obvious, and students' learning often appears to be superficial. It is worth educators' deep reflection and practical solution.

After multiple distributions in primary and secondary schools, students in ordinary middle schools have relatively lower IQ and weaker basic knowledge and learning abilities based on probability statistics and normal distribution analysis. In other words, these students are relatively less capable of learning pure theoretical knowledge. It is very difficult to cultivate those with average qualities into qualified "products", which requires a lot of effort and difficulty. At least, we need to have considerable patience to face these students with uncertain temperament and capriciousness. This presents a difficult problem for the administrators and all educators in ordinary middle schools. The bottom line requirement of the country is to cultivate "people" from "moderate people". We should know that human growth is uncertain and subject to various factors. We should understand that these students have their own natural laws and effective measures in growth and development. As long as educators

are conscientious, success belongs to us.

2　Emphasize educational mission and cultivate core competencies

The important mission of education is to cultivate students into qualified citizens and builders of socialist modernization, in which curriculum plays an important role in cultivating students' core literacy through the implementation of curriculum teaching.

2.1 Emphasis should be placed on building "scaffolding" in course teaching

In routine teaching, teachers often emphasize the learning of each knowledge point, while easily forgetting the connections and relationships between chapters, sections, knowledge points, and knowledge structures. Such micro -learning may have good results, but students are not clear about the connection between knowledge, the position and causal relationship of a knowledge point in the entire knowledge structure, and tend to form a blind state of "seeing trees but not the forest", lacking clear judgment and understanding of the macro and overall knowledge. Therefore, in teaching, it is often helpful to help students sort out the knowledge relationship, organize the structure of the knowledge tree, awaken students' imagination and memory, and make them form a complete concept map of knowledge ability structure. In the internationally popular concept, it is also called "framework learning" or "scaffolding" learning.

The main purpose of the "scaffolding" learning is to convey the main knowledge content and core operational tips to students, allowing them to learn skills and techniques based on these operational tips and understand them during the operation. Due to the limitations of the foundation and ability of ordinary middle school students, no matter how strictly you require and train them, most students' knowledge level, diligence level and self-learning ability cannot meet the basic requirements for learning theoretical knowledge, which is completely different from the situation of key primary and secondary school students. Of course, not all students are like this. Some students lose their interest in learning at primary and secondary schools and give up learning progress in advance due to family finance, parental expectations, personal interests and hobbies, as well as the lack of personalized teaching methods, communication and cooperation between teachers and students, or improper handling of conflicts between teachers and students.

The "scaffolding" learning approach brings us many challenges and opportunities. We need to innovate in the way of education and teaching, grasp the fundamental task of cultivating students' moral character and promoting their personal growth, and effectively improve their core literacy.

2.2 Enhance core literacy in knowledge ability cultivation

The basic knowledge and learning ability of ordinary middle school students are relatively weak. In other words, these students are relatively backward in their ability to learn pure theoretical knowledge. How to cultivate those with average qualities into qualified citizens and builders of socialist modernization is our important responsibility. The foundation is core literacy.

We need to analyze from the needs of students, make value judgments and course choices based on their professional development, and weigh the importance of future career development. We should choose core content to enable students to acquire the most important knowledge reserves, leaving enough time for them to think and providing necessary space for them. This is the meaning of the traditional Chinese educational philosophy of "teaching is for not to teach". Building a scientific curriculum concept is a fundamental, valuable and particularly important matter for returning education to its essence in the current education "involution".

3　Carry forward the cultural function of curriculum and cultivate students' core literacy

In school teaching, curriculum is an important carrier. In a sense, all activities are courses. Of course, the school curriculum is not only the disciplines listed in the timetable, but also includes school systems, regulations,

management requirements and implicit curriculum culture. It has unimaginable educational functions：face to all and emphasize quality education；overall goal, reflecting flexible and open implementation；subject－oriented, respecting the differences between students；activity teaching, guiding experience participation；process evaluation, emphasizing all－round development；course development, applying what have been learned.

3.1 Face to all and emphasize quality education

Course teaching in school faces to all students. Educator Lyu Xingwei has raised a series of problems in Chinese education, the main one being the neglect of quality education. From primary school to middle school, we often focus on relatively outstanding students, ignoring or abandoning those with relatively average qualities. In order to reflect their performance, primary and secondary schools often present their own highlights to the higher authorities. Our propaganda often uses cases instead of the whole and trees instead of forests. This is a stereotypical approach that needs to be improved. Education requires concrete actions.

Quality education needs to be reflected in the educational process. After the 18th CPC National Congress, inspection teams have been dispatched to various schools at all levels to rectify the situation. Government personnel with insights have long been keenly aware of the short－termism in education, which, from a certain perspective, is also a manifestation of social Darwinism. In order to achieve development goals as soon as possible, we have not respected the laws of development. Instead, there occur blind, excessive and leapfrog developments, and the pressure is passed down from level to level. When reaching the lowest level, the pressure will be staggering, resulting in exhaustion and curtness. The idea of "don't let children lose on the starting line" is reflected in the fact that it is proposed even in primary schools and kindergartens. Many inspection teams in various places have pointed out these problems and requested schools to handle education with a normal attitude. According to the national education policy, they should focus on the laws of education development, student growth, and physical and mental development, and cultivate qualified citizens and construction forces needed for modernization.

3.2 Overall design, reflecting flexibility and openness

Course teaching needs to cultivate students' overall thinking and reflect the full teaching objectives. The "scaffolding" is the key to teaching, which can cultivate students' inductive thinking, promote the development of their innovative thinking, and enable them to open their minds in flexible changes to adapt to the requirements of the changing times.

Course teaching needs to reflect flexibility and openness. The current problems in teaching are often limited to a narrow teaching of one lesson and single content, lacking the overall design of a chapter or even the goal design of a book, which is detrimental to the growth of students.

At present, the curriculum system of ordinary middle schools is often built around the concept of a curriculum expert. However, there is no mechanism to test, evaluate, feedback and adjust its scientificity, rationality, operability and effectiveness. This is the root cause of the problem. The author believes that reflection and change are necessary. Firstly, the curriculum needs to be tested by both the learning and teaching subjects. The most authoritative voices are students and teachers who use it. The knowledge level of students in ordinary middle schools is relatively low, so their evaluation lacks sufficient persuasiveness. However, this is not a reason for their absence. The "silent absence" precisely shows that our evaluation system does not put people first and ignores the existence and feelings of students. This is contradictory to the "student－centered" requirement of the times. In order to solve this problem, we can improve the mechanism by selecting excellent students to conduct application analysis of the curriculum, selecting ordinary students to conduct general evaluation of teaching materials, and selecting teachers and students to conduct high-level evaluation of curriculum and teaching resources through group cooperation. In the application of curriculum and teaching, the most authoritative real subject is the majority of

teachers, who are also deprived of the right to participate in evaluation and even lack a sense of existence. In daily use, teachers are prone to discover problems first over years of repeated teaching operations. For example, in the process of using textbooks, the author often finds problems, even printing errors, unscientific arrangement, unscientific selection of examples, unreasonable order of exercises, etc. Many letters have been written to the publishing house but have gone unanswered. In order to improve students' learning effect and interest, the author often gives students a privilege that whoever discovers textbook errors will be given a higher score in their usual performance. In fact, some problems in textbooks can be found every semester. However, there is no connection with the editor and no communication with the publishing house. It is also impossible to coordinate with administrative departments. This is also a common problem in Chinese culture. The division of labor in society is too fine and there is a lack of mechanisms for connection and communication in the middle. The "railway police" only take care of their own section, resulting in many departments being in charge of things. When problems arise, no one will care about them until it is too late. It was not until the "toxic textbooks" caused a nationwide ideological accident that it was solved by the attention of national decision-makers. Of course, this is a painful lesson that deserves consideration by decision-makers. We need to build a textbook review mechanism to check and revise it regularly. Curriculum experts and textbook writers need to bear considerable responsibilities and consulting more users' opinions to make timely corrections.

3.3 Subject-oriented, reflecting individual differences

Course teaching serves all students. Students are the main body, which is of course the essence of teaching. Therefore, the teaching needs to be based on students' learning and real mastery at any time. It is not for teaching's sake, but for learning. We need to consider students' knowledge reserve, acceptability, degree of preference, and future needs in everything. If these requirements are met, our curriculum selection and direction are meaningful and good curriculum view, and the best carrier to lead students' development. What is called development? It means that students' learning and life are relaxing and enjoyable, in which they actively participate, make progress every day, grow every day, develop every day, and gain more than the previous day. There is progress in thinking, cognitive, practical, and critical abilities. This is a good curriculum and development view.

Course teaching needs to reflect the differences between students. There are differences in cognitive speed and ability among students in every class, and it is unrealistic to make them uniform. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the differences between students at different levels, design the objectives and requirements of layered teaching, and make differentiated requirements based on the learning effects of students at different levels. Of course, through different teaching methods, the ultimate goal is to achieve a common learning effect faces to all.

3.4 Activity teaching, guiding experience participation

Teaching needs to digest knowledge through different forms, so activity teaching is necessary to consolidate and digest knowledge. "It is a delight to learn and practice regularly" reflects this. Reflecting on the curriculum system from the perspective of students' sustainable development, some new courses can be introduced to cultivate students' core literacy and enhance their professional general ability. For example, speech and eloquence, campus choir, collective dance, cheerleading, photography technology, post-editing and production of videos, musical instruments, flower arrangement art, etc. , which are beneficial to physical and mental health, happiness in life and work needs, and can be introduced to students in the form of mini-courses, short courses, and micro-courses. It can enhance students' artistic appreciation taste and ability, enrich cultural life on campus, and at the same time benefit students' future development and employment. It is worthy of our deep thinking and practice.

Course teaching must guide students to experience with minds and actively participate in it. The second

classroom, also known as informal time and space, is an important channel for personal growth and an indispensable opportunity. As the first classroom is too formal, rigorous, rigid, and dull, lacking warmth and communication, only in the second classroom can people take off their masks and return to their true state, communicate with each other naturally, immerse themselves in emotions, and motivate each other. The main forms of the second classroom on campus are clubs, extracurricular activities, project collaboration, self-learning, and so on. In the era of the Internet, we should also develop new forms, such as CHATGPT-based learning, online learning based on high-quality online university courses, teacher-student research and development teams formed around research projects of famous teachers on campus, cross-disciplinary project collaboration club activities, and student practice bases for on campus and off campus collaboration. The individual project team activities and Internet plus social project practice that students freely set up require teachers to pay attention to the latest development of the industry and society, be enthusiastic about serving students, mainly in forming teams, and cooperate with teachers and students.

3.5 Process evaluation, emphasizing all-round development

To enhance the effectiveness of the course, it is necessary to conduct regular evaluations during the process to understand the learning effect, evaluate the course effect, strengthen process monitoring, and promote reflection and adjustment. Currently, we repeatedly emphasize the ideological and political education in various disciplines, which means that traditional ideological and political courses and current political lectures alone cannot meet people's needs for ideological shock waves in the rapidly developing economic society. The negative effects of excessive efficiency in pursuing people's thoughts brought about by economic development and the weakening of beliefs and ideals are not transferable by human will. We cannot cancel economic activities, so we have to start from ideological tools to strengthen ideological understanding and cultural identity, and use the educational function of ideological and political education to strengthen moral cognition and moral education practice for young students.

Course teaching must emphasize all-round development. Ideological education must penetrate all aspects of education, from horizontal to vertical. This requires us to fully infiltrate and participate in all disciplines for all times, and with all teachers, so that the "three-in-one education" becomes the strongest voice of the times.

3.6 Resource development, applying what have been learned

Teaching must enrich teaching resources with real-life examples, using books to teach rather than teaching with books. As long as they're necessary, many things in life can be used. The concept of curriculum affects the implementation of curriculum, and curriculum affects the development of students' quality. For several types of courses in ordinary middle schools, there are generally liberal arts courses, science courses, comprehensive arts and science courses (comprehensive practice, information technology, mental health), art courses (music, art, dance, art), sports (physical exercise, sports skills), with the proportion of class hours generally being Politics：Chinese：Math：Foreign Language：Physics：Chemistry：Biology：History：Geography：Physical Education：Music：Art：Labor Technology：Information Technology：other professional courses = 6：5：5：5：6：6：6：6：6：8：8：8：8：8. However, the process of curriculum implementation shows that the third, fourth, and fifth types of comprehensive, art and sports courses that should be valued on the surface are greatly discounted due to limitations of school conditions or administrators' preference for "mainstream courses". Most comprehensive practice courses in most schools from most areas exist in name only, resulting in the inability to truly implement art appreciation practice courses. Besides, students' physical training is insufficient, which seriously affects their health and future sustainable development ability. In the current situation where other courses are subject to practical limitations, we need to attach importance to extending beyond the classroom and using online resources, and attach importance to ideological and political education in the curriculum to make up for the deficiencies in the implementation of other

types of courses through ideological education means.

Teaching needs to guide learning towards application. There is no pure theory without application, nor is there a one-way application without theoretical support. In 2016, the concept of core literacy was proposed in the Chinese education community. Its essence is that in the era of massive knowledge, students do not lack knowledge and information, but there is too much knowledge, and students are at a loss, often losing their direction and not knowing how to choose and turn. How to learn the most valuable core knowledge in the limited student life, cultivate core abilities, and ultimately form core literacy so that they can develop rapidly in their future career, keep up with the pace of the times, and meet the needs of sustainable development in life is the essence of the new era curriculum reform. How to optimize courses to meet the needs of students' future development is the task of education management experts and curriculum experts, and of course requires the participation of all front-line teachers.

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