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The Complex Case of Positioning the Foundation Degree: Making Sense of A Degree That Is Not A Degree

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Abstract

The Foundation degree was launched in 2001 and has enjoyed growth but remains a controversial qualification. Foundation Degree Forward, the body charged by the UK government with providing a 'national network or expertise to support the development and validation of high-quality Foundation degrees' is championing the marketing of the Foundation degree and the government has poured a lot of resources towards its functions. The complexity of positioning the Foundation degree emanates from lack of clear differentiation. The performance of Fd graduates in organisations, continued support from the government and the employers will affect the long-term image of the qualification. While acknowledging some well founded arguments for the case for Fds this paper points out that the wholesale shift from the Higher Nationals (HNs) to Fds might have been too drastic. The paper argues that there was merit in re-engineering the HNs and avoid the huge amounts of resources expended on promoting the Fd. The Wagner Task Force Report to Ministers (2004: p3) could not have been more explicit about the challenge for Fds in stating "The need for them is clear, and the achievements of the first three years are impressive. There are still many challenges to be met if Foundation degrees are to become embedded as an integral part of our higher education system. However the first period of any innovation is the most difficult."

Keywords: Higher Education, Foundation degrees, Marketing, Positioning, Work based learning, Education standards

1. Introduction

Gutman and Miaoulis (2003: p105) point out that "A problem that arises too often is that marketing communications promise benefits that the institutions are unable to deliver." This view is consistent with the state of the Foundation degree (Fd) within the United Kingdom (UK) Higher Education establishment. As a brand the Fd is in limbo without a foothold in the market, something which could be attributed to the fact that the programme is relatively new on the higher education market. An important question that may be asked is whether the launch of the Fd was political gimmicking or a well founded move meant to change the education system in the UK. The government would want 40% of the adult population at level 4 education which includes degrees and diplomas by 2020, up from 29% in 2005. If more people are to see the Fd as a bachelor's degree the government would be happy with that confusion as it gives the impression of a more educated society and that would help fulfil their desire to paint a positive picture by default. At this point students would question if it is a degree, industry would be confused while academic institutions face the daunting task of trying to persuade the doubters that it is a credible qualification.

Education is the cornerstone of social and economic development and governments the world over should respond to commerce and industry needs by investing into the appropriate programmes that will ensure appropriate education programmes are delivered by institutions from primary through to higher education levels. The Wagner Foundation degree Task Force Report (2004) points out that the Foundation degrees have developed into a single brand which has got a number of products, which could be classified in a variety of ways. This prompts a number of pertinent questions about the authenticity of the qualification, its relevance to the needs of society and the fact that most institutions moved in to run it without concrete closely monitored trials. This would have helped develop the right models for effective delivery. This might be the reason for doubts about the efficacy of the Fd as an answer to the skills deficiency in the country. Much as there are many questions unanswered with university delivery of the Fd already the momentum has picked up with Further Education Institutes (FEIs). The situation on the ground presents a mixed picture with both universities and further education colleges delivering it. The two offer different experiences in both social life and

pedagogy. While mutual cooperation between universities and further education colleges is enriching and is common, the situation facing the Fd is complex as the FELs have been empowered by the government to award the qualification with the guidance of Foundation Degree Forward (FDF), thus removing the tried and tested experience and authority vested with universities. FDF has now taken a much more complex role of promoter, referee and owner of the qualification.

According to Foundation Degree Forward, the body charged with providing a ‘national network or expertise to support the development and validation of high-quality Foundation degrees’:

The Foundation degree is a distinctive higher education qualification which was established in order to provide new opportunities for vocational, progression in a way which is both academically rigorous and employment related. Foundation degrees, therefore, integrate academic work with work-based learning and are characterised by close collaboration between learning providers and employers in the design, development and delivery of the award. The key characteristics of a Foundation degree, as defined by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (England), are: employer involvement, work-based learning, accessibility, flexibility, articulation and progression. (<http://www.fdf.ac.uk/files/INBRIEFWhatIsAFoundationDegree.pdf>, accessed 16.07.07)

The Fd is not a conventional bachelor's degree despite having the word degree in its name, neither is it a Higher National Certificate or Diploma, though it takes the same duration to complete. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) points grading equates it to the Higher National Diploma, that is a 240 credit rating compared to the degree, that is the bachelor's degree which attracts 360 credits. The Fd is a relatively new product in Higher Education (HE) and has many doubters who would question its merits and demerits, and there will be those who are totally confused about its existence or value in view of the multitudes of vocational and academic qualifications. It would appear the prospective student is not clear as to what it is, the government assumes or imagines that it is the best in meeting new challenges in society and industry and is the best way to equip society with degrees, the employer is rather confused about the differences and the unfortunate academic has the unenviable task of selling it.

While a lot has been documented attacking or in defence of the Fds the debate about their efficacy is alive. The debate has not helped in clearly delineating the Fd from other qualifications as a unique qualification, different from other offerings other than in terms of its name. In the main there is no concrete position on what is, should be, would be or should have been. The credits obtained are equivalent to those obtained on HNs and the progression is to the conventional bachelor's degree. The positioning is further distorted when the Fd is offered in institutions where the bachelor's degree and the HNs are on offer. While this suggests that the Fd is neither of the two it creates a distorted picture to the stakeholders in conceptualising what it is or what its unique characteristics are. It would turn out that the state has put forward resources for it to be delivered and therefore it should be offered. There are fundamental questions that remain unanswered in the whole debate about Fds. If government had not vehemently pushed and poured in resources for the delivery of Fds in HE and now extending to FE provisions would many institutions have offered them? Probably not. If the emphasis in the provision is on work-based learning it is not inconceivable that HNs are designed on that basis given they had work experience as an option. The Higher National Diplomas and Certificates are still being offered in most HE and FE institutions and remain popular with students, industry and academic institutions. The case for Fds remains a challenge for the state. The task of marketing or more specifically positioning the Fds rests with FDF and the reality of prospective students, the employer, the academic fraternity and society at large having to first accept and see the value of Fds vis-à-vis other provisions in the more or less the same threshold of learning is a daunting task. The one big question continues to be whether or not this is a unique education provision. The name Foundation degree suggests that it is a building block to a degree but certainly this would not be the best response to industry needs from the arguments put forward by the government. Therefore while the Fd is supposed to be the best response to the waning popularity of the HNs it would sound like the case of putting old wine in new bottles.

In the main the challenge is the change in the perception of the qualification across the divide of the various stakeholders. In that respect it is critical that FDF embraces relationship marketing. That needs close cooperation and clearly communicating policies and good practices across institutions. It is expected that all organisations embark on relationship marketing as Gronroos (2004: p99) observed “...the phenomenon itself – a relationship approach to taking care of interactions with customers – is as old as the history of trade and commerce.” In view of this argument it is imperative that FDF makes an effort to create harmony across the different stakeholders in order to encourage symbiotic relationships and also create the right scope for the dissemination of information. He further argues that often a customer relationship goes beyond a single transaction of a good or service and the related processes include more than the primary goods and services which are core elements of the service offering and those elements are equally important and require effective management for successful marketing. Morgan et al (2004: p365) observe that:

Employers generally are not clear about Foundation degrees and what holders of the award are able to do, and we may be unwittingly contributing to this lack of clarity by retaining the HNC and HND names instead of getting rid of all of them altogether.

It is clear that there are multitudes of problems and challenges in the planning and delivery of the Fd. What makes the whole process more complicated is the validation role that FDF should play as put forward by the Dfes:

To address this and to widen the choice for further education colleges, and other colleges without degree-awarding powers, we will establish a new national network of universities – “Foundation Degree Forward” – to offer a dedicated validation service for foundation degrees. It will also act as a national centre for foundation degree expertise, liaising with sector skills councils and professional bodies to draw up frameworks for foundation degrees covering a wide range of skills needs.

(<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/strategy/hestrategy/expand.shtml>, accessed 13.07.07)

The idea of a national validation centre is consistent with the need for expanding the Fd provision nationwide in UK. However, it sounds premature to come up with such a gigantic move when the Fd qualification is yet to gain a foothold on the marketplace. Further complicating the situation is the delivery of the Fd by FEIs which would need careful planning and restructuring in order to give the students a semblance of the challenges of being in university or simply experiencing the challenge of pursuing higher education in a challenging way in both environments, especially with all necessary academic processes being carried out at the respective institution.

2. Purpose of Study

This paper seeks to delve into the dynamics of the Fd with the intention of cutting an edge on how it is positioned vis-à-vis other qualifications and what its future prospects are. A number of issues will be considered as follows:

- In discussing the positioning of the Fd the writer will seek to evaluate perspectives of the various stakeholders. In the main various perspectives will be considered, that is the government, the prospective student, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the employer's perspective and society in general. Certainly this is a typical case of multiple stakeholder perceptions. The different views must be taken into account in coming up with a strong strategic position.
- Ultimately the Fd is part of the HE provision which should help in fulfilling the needs of the various skills requirements in the public and private sectors and consideration will also be given to how the Fd stands relative to other higher education course provisions. Consideration will be given to the implications of giving Fd awarding powers to FEIs.
- It is the intention of this paper to raise issues about the content and mode of delivery of Fds vis-a-vis the conventional bachelor's degree and the higher nationals with a view to ascertain whether the case is about marketing substance in providing value or simply pandering to political whims for the broader agenda for winning elections.
- Ultimately the paper will critically evaluate the implications of progression to the conventional degree upon completing the Fd. This will consider whether this will be a case of mixing oil with water or it is just a matter of logical progression. This issue is considered given that Higher Nationals seemed to offer a bit more theory in their pedagogy than the Fds.

3. The Concept of Positioning and Branding

Ries and Trout (1986) in Kalafatis et al (2000: 417) state that, “Positioning starts with a product. A piece of merchandise, a service, a company, an institution, or even a person ... Positioning shifts the emphasis of marketing from the product to the battle for your mind.” It is important to note that this view suggests that in the main positioning is about the meaning or symbolism people will attach to something. Essentially the notion of positioning is about the view or perception taken in respect of a given phenomenon. Arguing along the same lines Bradley (2003: p57) states that “A position is a complex set of perceptions, impressions, and feelings and it is important to note that customers position organisations and feelings and it is important to note that customers position the organisations' value offering with or without its help.”

Groucutt (2006: p 104) defines re-positioning in two integrated ways as follows:

Firstly, “The physical re-positioning of the brand into current and future potential competitors. Indeed, by physically re-positioning the brand contact will be made with the competitors. Secondly, the repositioning of the brand in the mind of the consumer. It is the consumer that has to be persuaded that the brand is right for them.” While the view taken by Groucutt is inclined towards commercial activities, the principle of re-positioning is equally applicable to the re-positioning of a service or an education programme which in this paper is the Foundation degree.

The Fd was launched as a replacement for the waning HNs and from a marketing perspective that was product rejuvenation or replacement at the end of the product life cycle. However, the actual implementation amounts to extending the product range since the HNs are still on offer seven years after the launch, thus defeating the argument that the Fd was their replacement.

In a recent article Maringe (2006) suggests that customers, that is students in HE now exist in positional markets, where institutions compete for the best students while the applicants compete for the most preferred institutions and

universities are bound to be good at a number of things but not everything, hence universities need to play to their strengths in their quest for excellence. He further asserts that the positioning process which includes the development of an institutional brand or image, determining the market segments to be served and crafting a communication strategy that will help consolidate institutional capacity. This view brings the argument full circle that universities are marketing entities which need good branding as the image spills into their offerings.

Knox (2004: p106) states that “During the late 1980s and early 1990s, brand management practices spread to services and business-to-business organisations.” It is important to note that the Fd as a qualification is a brand and carries certain connotations which at this point are not positive. Successful branding requires effective strategic planning and sustained management so as to ensure a strong unique selling proposition (USP) especially in view of the clutter of academic, professional and vocational qualifications in the UK education market. Essentially the Fd requires a clear positioning strategy and promotion to consolidate its standing in the consumer’s mind. However, the multitude of stakeholders which the positioning strategy should take into account makes the process complicated. Lepineux (2005) observed that the stakeholder theory is weak as epitomised in the following shortcomings:

- A controversial definition
- There is a wide spectrum of players with a high degree of variation
- It is problematic to try and balance their interests
- There is a lack of a strong normative framework
- Normative and empirical streams are separate

These disparities make it difficult to develop a concrete position that can help in coming up with a solid position that can be easily generalised to all stakeholders in respect of an embracing positioning of the Fd. The fact that the Fd as a qualification involves a number of parties in its delivery and in turn has to appeal to a number of players creates complications in positioning. The players involved in the design of the curriculum of the Fd include the government, the employer, FEI and HEI. The successful positioning of the Fd would require that it appeals to the students and the employer is pleased with the Fd graduates and the government is satisfied with the national skills base. According to the website, <http://www.determan.net/Michele/mposition.htm>, accessed 18.04.07.

“A good position is: (1) What makes you unique (2) This is considered a benefit by your target market”.

The Fd qualification has been portrayed as unique by the government and its respective promotional organs. However, it is not clear if the prospective student and employer see it as unique. In the euphoria of launching the programme there is a lot of unsubstantiated claims which may not be holding in the long run and it may prove that the student, employers and employer organisations may not find the programme appealing in the long run. Ultimately the challenge on the qualification is in the delivery by the graduates upon completion and being tasked in organisations which will determine success or failure of the qualification. In an article reflecting the development of the Fd at the University of Glamorgan Gibbs (2002: p 239) in Morgan et al (2004: p365) states that:

Granting trust to the brand usually requires an understanding and reassurance of the competence of the brand, and the consistence of that importance plus the existential belief in the veracity of the brand. Trust and consistency is built up over time and requires a drip feed approach.

In the main there are doubts about the delivery of the Fd and the effectiveness of some of the mechanisms that should be central to the delivery of the programme. The unconventional student coming from a widening participation background would need special support which could be lacking in some institutions, cooperation between universities or colleges with employers may be difficult to realise, student experience doing the Fd at university or at an FE college will be different hence bringing an element of inconsistency.

4. The Process of Positioning a Service

The concept of positioning is central to effective marketing as it places the product within the mind of the targeted clientele. This helps relate the product to competing and complementary brands in a manner that sets it apart as a unique offering which can be used in developing a unique selling proposition (USP). The process of positioning is complex as it encompasses multitudes of variables which may be at variance in shaping the overall customer mental picture of a service or good relative to other goods or services. Equally the measurement or determination of positioning is complicated as it is not visible being a mental process, ie, positioning takes place in the mind.

Brassington and Pettitt (2005) provide a three stage process in positioning, ie. firstly, conduct detailed market research and identify variables that are relevant for a particular segment; secondly, conduct further research to determine current products that offer the identified attributes in the segment, and thirdly, determine what the market would expect as the ideal level of the defined attributes and how they rank each brand’s attributes in relation to the ideal and to each other. Schutz et al (1995) suggests a number of positioning strategies borrowed from various authors and are summarised as

including product attributes, price/quality attributes, use or application, product class or by product user. These approaches would be appropriate in positioning the Fd with the only complication being the multitude of stakeholders whose intentions or objectives are not the same as far as the qualification is concerned.

Hooley et al in Randall (2001: p132) provides a four stage approach to positioning which has the following stages:

- Identify the competitors
- Analyse positions
 - Determine competitors' positions
 - Determine the competitive dimensions
 - Define customers' positions
- Decide amongst positioning alternatives
- Track the positioning

The UK government launched the Fd as a replacement for the HNs which from a marketing perspective would fall into the concept of product development, ie a new product in an existing market. The competitors were and still remain the HNs in the form of the HND and HNC. Positions were analysed and it was determined that the HNs were no longer appealing, ie they had entered a declining stage in their life cycle. The Fd was considered more appealing because of its work based learning approach and that potential students would require a programme that enhanced their chances of getting a job. The Fd has been positioned as the qualification of the time with a far-reaching appeal which incorporates

- Are high quality teaching and learning based qualifications
- Are underpinned by a genuine partnership between employer, provider and employee
- Are truly work-based in design, content and delivery
- Popular with employers and employees
- Deliver personal employability skills, specific vocational skills, and a lifelong learning capability

Efforts have been made by the UK government to ensure that the development of the qualification is tracked over time and the Wagner Report to Cabinet (2004) is evidence of tracking the positioning of the qualification. What is not clear is what is happening to the HNs given that they continue to be provided by FEIs and HEIs who are also providing the Fd. This amounts to duplication of effort and resource wasting as the qualifications are supposed to achieve the same end result. There is also unnecessary tension between those who run Fds and HNs in the same institution fighting over student numbers for virtually the same purpose, ie. to offer students what is practically the first two years of a bachelor's degree.

While the characteristics of the qualification are meant to have are critical to providing relevant learning experiences for modern day challenges it is not yet clear if these aspirations can be fully realised. At the same time similar arguments could still be put forward in respect of the HNs. At that point the differentiation becomes unclear to the clientele and may not give the Fd a unique selling proposition and leads to confusion. There is doubt that the launch and subsequent follow-up action on the Fd was well thought, but there could be merit in restructuring and re-launching the HNs, which could have been cheaper and more convenient to implement. The government could draw from the experience of a lot of people in multitudes of institutions including the FEIs and HEIs who have delivered the HNs.

5. Understanding the Foundation Degree

Piercy (2002) presents a framework for "going to market" which provides the facets for effective marketing as illustrated as illustrated in table 1.

Applying the process of going to market on the Fd provides some insight on the value proposition of the qualification.

- The value definition of the Fd is provided in the Leitch Report that sought to overhaul the education system in the UK. The report underlined the importance of a new qualification that could better meet the needs of industry in the modern day. Information has been disseminated on various forums championed by FDF. The interpretation and subsequent understanding has been clouded by the qualifications clutter created by the continued delivery of the HNs. Scope to learn about the qualification has been curtailed as there is a clear rush to make the qualification the preferred one in FEIs and HEs.
- The value development of the Fd seeks the support of various players which include FEIs, HEIs, employers as partners, FDF which creates a complex scenario. The operations in the delivery of the Fd tend to follow the normal pattern of academic procedures. The motivation and commitment has been aided by the provision of funds to FEIs and HEIs for students to do such programmes. The responsiveness has been clouded in the continued delivery of HNs which the Fd is supposed to replace. At the same time so many questions are being asked about the uniqueness of the

qualification.

- The delivery of value poses the biggest challenges to the whole idea of the Fd provision. The inbound logistics are from largely the same background that HNs used to recruit from with a few more students coming from a widening participation background. The institutional behaviour is mixed in excitement that recruitment is aided by the support from FDF but confusing that the new provision has different demands on the mode of delivery and attitude of the student. Some of the students are difficult to motivate as they are not from academically inclined backgrounds. HEIs and FEIs are supposed to reinvent themselves in the face of new challenges posed by Fds. There is need for mutual cooperation with employers in both design and delivery of courses. But, it is doubtful if organisations would want to continue to work FEIs and HEIs in delivering the Fds for a long stretch of time. It is not inconceivable that the FD will simply transform into a Higher National where there is no partnership in design and delivery.

In emphasizing the case for Fds Morgan et al (2004: p 359) state that:

... There had to be a clear justification for introducing a new award in place of the existing HNCs and HNDs. Principally and pragmatically these opportunities included:

- *Flexibility of student choice (of modules to satisfy named Foundation degree awards e.g Finance, HRM, Marketing, Leisure and Tourism, reflecting existing and emerging vocational preferences.);*
- *Vocational relevance emphasizing the development of work-related skills;*
- *The opportunity to include APEL processes*
- *The development of Modern Apprentices and NVQs, which could be used as access points*

The opportunity for students to continue to undertake related components of the award during traditional academic holiday periods.

The Leitch report is often referred to as the spark for many changes in education. Below is a summary of the key objectives some of which have led to the development of the Fd. It is clear that the desire is to increase the proportion of people with a level 4 qualification into which Fds fall into from 29% in 2005 to 40% in 2020.

The Leitch report (Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills) sets four groups of targets for raising the level of adult skills in the UK by 2020. They were:

For basic functional numeracy and literacy: 95% of adults, up from 85 and 79% respectively in 2005.

(1) At level 2 (e.g. 5 GCSEs at grade A to C but also various vocational qualifications): 90% of adults, up from 69% in 2005.

(2) At level 3: 1.9 million additional level 3 attainments over the period as well as an extra 0.5 million apprentices each year.

(3) At level 4 (e.g. both university degrees as well as some professional qualifications e.g. in teaching and nursing): 40%, up from 29% in 2005. (<http://www.npi.org.uk/lites/leitch.pdf>, accessed 10.07.07)

Morgan et al (2004: p 354) state that:

The expansion of higher education (HE) during the 1980s and 1990s with government aspirations of a 50% participation rate (by students under the age of 30 by the year 2010) in HE has raised a number of concerns, amongst others, about the potential undermining of values, its relationships with society and its role in economic prosperity.

In emphasizing the need to expand higher education provision in UK, the Dfes argues that:

For all these reasons, we believe that our target to increase participation in higher education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18–30 by the end of the decade, linked to our wider aim to prepare 90 per cent of young people for higher education or skilled employment, is right. Moreover, since on latest estimates England currently has a participation rate for 18–30 year olds of 43 per cent, the further increase we need to achieve 50 per cent by 2010 is relatively modest. The chart overleaf shows how other countries compare, using the nearest comparable OECD measure. ... We welcome the fact that an objective review of the way in which the 50 per cent target is measured (the Initial Entry Rate) has just begun – led by the Office for National Statistics. Views are invited via the National Statistics website until the end of February 2003. The aim is to increase the rigour and transparency of the method for measuring our progress. (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/strategy/hestrategy/expand.shtml>, accessed 13.07.07)

These arguments by Morgan et al (2004) and the Dfes further confirm assertions made in the Leitch report in emphasizing the pressures for increasing the need for higher qualifications, ie at level 4. In view of the political statements that this action makes it is inconceivable not to be skeptical about the expansion of education provision in that it carries both a principle of development and political appeal no wonder Tony Blair prime minister of the UK (1997 – 2007) had his key policy centred on what he termed Education! Education! Education!

The Fd is portrayed as a unique qualification and is relatively new on the market and has experienced phenomenal growth since its launch in 2000. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which is Higher Education standards inspectorate describes the FDF as summarised in table 2.

There are various routes into the Fd and out of the Fd as follows:

In their promotional materials Foundation Degree Forward suggest that the best Fds:

- Are high quality teaching and learning based qualifications
- Are underpinned by a genuine partnership between employer, provider and employee
- Are truly work-based in design, content and delivery
- Popular with employers and employees
- Deliver personal employability skills, specific vocational skills, and a lifelong learning capability

FDF will be positive about their role given that they were created to promote the qualification as a desirable one. In a pamphlet entitled *Guide to Foundation Degrees in the North West* they argue that they are “designed to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed by employers. ...Contain a mixture of academic work and work-based learning”. This framework is best illustrated in table 3.

Rowley (2006) discussing the risks of business of Fds raises a number of pertinent issues which present huge challenges to the whole process of operationalising the delivery and her arguments are centred around the following issues:

- Most students targeted for Fds have skills and backgrounds which do not conform to models or expectations of higher education. The majority of these unconventional students may have little experience of education beyond compulsory school education to age 16, and tend to face difficulties adjusting to the demands of studying at the level of Fds.
- The approaches to cope with full and part time (and other modes of engagement) will be diverse and the “approach that many HEIs have embraced to survive in a regime of reducing per capita student funding is unlikely to accommodate this diversity well, which, in turn, has implications for resource models for responding in this marketplace.” (Rowley, 2006: p7)
- In assuming that HEIs and FEIs can use their experience in product design, and market knowledge gained from delivering undergraduate programmes in vocational disciplines, and HNDs and HNCs is a dangerous assumption given that – foundation degrees are different, but this approach could lead to the re-emergence of re-labelled HNDs and HNCs.
- A key tenet of Fds is working in partnership and this is not easy and that could lead to half measures in trying to realise some kind of partnership, moreover with the suspicions of a any new service or product organisations would be hesitant to commit themselves. There is a second tier of partnerships which is HEIs and FEIs which have different cultures in both delivery and student roles and experiences in learning.

The multitudes of issues facing the development of Fds necessitates that “... Foundation degrees require a responsive and dynamic curriculum development process in order to enable them to respond to local demand, without compromising quality.” (Rowley 2006: p10)

6. Consolidating the positioning of the Fd

The then Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke is quoted in January 2003 as stating:

We will drive forward foundation degrees, making them the main work-focused higher education qualification. One of their key features is that employers play a role in designing courses, so both they and the students can be certain that they will be gaining the skills that are really needed in work.

(<http://develop.ucas.com/FDCourseSearch/About.htm>, accessed 15.01.07)

The government would be expected to support the Fds, being something they have invested heavily into. The government decided to shift away from the popular Higher Nationals. There were reviews made before the introduction of the Fd that suggested that the popularity of the Higher Nationals was waning. In that respect it could easily be a case of making work-based learning mandatory and thus rejuvenating what was already a successful brand. This approach could have saved resources and would have been easier to drive unlike the mongrel created by way of introducing the Fds. It is not that Fds do not work, neither is this discussion suggesting that the Fds cannot be made to work but it is an expensive, complex and risky route for HEIs and FEIs to deliver. Such money could have gone into curriculum development instead of promotion and could have gone some way in mitigating the case for the inadequacy of resources for the welfare of teaching staff and revamp higher nationals.

Rowley (2006: p15) argues that her article “explicitly acknowledges that a government policy-led innovation that seeks

to introduce a new higher education qualification poses risks at a variety of different levels, for employers, FEIs, HEIs, their staff and students.” This position underlines the real challenges facing the Fds. While the future of Fds will be determined by government policy and actions it remains a big challenge as to the pace of adoption of Fds as an acceptable and preferred qualification by the multitudes of stakeholders who will ultimately determine the success or failure of the qualification.

In The Foundation Degree Task Force Report to ministers professor Wagner (2004) points at a number of important issues about what had been achieved and what needed to be improved for progress in the delivery of the Fd as follows:

- Fds present an opportunity for a new qualification provision to meet the identified skills requirements and the challenge is doing so in partnership with the employers and utilising work-based learning tools
- The complexity of the positioning is alluded to in stating “Further education colleges are providers of Foundation degrees but they bring a range of experiences than universities. Employers seeking to develop their workforce have needs that drive their perceptions of what Foundation degrees should provide. Regional Development Agencies are looking for ways to generate the economies of their region. The funding bodies and government have their own imperatives.”(Wagner Report, 2004: p 3)
- The general delivery of Fds seems to conform to the characteristics originally set down but more needs to be done on the aspects of the programme which are work-based and this would require HEIs and FEIs to be innovative.

The Chief Executive of Foundation Degree Forward, Derek Longhurst in Forward (April, 2007: p12), the Foundation Degree Forward Journal summarises the Hefce report on Fds providing statistics on the qualification which have been tabulated in table 4 and 5.

The number of students for 2006/2007 is significant and that suggests a growing interest in the programme. The most interesting statistic from the table is the proportion of female students. This is reflective of the programme’s appeal for widening participation given that most females have been denied education for a variety of reasons. It is important to note that the high likelihood of employer support implies that industry values the qualification. Part of the reasons for the growth of numbers can be attributed to the substantial funding that was provided to Foundation Degree Forward to promote the qualification. While the brand has not yet gained a foothold in the HE market it would appear with time that market will be receptive and with experience HEIs and FEIs will adjust their practices and improve both the content and the pedagogy of the qualification.

It must be clear that the growth of the Fd is reflective of the enormous amounts of money that were expended in order that there is a shift from HNC and HND as the DfES puts in clearly in suggesting:

For institutions, we will offer additional funded places for foundation degrees from 2004, in preference to traditional honours degree courses; so that the numbers studying traditional three-year courses will remain steady, and growth will come predominantly through this important new route. We will also provide development funding for institutions and employers to work together in designing more new foundation degree courses, discussed in more detail in . For students, we will provide incentives for those doing foundation degrees, in the form of bursaries which might be used either for extra maintenance, or to offset the fee for the course. We will provide £10 million in 2004–05, rising to £20 million in 2005–06, for these incentives.

7. Conclusions

The principle behind the launch of the Fd is far-reaching and well founded. The modalities of operationalising the Fd presented a rare scenario of combinations with a potential for disasters as alluded to by Rowley (2006) in raising the risky aspects in the business of Fds. The demands on institutions for the need to learn and relearn practices and incorporate students from unfamiliar backgrounds and experiences while introducing a new programme with a different approach would impact on the effectiveness of the affected institutions.

The yawning skills gap needed to be addressed and so was the waning relevance of the HNs. A partnership of delivery between institutions and with employers and employer organisations is an authentic move but one that is fraught with a number of clear and real potential disasters. The first problem in this stakeholder puzzle is the practicality of operationalising that partnership of design and delivery where these relationships have often been suspicious if not accusatory of each other. HEIs and FEIs do not always cooperate and there is a feeling of competition and suspicion of standards hence the need for stringent monitoring and direction where validation agreements are in place. While employers benefit from the availability of appropriate skills their long-term commitment to educational programme is likely to be brought into question.

The Foundation degree is a relatively new qualification only launched in 2000. However, any product whose branding does not offer a unique identified suffers from market suspicion. It would not be wrong for the market to see the Fd as an imitation of a degree given the name or the HNs given the UCAS points rating and the duration of delivery. To the

extent that a number of institutions are continuing to deliver HNs and most of them continue to attract more students than Fds the positioning of the Fd is shrouded in confusion and it will take a long time to overcome despite the deliberate effort the state has made to shift focus away from HNs.

While numbers are looking healthy for the Fd as presented by HEFCE it is important to take into account the fact that the real problems have not yet started. Once there is a substantial critical mass of the graduates of the Fd and being expected to perform the criticism might be raised. At the same time on the delivery it does not seem obvious from the available literature and reports the added strain for teaching where it is extremely important to invest a lot more into student support.

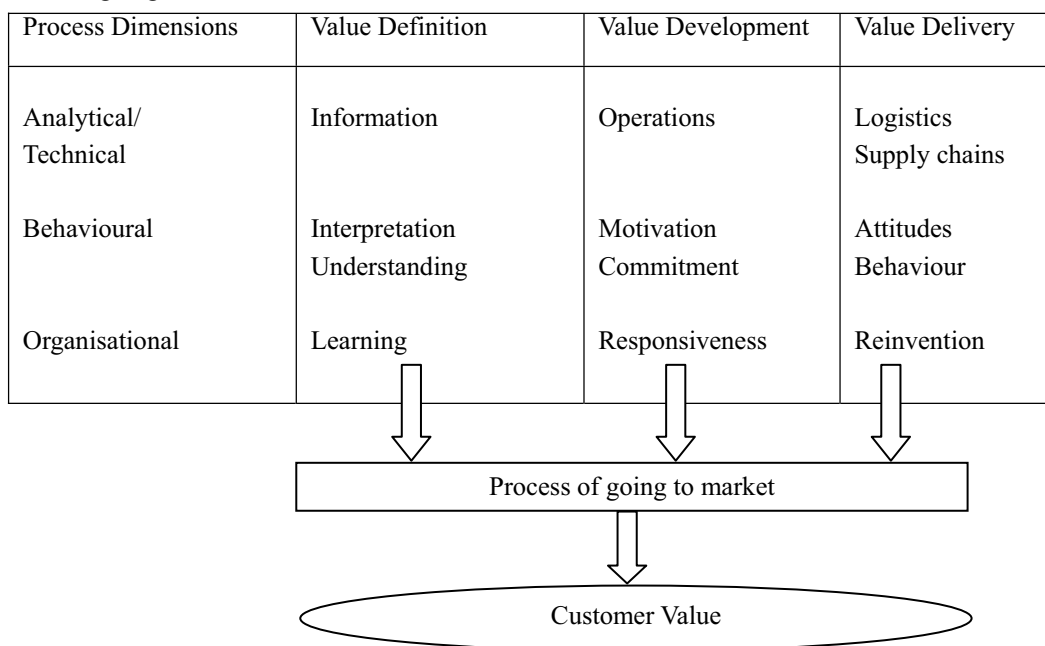
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Table 1. Process of going to market



Piercy(2002: p7)

Table 2. Characteristics of the Foundation Degree

The generic outcomes identified below are taken from the descriptor for the qualification that has been used to represent the Intermediate level within the FHEQ. By comparison, holders of Foundation Degrees should be able to demonstrate:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles in their field of study and the way in which those principles have developed;
- Successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the programme;
- Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, and the application of those principles in a work context;
- Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s), and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in their field of study and apply these in a work context;
- An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in their field of study and in a work context.

Typically, holders of Foundation Degrees would be able to:

- Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in their field of study and in a work context;
- Effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively in their field of study and in a work context;
- Undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume responsibility within organisations; and have:
- Qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making;
- The ability to utilise opportunities for lifelong learning.

Source: Adopted from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/foundationDegree/benchmark/FDQB.asp> accessed 17.04.07.

Table 3. Routes into and from the Foundation degree

ROUTES TO	FOUNDATION DEGREE	ROUTES FROM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work • Level 3 vocational qualifications • Advanced Apprenticeship • A-levels • Access to HE • Professional Qualifications • Non-vocational HE • Voluntary/community activity 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honours degree • Higher level NVQs (eg level 5) • Higher vocational qualifications • Work • Professional Qualifications • Voluntary/community activity

Source: FDF, Learner Progression guidance

Table 4. Statistics on the Foundation degree

Factor	2006-2007	2005-2006
Total Number of students	60, 925	46, 780
Number of part-time students	27, 000	20, 000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% of FD students are taught at HEIs and 54% are taught at FEIs. • 56% of part-time students are taught in are taught in HEIs. • 77% of part-time students are supported by their employers. • 64% of students are aged 21 or over. • 75% of students are female. • The proportion of non-conventional students has been increasing and that is confirming that wider participation is working. 		

Source: Forward (April, 2007: p12), the Foundation Degree Forward Journal

Table 5. Resources to support our strategy (£m)

	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	Per cent Increase in cash terms in 05-06 over 02-03
Foundation Degree development	0	9	11	12	
Foundation Degree incentives	0	0	10	20	
Total					

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/strategy/hestrategy/expand.shtml>, accessed 13.07.07



Symbolic Interactionism in Sociology of Education Textbooks in Mainland China: Coverage, Perspective and Implications

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Abstract

17 textbooks are examined for the quantity and quality of their material pertaining to ideas in the symbolic interaction tradition. Most of the textbooks fail to discuss at least some of the ideas in this tradition. In the 5 exceptions, the texts only include material from the Chicago school of this tradition with only a little inclusive information from the Iowa school. Thus, the ideas about symbolic interaction that students receive from these texts are both incomplete and outdated. Based on the text-analysis, this paper claims that the materials from only one of these schools greatly diminish opportunities to use information from the other one to help students gain a sociological, dialectical, and reflexive perspective.

Keywords: Symbolic interactionism, Sociology of education textbooks, Mainland China

1. Introduction

Most of the theoretical traditions and analytical perspectives that college students first acquire about any discipline are likely from the introductory course or textbook on that subject. Introductory textbooks are like guides that leading novice learners to go through the terminological jungle where many labels and schools compete. Meanwhile, excellent textbooks will not only influence students' view on the certain discipline but also shape their future actions as researchers in the specific field, as community members or as participants in the larger society.

Sociology of education, as an independent subject in mainland China, has three main developmental stages since the first textbook *Education and Society*, written by Tao Menghe (1922), was published: (1) the foundation period (1922-1949); (2) the stagnation period (1949-1979) and; (3) recovery and reconstruction period (1979-) (Dong & Zhang, 2007). Given this context, this paper examines a group of textbooks designed for introductory classes in Sociology of Education and evaluates their treatment of symbolic interactionism. During the analysis, several facets are examined including that the way this theory is discussed and the extent to which its developments in the theory are noted and employed in discussions on substantive material.

2. A Historical Review on Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is arguably one of the primary theoretical traditions in the discipline of sociology (Collins, 1994). According to the interactionists, the fundamentation of symbolic interactionism is the manner in which the individual is connected to the social structure and the possible interplay between the individual and others. The interactionist perspective maintains that human beings engage in social action on the basis of meanings acquired from social sources, including their own experience. These meanings are both learned from others and to some extent shaped or reshaped by those using the symbols. As humans learn and use symbols and develop meanings for objects in their social contexts, they develop a "mind" that is both reflecting and reflexive. Mind is not a structure but a process that emerges from humans' efforts to adjust to their environment (Turner, 2004:345). Sociologists who identify themselves as interactionist would agree that the central figure in this tradition is George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), who made the great breakthrough in understanding the basic properties of human social interaction. A crucial concept of Mead is the self. The self and the mind are dialectically related to one another, neither can exist without the other. Thus, one cannot take oneself as an object (think about oneself) without a mind, and one cannot have a mind, have a conversation with oneself, without a self (Ritzer, 2004:56). Basic to the self is reflexivity, or the ability to put ourselves in others' places, humans are both actors and reactors and the human sense of "self" is a product and process, as the self is simultaneously shaped by the larger society.

In addition to providing discussions of many elements about the relationship between the society and the individual, Mead articulates the origins and actions of the self. He argues that the self is comprised of two components which allow for both dialectical and reflexive processes. According to Mead (2005), the part of the self that takes the attitudes of others is termed the "me". However, we can never predict exactly how their responses may play out. We have a general feel for the way in which interactions take place. Yet, it remains possible for someone to react in an unexpected manner.

This reaction to a stimuli arising during interaction is the “I” and is made possible because of the “me” (Taylor, 1997). As Ritzer’s (2004:59) statement, “we are never totally aware of the I, with the result that we sometimes surprise ourselves with our actions.”

Given Mead’s dichotomous approach to the architecture of the self, it is not surprising that two rather distinct views of symbolic interactionism have developed over the past decades: one emphasizes aspects and consequences of the “I”, the other emphasizes aspects and consequences of the “me”. These two views of symbolic interactionism are often referred to, respectively, as the Chicago school and the Iowa school of symbolic interaction theory.

2.1 The Chicago School

The central figure and major exponent of Chicago school is Herbert Blumer(1900-1987), who coined the label “symbolic interaction”. According to Collins, in Blumer’s hands, symbolic interactionism turned into a full-fledged dynamic sociology (Yu, 2002:159).

In his writings, Blumer championed a position and a methodology that emphasized the processes associated with the Meadian “I” (Blumer, 1969). In his view, Mead’s picture of the human being as an actor differs radically from the conception of man that dominates current psychological and social science. Mead simply meant that the human being is an object to himself. The human being may perceive himself, have conceptions of himself, communicate with himself, and act toward himself (Blumer, 1966). Meanwhile, such self-interaction takes the form of making indications to himself and meeting these indications by making further indications.

As mentioned, Blumer and his followers pay special attention to how humans interpret and define actions of their own and others. The focus of Chicago school interaction theory is on the reflecting, creative, acting self, which is constantly apprehending meaning for objects in the environment while simultaneously altering those meanings in service of larger issues of the self (Blumer, 1969). For Blumer, it is not possible to study the structure of a society through the use of variables because this would imply a relationship of causation, which would be impossible since anything is capable of being instantly redefined. Therefore, fixed social variables are impossible to measure, and any attempts to explain human social behavior with such constructions are unproductive. In addition, Gusfield (2003) tackles characters of symbolic interactionism and presents his understandings which are most valuable guidelines:

Whatever SI may be to my readers, for me it was not and is not today a theory in the sense of a body of thought providing substantive generalizations or abstracted propositions about some social activity. There are no substantive predictions or explanations to which it confidently leads. In fact, ... “The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism”(1969), Blumer refers to SI as an choose to call it a “perspective” or a “way of seeing,” both terms central to the writings of another and major influence on me, Kenneth Burke. Four aspects of this symbolic interactionist “way of seeing” seem significant in my thinking and in my work: meaning; interaction, emergence, and situatedness; language and symbolism; and the humanistic thrust. (Gusfield, 2003)

In sum, Blumer and those who follow in his disciplinary footsteps are primarily attuned to the actions and consequences of Mead’s “I”. Throughout the development of the discipline of sociology, the Chicago school has dominated the analysis and understanding on interactionist theory by most sociologists. Yet developing parallel to this view was another version of the theory, the Iowa school which placed more emphasis on the ways in which features of the social structure influence and shape common meanings.

2.2 The Iowa School

The most influential advocate of the Iowa school of symbolic interaction is Manford Kuhn (1911-1963), who studied with Kimball Young in the University of Wisconsin and was on the faculty of the University of Iowa from 1946 to 1963. Unlike other interactionists, especially Blumer, Kuhn focuses on the processes associated with Mead’s “me” and incorporates role theory (Stryker and Statham, 1985). He points out “ambiguities and contradictions” in the work of Mead while he sharply criticized other interactionists for interpreting them as “dark, inscrutable complexities too difficult to understand”(Kuhn, 1964a).

Kuhn and his students put Mead’s concept of the self at the cornerstone of their approach to understand human behavior. They saw the social object self as firmly lodged in an actor’s social group memberships and activities, and thus as stable as these memberships and activities. Furthermore, consistent with Mead, they saw the self as an object present in all social activity. They were guided by the belief that if the structure of selves could be understood, it would aid in the development of a general theory of social behavior. (Buban, 1986:27)

The Iowa school has been subjected to severe criticism from other interactionists. In particular, Kuhn was accused of grossly distorting Mead’s position by conceptualizing the self as a permanent, imprinted structure that determines behavior. This notion is exposed in the chief research tool developed by Kuhn and his colleagues, which is a pencil-and-paper measure of self-attitudes known as the Twenty Statements Test (TST) (Kuhn and McPartland, 1954).

While it is true that the employment of the TST explicitly treats the self as a structure, a perusal of Kuhn’s work reveals

that he was well aware of the fact that as social situations change, persons' self attitudes also change (Kuhn, 1964b). According to this apparent contradiction, Kuhn was simply reacting to a belief that other interactionists, Blumer in particular, had distorted the concept self by conceptualizing it as overly fluid, as totally lacking any order or structure:

Some theorists ... discuss self-change as if it were most volatile and evanescent; the self shifts with each new indication one makes to himself, and these indications are the constant accompaniments of experience. (Kuhn, 1964a: 61)

Another criticism of the Iowa school is that they, in employing a pencil-and-paper measure of the self, ignored the most basic feature of human social behavior: temporal process. However, Kuhn was deeply frustrated with the general lack of advancement by symbolic interactionists toward developing a theory of social conduct. His impatience with other interactionists, especially those of the Chicago school, can be clearly observed in his classic review of the field (Kuhn, 1964a). However, for the study of interaction processes, it must be concluded that the TST research inspired by Kuhn is of virtually no value. Even though critics of the Iowa school (Meltzer et al., 1975) have made several misleading inferences regarding both Kuhn's interpretation of Mead and Kuhn's philosophical stance, they are quite correct in charging him with ignoring process in his research endeavors. Nevertheless, the contribution of Kuhn's legacy must not be underestimated.

To sum up, Kuhn and those who follow in his disciplinary footsteps are primarily attuned to the actions and consequences of Mead's "me". Several decades later, building on the legacy of the "old" Iowa tradition, the "new" Iowa school places great emphasis on the order or structure of human interaction, which are influenced by Kuhn apparently. Also evident is Kuhn's insistence that a theory of social life can only be built upon a solid foundation of data which has been collected in a controlled, systematic fashion.

Accordingly, the Chicago school and Iowa school are different but related threads in the history of symbolic interactionism. With the above historical review as background, this paper focuses on two questions below:

- a). To what extent and in what manner is the symbolic interaction tradition covered in Sociology of Education textbooks in mainland China?
- b). If there are some relevant discussions in the textbooks, which theorists' and researchers' works from the symbolic interactionist tradition are presented?

3. Methods

Given the above framework, this paper performed a content analysis of 17 textbooks which are published after 1979 (the period of recovery and reconstruction) and the authors are Chinese scholars in mainland China. Table 1 shows the details about these textbooks including author's name, text name, publication location, and publication time.

Once the sample of texts was gathered, the desired data was collected by a systematic review of the presentation of material on symbolic interactionism in each text. Using classical works on symbolic interaction theory (Mead, 2005; Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1989) and several introductory textbooks on sociology (Turner, 2004; Rizter, 2004; Popenoe, 1999) as references, major concepts and terms are selected to identify whether symbolic interactionism is mentioned and introduced in these textbooks. The results of this selecting process are the following concepts: "symbolic interaction (interactionism)", "interactionist theory", "social interaction", "self", "self-concept", "generalized other", "important other", "identity", and "role-identity". The subject indexes of all books were consulted for entries on these terms. Each of these terms is highly likely to be related to symbolic interactionist theory in general and is an obvious and important aspect of either the Chicago or the Iowa school of symbolic interaction theory or both. Additionally, this method also provides a mechanism for evaluating whether or not a particular school is being favored in the introductory text. As a final check for a discussion of symbolic interactionist material, the chapters in which symbolic interactionist information is traditionally found in introductory texts had been examined. (See Table 1)

4. Findings

Table 2 summarizes the data on how information on symbolic interaction theory is presented in the 17 general introductory textbooks on sociology of education examined for this study. The first column lists the textbook under consideration by authors' names.

Continuing with Table 1, the second column of data is labeled "Is symbolic interaction covered?" and reports on whether information on symbolic interactionism is contained in each text. If symbolic interactionism information is included in any way in the text the cell is coded as "yes"; if no information on symbolic interaction is included, the cell is coded as "no".

The third column reports whether or not material produced by writers from the Chicago school of symbolic interaction is included in the text. If such information is included in any way in the text, the cell is coded as "yes"; if not, the cell is coded as "no".

The fourth column contains a list of symbolic interactionist theorists and researchers generally associated with the

Chicago school of symbolic interactionism whose work is cited in each text. If such information is not included in any way in the text, the cell is coded as “none”.

The fifth column indicates whether or not information from the Iowa school is included in each text. As with column three, cells show either a “yes” if the text includes material from this tradition or a “no” if there is no inclusion of material from the Iowa school. The final column lists theorists and researchers working within the Iowa school of symbolic interaction whose works are cited in the texts, which is the same with column four. (See Table 2)

According to Table 2, an inspection will reveal that only 5 textbooks analyzed for this study discussed or mentioned symbolic interaction theory. As can be seen in column 4, Mead, Cooley, and Blumer are cited more often in these discussions. Meanwhile, several British theorists such as Hargreaves, Keddie, and Woods are also cited. The other 12 textbooks, however, discuss the problems and classical works without any remarks linking to either schools of symbolic interactionism. What is more, the Iowa school has been totally ignored by the authors since 1986.

In the 5 textbooks which include symbolic interaction theory, some texts mention major exponents, but fail to review their works and theories (Lu, 1990; Wu, 1998; Xie, 2007). Texts such as Qian's (2001) discuss both theories and methodologies of Chicago school, but, apparently, Iowa school is out of the author's vision for some reasons. Minhui Qian (2004) is the only author who has mentioned the initial development of symbolic interaction theory.

The data in Table 2 clearly indicate that the vast majority of introductory sociology of education textbooks allocate no space to the discussion and summary of symbolic interaction theory. Even though several textbooks address this theoretical tradition, symbolic interactionism is often referred as a sub-theoretical school accompanied with phenomenology and ethnomethodology in interpretive approach or the so-called new sociology, which has risen since 1970s. It is equally clear that most of the coverage of symbolic interaction theory is based on Chicago school, which is advocated by Blumer and his colleagues. Moreover, when the Iowa school is mentioned in the introductory texts (Qian, 2001), it is often done in an unclear and incomplete fashion.

According to the primary findings above, this research argues that the works fail to mention the symbolic interaction theory for two main reasons: firstly, the text is an edited collection of readings or the text approaches to the study of sociology of education from a highly macro perspective. In the former case, the text contains little or no discussion of any theoretical perspectives; in the latter, symbolic interaction theory, together with functionalism and conflict theory, falls outside of the scope of the text and is ignored altogether. Secondly, during the three developmental periods of sociology of education in mainland China, most of the textbooks focus on structural-functionalism and conflict theory (Dong & Zhang, 2007) rather than interpretive approach in which symbolic interactionism is a critical figure. This tradition, to large extent, is due to the absence of sociology of education from 1949 to 1979 when the structural-functionalism as the mainstream in worldwide sociological research encounters the double challenges from conflict theory and interpretive sociology. In the first decade of recovery and reconstruction period, the main task facing by the researchers in mainland China was restarting the research as soon as possible because this academic tradition had been suspended for almost 30 years. That is to say, reconstructing the system of this subject was more important than introducing western research paradigms or paying special attention to the new movements in the global academe.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

If it can be assumed that the material in introductory textbooks in any discipline should reflect the current state of that discipline, then the data presented above warrant the conclusion that most current introductory textbooks do not meet this criterion when discussing one of the major theoretical traditions of the symbolic interaction theory. With few exceptions, textbooks designed for novice learners majoring in Sociology of Education are silent on the substantial changes which have occurred in this aspect of the discipline over the past three decades in mainland China. From the perspectives of current teaching and learning situations in universities, there are a number of implications that should be noted.

Firstly, it is unfortunate that the majority of examined texts only aim at the introduction of structural-functionalism and conflict theory. No doubt that these two traditions are critically important in the history of sociology as well as in the development of Sociology of Education. Symbolic interactionism as a representative orientation in the interpretive sociology, however, is also a landmark in the sociological adventure. Ignoring this tradition does not only make the subject incomplete and outdated, but also make researchers lose an effective instrument to analyze the social world.

Secondly, by presenting the Chicago school as the symbolic interaction theory, students may easily reach the conclusion of what symbolic interaction is and how elements of the social structure might influence the construction and application of meanings for a situation. As many writers have noted, this might have been a current view in the discipline in the 1970s but is hardly the case today. Only discussing material from the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism leads to the conclusion that the primary micro-theory of the discipline fails to show how structural and interactional components help us understand a variety of topics in some specific fields.

Thirdly, in most texts reviewed for this research, symbolic interaction theory is presented as an opposing perspective to

the macro-level functionalist and conflict theories in sociology. The review of these theories is typically followed by remarks about the deficiencies of all three and some comments surrounding the debate over whether structure or agency is a more powerful social force. If text authors were to include information from both threads of symbolic interactionist theory, the authors could not only incorporate this debate into the discussion of the theories but also provide at least one way to help students think about the relative impact of agency and structure in their lives with appropriate, even autobiographical, examples.

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Table 1. Textbooks Examined

Text Author (s)	Text Name	Publication House	Time
Pei, Shiyong	Introduction on Sociology of Education	Nankai University Press	1986
Gui, Wanhong & Su, Yulan	Sociology of Education	Tianjin People's Press	1987
Liu, Huizhen	Sociology of Education	Liaoning Education Press	1988
Li, Yixian & Bi, Cheng	An Introduction to Sociology of Education	Heilongjiang Education Press	1989
Lu, Jie (eds)	Sociology of Education	Peoples Education Press	1990
Dong, Zefang	Sociology of Education	Central China Normal University Press	1990
Wu, Duo & Zhang, Renjie	Education and Society	China Science and technology Publishing House	1991
Jin, Yiming (eds)	Sociology of Education	Jiangsu Education Press	1992
Fu, Songtao	New Discussion on Sociology of Education	Hebei University Press	1997
Wu, Kangning	Sociology of Education	Peoples Education Press	1998
Ma, Hemin & Gao, Xuping	The Studies on Sociology of Education	Shanghai Education Press	1998
Qian, Pu (eds)	Sociology of Education: Theory and Practice	Guangxi Education Press	2001
Ma, Hemin	Newly Organized on Sociology of Education	East China Normal University	2002
Qian, Minhui	Sociology of Education: Thinking and Construction of Modernity	Peking University Press	2004
Yang, Changyong & Zheng, Huai	Sociology of Education	Guangdong Peoples Publishing House	2005
Hu, Chunming	Sociology of Education	China Social Sciences Press	2006
Xie, Weihe	The Sociological Analysis of Educational Activities	Education Science Publishing House	2007

Table 2. Coverage in the Texts

Text Author (s)	Is symbolic interactionism covered?	Chicago school covered?	Who is cited?	Iowa school covered?	Who is cited?
Pei, Shiyang	No	No	None	No	None
Gui, Wanhong & Su, Yulan	No	No	None	No	None
Liu, Huizhen	No	No	None	No	None
Li, Yixian & Bi, Cheng	No	No	None	No	None
Lu, Jie (eds)	Yes	Yes	Keddie; Woods	No	None
Dong, Zefang	No	No	None	No	None
Wu, Duo & Zhang, Renjie	No	No	None	No	None
Jin, Yiming (eds)	No	No	None	No	None
Fu, Songtao	No	No	None	No	None
Wu, Kangning	Yes	Yes	Cooley; Blumer; Mead; Hargreaves; Keddie; Woods	No	None
Ma, Hemin & Gao, Xuping	No	No	None	No	None
Qian, Pu(eds)	Yes	Yes	Blumer; Mead; James; Thomas; Cooley	No	None
Ma, Hemin	No	No	None	No	None
Qian, Minhui	Yes	Yes	James; Cooley; Mead; Hargreaves	No	None
Yang, Changyong & Zheng, Huai	No	No	None	No	None
Hu, Chunming	No	No	None	No	None
Xie, Weihe	Yes	Yes	Mead; Morris; Goffman; Hargreaves;	No	None



Analysis on the Management of College Teachers' Tacit Knowledge

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Abstract

Knowledge management, especially, tacit knowledge management, is a significant guarantee for the sustainable development of universities. The transfer of college teachers' tacit knowledge is the key and difficult point in tacit knowledge management of universities. This paper starts from the existence and application condition of college teachers' tacit knowledge in China and puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for college teachers' tacit knowledge management.

Keywords: Higher education, Knowledge management, Tacit knowledge

Polanyi, British physical chemist and ideologist, divides knowledge into two types, namely, explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is formalized, is explained with texts, and is easy to be spread. Tacit knowledge exists in people's mind, is implicit, and is hard to be coded. Tacit knowledge expresses itself as a kind of wisdom, experience, even feeling. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to transfer tacit knowledge. In traditional university management mode, people are used to attaching emphasis on the evaluation of teachers' explicit knowledge and on the explicit knowledge teaching of teachers, whilst people usually neglect the obtaining and transfer of tacit knowledge. As a matter of fact, tacit knowledge is better than explicit knowledge in creating values and determines the levels of scientific researches and knowledge innovation of universities. Even, tacit knowledge plays dominant role in the formation of students' knowledge system, world value and value concepts. Therefore, tacit knowledge management is the key point in teaching management and knowledge management of universities.

1. The characteristics of college teachers' tacit knowledge

Fundamental knowledge of teachers is usually evaluated and examined by way of its source or functions. Sternberg and Horvath divide fundamental knowledge of teachers into discipline knowledge, teaching knowledge, discipline teaching knowledge and social and political context knowledge related to teaching. Shulman believes that fundamental knowledge of teachers includes discipline content knowledge, general knowledge on teaching methods, course knowledge, discipline teaching knowledge, knowledge about students and students' characteristics, educational environment knowledge, and knowledge on teaching aims and values as well as its philosophy and historical origin. Each knowledge type covers both explicit knowledge that can be observed and evaluated and tacit knowledge that is difficult to describe. Based on the afore mentioned knowledge frame, strengthening the development and management of college teachers' tacit knowledge is the main way to improve comprehensive powers of universities.

Tacit knowledge has remarkable personal characteristics. Explicit knowledge is standard and systematical, while tacit knowledge has not yet been or is hard to be standardized. The existence of tacit knowledge is sparking, usually is teemed with personal styles, and is interlaced with personal characteristics, experience and contexts. Therefore, it is hard for people to distinguish whether the knowledge is common knowledge and talents or is distinctive talents related to personal characteristics. Personalization is the chief characteristic of college teachers' tacit knowledge.

Secondly, it is hard for tacit knowledge to flow because it is difficult to express tacit knowledge in systematical and coded language and usually tacit knowledge could only be understood but not expressed. Because tacit knowledge is not coded, it is hard to imitate it and to transfer it. Tacit knowledge does not have clear definition in independent and dependent variable, the mutual relationship among elements in contradictions, and the relationship between objects and

conditions. A large amount of research knowledge is still of tacit or half-tacit and half-explicit status.

Researches have shown that tacit knowledge is obtained through experience. Tacit knowledge is expressed through an individual's actions rather than the explanations made by the individual on the subjects that he or she knows. Tacit knowledge of college teachers is obtained through teaching and professional practices. From perspective of skills and knowledge of teachers, tacit knowledge can be divided into two types. One is knowledge on skill, including the informal and hard-to-be-expressed skills, experience and knacks in teaching and professional skills; the other is tacit knowledge in cognition, including the insight, intuition, feeling, value concept, psychological mode, and cultural customs.

2. Analysis on obstacles existing in the transfer of college teachers' tacit knowledge

2.1 Difficulty in defining teachers' tacit knowledge

China's university knowledge management institutions lack professional knowledge management personnel. Knowledge management is a new subject in university management. Many universities have not realized the significance and complexities of knowledge management, tacit knowledge management in particular, and have not done sufficient researches and taken effective management methods on tacit knowledge.

Due to the implicitness of tacit knowledge and the difficulty in expressing it, it is difficult for universities, who need to obtain tacit knowledge, to find out who have the tacit knowledge, where it is and what type it is. For lacking of sufficient information, for one hand, universities could not find the exact position of tacit knowledge and its possessors; for another, because of the lack of effective identification methods and ways, it is hard to identify and explore important tacit knowledge whose values have not yet been realized. Therefore, universities are reluctant to input their energy in finding and obtaining tacit knowledge, which blocks the communication and share of college teachers' tacit knowledge.

2.2 Monopolization of tacit knowledge

Monopolization of tacit knowledge restricts tacit knowledge from entering public transmitting field, which, in turn, limits the transfer of tacit knowledge. The typical expression of monopolization of teachers' tacit knowledge is its proprietary feature. Teachers are afraid that once they turn their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, they will lose competition advantage. Therefore, they control the experience, skills, thoughts, techniques or information that have high commercial and social values so as to guarantee or promote their status or to wait for good chances to use their tacit knowledge to achieve better economical or social values. In addition, if college teachers assign their knowledge to others, the receivers will obtain tacit knowledge without making payment, which is unfair. Therefore, teachers in possession of tacit knowledge will try to protect their "intellectual property".

2.3 Lack of credit system to protect college teachers' tacit knowledge

The base of knowledge transformation is credit rather than economic profits. Tacit knowledge possessed by an individual teacher, especially the part related to experience and capacity, is hard for others to imitate and is invisible property of teachers. If a teacher is willing to share his or her tacit knowledge, her or his individual fame established in the public will bring him or her many visible or invisible social returns. In order to encourage teachers to be willing to share their tacit knowledge, institutional credit guarantee system must be set up, which means that tacit knowledge share is a part of the institution culture and the tacit knowledge shared by an individual will not be embezzled by others.

2.4 Insufficient knowledge communication and share environment in universities

Many universities in China lack good environment and atmosphere that could promote knowledge communication, knowledge learning, knowledge share and knowledge innovation and lack the value concepts of "the awareness of communication", "the awareness of cooperation" and "the awareness of share". The human and cultural environment of universities that encourages knowledge communication, share and innovation has not been formed yet.

3. Methods to help the transfer of college teachers' tacit knowledge

3.1 Setting up university knowledge management system and digging out teachers' tacit knowledge

Universities shall, according to their specific conditions, employ full time management personnel and set up special knowledge management system. Firstly, universities shall identify and dig out tacit knowledge, especially core tacit knowledge, that universities need in their development. According to specific conditions of each university, university knowledge management personnel shall organize experts, professional technicians, and technicians to systematically identify and dig out tacit knowledge by way of knowledge maps, expert systems and knowledge projects based on development needs of specialties and courses of universities, the needs of forming and maintaining the specialty and course features. Subsequently, universities shall scientifically divide and systematically measure tacit knowledge from the perspective of significance, difficulty in obtaining, share property and uniqueness and effectively integrate tacit knowledge so as to change the out-of-order tacit knowledge into orderly and well-organized knowledge and to gradually cultivate and form core knowledge in university specialties.

3.2 Promoting explicitness of teachers' tacit knowledge

Teaching is a major that stores a large amount of tacit knowledge explicitness. "Teaching is without definite methods" reflects that in the field of teaching, there exists a large number of effective methods and knowledge that has not been standardized or made explicit. Education is a special research field. The growth of teachers and students share common growth rules, but still, they have their particular capacities, cognition styles, and growth rhythm as well as psychological and cognitive structure formed by the special combination of those elements. What is more, the educational environment each teacher is in and the educational objects that each teacher faces are also special. Therefore, specialty knowledge and capacity in teaching is far from the educational scientific knowledge that educational experts have found, concluded, and coded in certain format. Richer knowledge and capacity accumulates in a teacher's teaching and education experience. In this connection, universities shall pay particular attention to specialty reflection capacity of teachers as well as teachers' specialty experience. It shall be requested that teachers shall not only learn the existing educational theories and methods but also shall explore and learn tacit specialty knowledge, and promote teachers' tacit knowledge to become explicit so as to realize the life-time specialty growth of teachers.

If excellent teachers not only teach their experience to young teachers in subtle ways but also develop their work experience into system that can develop and control universities' education and teaching quality, people could not only turn educational teaching and management experience into explicit education and management professional knowledge but also let the entire university and more teachers to learn and share by way of spreading the explicit knowledge.

3.3 Methods and platforms for the transfer of college teachers' tacit knowledge

Proper methods and tools are needed when expressing tacit knowledge. Metaphor words, symbolic languages, modes, and concepts are effective tools that people use to express their intuition, experience and inspirational sense. To transform tacit knowledge into understandable forms also covers deduction and reasoning skills. Therefore, creative deduction shall be adopted. To draw on the wisdom of the masses could inspire people's inspirational sense, could spread and share teachers' tacit knowledge by way of brain storm or one-to-one communication, and could achieve good effect. Graphs, pictures, images, videos, and multi-media are also important tools and methods to express tacit knowledge.

Universities shall gradually put tacit knowledge into work documents, such as operation standards, management systems, and teachers handbooks, by which way teachers' tacit knowledge communication and share could be expedited and the communication and share scale could be enlarged. Most of the operation skills, knacks and experience are difficult to be expressed fully and correctly in language or words. Therefore, the communication and share shall be realized through observation, imitation and constant practice. Universities can create various proper conditions to spread and share tacit knowledge through the teaching of teachers who have rich experience to new teachers.

Universities that have established university knowledge base and intranet shall give full consideration on how to facilitate the communication and share of teachers' tacit knowledge. For example, internet discussion system can be adopted, where teachers could write down their experience and practices and store them into the discussion data base for communication and share. To apply expert system in internet could expedite the explicitness of teachers' tacit knowledge. Groupware can be applied to summarize teachers' skills, experience and knacks, which could expedite the communication and share process of tacit knowledge to certain extent. For the experience and skills that are hard to code, "searching peopled data base", "knowledge map" and expert network system shall be established so that people can quickly find teachers who have certain tacit knowledge. Also, formal or informal sites that are suitable for communication shall be set up so as to provide favorable environment for the communication and share of teachers' tacit knowledge. Universities can organize those who have particular knowledge and capacity into various project groups and task groups and let the members of the groups to get familiar with each other, to fully exchange thoughts and experience, and to mutually enlighten each other so as to realize the communication and share of tacit knowledge.

3.4 Inspiring teachers' enthusiasm in contributing their tacit knowledge

Universities shall consider teachers as knowledge persons and adopt balanced and high-effective methods from the perspective of materials and spirits to inspire teachers' enthusiasm. Material inspiring shall admit the special creation and particular property of teachers' personal tacit knowledge, set up inspiring system, "distributing according to knowledge contribution", connect teachers' involvement in knowledge share with salary and promotion, drive the communication and share of teachers' tacit knowledge by way of material profits. Spiritual inspiring shall satisfy knowledge personnel's desire for respect, for achievement, for creation and for self-realization, which is very important for promoting the share and creation of tacit knowledge. The share of tacit knowledge is not simply a technical problem. The key point is to create knowledge-dominant university culture that is human-oriented and encourages knowledge communication, knowledge share and knowledge creation, to set up value concepts of "the awareness of communication", "the awareness of cooperation" and "the awareness of share, and to promote teachers to communicate actively, to share and to create knowledge. To create a mutual trust, mutual cooperation and deep communication spirit

in universities is very important for the forming of such university culture.

4. Conclusion

Knowledge innovation and spreading are the main functions of universities, while the identification and management of tacit knowledge, the base for realizing those functions, is at initial stage home and abroad and in theory and practice. This paper points out that the key point for tacit knowledge management is to provide and create favorable system, organization, cultural atmosphere, and various favorable environment and technical conditions for the spread, transformation, creation and application of tacit knowledge. It is necessary to fully develop and make use of tacit knowledge of college teachers, to promote sustainable development of comprehensive teaching and scientific research levels of universities, and to enhance management on tacit knowledge in universities.

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What Makes An “Effective” Leader: The Application of Leadership

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Abstract

This article is based on the premise that leadership is leadership, whatever the profession. A number of “leaders” from various enterprises are discussed to determine the basic tenets of leadership. The nine tenets of leadership are:

- (1) Think and Act Strategically.
- (2) Understand and Demonstrate the Elements of Teams and Teamwork.
- (3) Master Small Group Decision Making.
- (4) Clearly Define Roles and Relationships.
- (5) Establish and Abide by a Leader-Subordinate Partnership.
- (6) Implement Systematic Evaluation of Policy.
- (7) Allocate Leader Time/Energy Appropriately.
- (8) Set Clear Rules and Procedures for Meetings.
- (9) Learn and Develop Continuously as a Leader.

Keywords: Leadership, Strategic Thinking, Teams and Teamwork, Small Group Decision Making, Role and Relationship Definition, Leader-Subordinate Partnership

1. Introduction

Tony Soprano, Vince Lombardi, George Patton, Jean Luc Picard, Rudolph Guiliani, Colin Powell, Marva Collins! You may wonder what any of these famous people have to do with leadership. They are regarded as being leaders. The authors of this article believe that leadership is leadership, whatever the profession. Regardless of scale or enterprise, there are tenets that are foundational to leadership. The literature about the individuals named previously uses various terms in its detailing how each is a leader. The authors have chosen the word *tenets* to embrace the terms used in the literature for leadership: traits, abilities, dispositions, characteristics, and principles.

One answer to the question, "What makes a leader?" is this: Leaders have the qualities of determination, unselfishness, and motivation. They also possess the ability of having "people pay attention to them." Moreover, leaders inspire subordinates to achieve their potential and show them that the whole can be far greater than the sum of the parts. In addition, leaders possess good judgment, an uncanny ability to spot talent that fits the needs of the organization and situation. To that end, leaders seek people with character as well as courage and develop them into "on-field leaders," to use a football metaphor. A leader's organization must provide an atmosphere of mutual admiration, a suppression of egos, and a team concept to allow the leader to overcome adversity.

Ask people about their leaders or their organizations, and what would they say? Would they say "close knit," "unselfish," "proud," "well-coached," or "admired?" If so, how do the leaders make this happen? Leadership.

Thomas Cronin, (1992), a recognized authority on public policy, defines leadership as making things happen that might not otherwise happen, and preventing things from happening that ordinarily might happen. It is a process of getting people together to achieve common goals and aspirations. Leadership is a process that helps people transform intentions into positive actions, visions into reality.

2. Think and act strategically

In essence, the quality of leadership effectiveness is the result of disciplined adherence to a set of fundamental tenets and skills that characterize an individual. One such tenet is to *think and act strategically*. In fact, a leader's primary responsibility is not just developing policy; a leader must accept responsibility for shaping the future of the organization (or in an educational sense, a school or school system) by expanding mental horizons to identify and meet the challenges of the future. Marva Collins, after developing her Westside Preparatory School demonstrated this tenet by shaping the expectations for her students who were labeled "problem students" and learning disabled students. Dr. Collins sets policy: I think of how many times visitors from all over the world have come to Westside Preparatory School and remarked: 'It's amazing what you do here with children.' I then think how many times we have called the profits of a billion-dollar corporation 'a miracle.' We expect profits; we expect success. Why then can't we expect the same success from our children? (para. 3)

It is the policy of Westside Preparatory to expect nothing less than success for each student at the school.

An effective leader must have a strategic perspective always operating from the future and guiding others to the future. The leader starts with a vision and then defines the necessary strategic issues to achieve the vision. The next step is to develop long-range goals that address these strategic issues and provides decision-making and budgetary focus for the successful implementation of these goals. Living from one annual budget to another, and from one meeting to the next, condemns a system and its future to happenstance and condemns the leader to function only as a situational leader. This type of thinking confuses governance and policy. Subordinates expect leadership, sound thinking, and decisive action.

3. Understand and demonstrate the elements of teams and teamwork.

Another tenet of an effective leader who thinks and acts strategically is to understand and demonstrate the elements of teams and teamwork. By law, leaders exist and have authority only when their members convene as a "body" to do business. They also are a component of a corporate being which must speak, act, and fulfill its commitments with one voice, in a mature, effective, reliable manner. Consequently, leaders, a collection of diverse individuals, come together to constitute and act as an entity, and only when operating as this entity can they exercise authority and fulfill their purpose. This is a classic definition of *team*. Carl Larson and Frank LaFasto, (1989) two authorities on teams and teamwork, define "team" as an entity comprised of two or more people working together to accomplish a specific purpose that can be attained only through a coordinated activity among the team members. In short, a team exists to fulfill a specific function or purpose and is made up of disparate, interdependent parts (individuals) who collectively achieve a capacity that none of its members could achieve individually.

Leaders are the catalysts for actualization. They ferment the mix. They create synergy. The word *synergy* sounds like *energy*. Synergy results from rallied energy. Leaders ignite a spark that causes the group to achieve an output together that could not be achieved through individual efforts.

While many team efforts are productive, few are synergistic. To create synergy, leaders inspire commitment to team success and quality performance. Leaders focus the energy of individuals and allow them to accept responsibility for the group product. Leaders light the fire of desire which flames into action and produces an explosive burst of accomplishments. Success feeds success as individual interests are redirected into group goals. Hence, a culture of synergy emerges that enables empowered people to produce well beyond the most optimistic predictions.

Members of a team can not be synergistic unless they understand, master, and demonstrate the fundamentals of teamwork:

- (1) A clear sense of purpose and goals;
- (2) A team performance based on clearly defined roles and relationships that unite individual talents and capacities;

- (3) An integration of members who have basic technical, interpersonal, and rational decision-making competency;
- (4) A commitment to team success and quality performance;
- (5) A climate of trust, openness, integrity, consistency, and mutual respect;
- (6) A set of clear standards outlining success and performance excellence;
- (7) The support, resources, and recognition to achieve success; and a principled and disciplined leadership.

4. Master small group decision making

A third tenet of leaders is the time they spend building their sense of team and developing the skills for productive teamwork. To build a team, a leader must have the ability to master small group decision making. Most staffs are classic small groups of fewer than a dozen people. They demonstrate certain skills and behaviors that "link" their members together, as well as the processes they follow to make decisions to fulfill their group's purpose.

People are motivated by external rewards, such as bonuses, benefits, promotions, incentives, and pay raises. Internal rewards are even stronger motivators. Everyone wants to feel important. People crave self-respect and the respect of others. They work for the approval of their peers as well as their leaders. People respond to well-deserved praise. Rewards for individual talent, achievements, and accomplishments, come in the form of certificates, letters of appreciation, positive notes, or a simple "Thank You." Workers need to hear that their efforts made someone else's life a little easier. These gestures of gratitude are powerful motivators that affect the mental, emotional, and spiritual state of a person. When employees perceive that they are appreciated and valued, trusted and treasured (Stuart & Crom, 1993), they take pride in their role as part of the team and share ownership in its accomplishments. When the workers' psychological needs and personal values are satisfied, productivity and profitability of the organization increase proportionally. Organizational performance thrives on personal achievement.

5. Clearly define roles and relationships

In any organization, leaders must be able to clearly define roles and relationships, another characteristic of effective leadership. Tony Soprano, in one of the episodes of the Sopranos, told one of his lieutenants after he had done something inappropriate "You're a capo, act like one." Each team member's contribution to the team relationship (i.e., school board member, superintendent, staff, principal, teacher, parent and student, etc.) must be defined in terms of roles to be assumed (function) and how those roles are to be carried out through behavior (performance). A role has two elements: function or what the specific responsibilities of that role are irrespective of incumbency and performance; and, how the person occupying the role is expected to behave and to fulfill his responsibilities. Leaders must have a clear definition of function. The performance component must be defined within the team through discussion and mutual definition of behaviors and practices expected of the leader and subordinates.

Lee Iacocca when discussing teamwork in his biography uses a legend of the National Football League. Vince Lombardi, when asked, "What makes a winning team?" replied, "Start with the fundamentals. A player's got to know the basics of the game and how to play his position. The players have to play as a team, not as a bunch of individuals. The difference between mediocrity and greatness is the feeling the players have for each other."

The team concept facilitates expected roles and relationships and gives constructive feedback to its members as to the degree to that they are fulfilling these expectations.

6. Establish and abide by a leader-subordinate partnership.

Subsequently, these tenets lead to the tenet establish and abide by a leader-subordinate partnership. Subordinate means staff, followers, employees, participants, those individuals who work with a leader. The statement "Leaders make policy; subordinates implement policy" is a misconception of reality. Policy-making and policy-implementation are not distinct, separate functions. Policy-making/implementation is a continuum of thought and relations that transform ideas and abstractions (visions, policies, goals, plans, etc.) into defined observable ends or outcomes (results, programs, buildings, streets, deliverable services, etc.). Leaders and subordinates share this continuum as partners, ensuring each other's success. Each person plays an important role in creating sound policies and ensuring their effective implementation through reliable administrative practices and performance. John Carver, (1990) a widely acclaimed author who writes about staffs that make a difference, discusses this partnership as one in which leaders define what needs are to be met and what ends (outcomes) are to be achieved. Carver believes that leaders should allow staff (within a leader's established limits) to define the means for achieving these ends and to establish a leader-staff linkage that empowers staff to do its tasks and to be evaluated on the results produced.

Leaders who accept and abide by this partnership focus on vision and goals, good policy, and effective staff performance. Those who do not engage in leader-staff partnership fall prey to micromanaging—a perceived need to become involved in, or retain approval over, staff activity and plans.

7. Implement systematic evaluation of policy

The leader-staff partnership is based on the ability *to* implement systematic evaluation of policy, another effective leadership characteristic. Leaders frequently fall into the “Jean-Luc Picard” syndrome (Star Trek II): “Make it so.” They assume that a leader’s action equates to policy/program implementation. The next time leaders hear about the policy is when a problem or a crisis arises. However, effective leaders expect periodic feedback on policy results and possible policy amendments as required. This feedback can be provided through progress reports, in-process reviews, policy reviews, and after-action reviews.

8. Allocate leader time/energy appropriately

In reality, a leader knows he/she cannot be everywhere at the same time. To be at the right place at the right time, a leader must be able to allocate leader time/energy appropriately, the seventh characteristic of effective leaders. Leaders “play” in a number of settings or ‘arenas’ to achieve overall, peak performance. The following four arenas have their own purposes and contributions to a mission’s effectiveness:

- (1) Goal-setting (retreats or meetings).
- (2) Exploration and analysis (study sessions).
- (3) Disposition/formulation (regular group meetings).
- (4) Community (interactions with families and other agencies).

Effective leaders have at least one goal setting retreat or meeting annually. They also must have two staff meetings monthly, usually in the weeks between regularly-scheduled higher level staff meetings. Here, they confer with their staffs and other experts about significant items under consideration requiring eventual actions. Unfortunately, many leaders short-change this arena, pushing the opportunity for learning into the formal staff meetings which are not designed for, nor capable of, promoting much in-depth analysis of complex issues. Actually, the disposition/formulation arena is designed to get to a vote, not to promote careful analysis of complex issues.

However, the community arena is becoming more important because it is rapidly transforming the role of leader and how a leader's time is spent. Communities today are more dependent upon sophisticated alliances and partnerships among groups, public and private entities, and multiple government agencies to negotiate complex and multi-jurisdictional (regional) issues. The most profound change in how leaders operate is occurring within this arena which requires more time in interactions outside of the unit and puts more time constraints on subordinates and staff.

9. Set clear rules and procedures for meetings

For a leader to use time and energy wisely, he/she must be able to *set clear rules and procedures for meetings*, the eighth tenet of effective leadership. Meetings exist for the purpose of doing a leader's business. Literature on how to conduct effective/productive meetings details the need for and adherence to clearly defined rules and procedures. Many leaders, however, drift from these rules and procedures in pursuit of informality, collegiality, and “just being nice.” They let their meetings drone on with lack of focus, redundant comments, and endless discussions. Rules and procedures do not preclude staff input, courtesy, or sensitivity to everyone's concerns and viewpoints. They respect all these elements in addition to the necessity to conduct business in an orderly, disciplined, productive manner.

10. Learn and develop continuously as a leader

The last tenet of a leader is to learn and develop continuously as a leader. Leadership growth flourishes with self study, education, training, and experience. As a leader grows, so does the performance of everyone within the organization. According to Peter Drucker (1993), when discussing developing executive effectiveness, states it requires changing people's preoccupation with problems to a vision of opportunity, from concern with weakness to exploitation of strengths. Rudy Giuliani (2002) has a chapter in his book *Leadership* entitled: “Study. Read. Learn Independently.”

Leaders must decide what their role is, identify the skills needed to be effective in that role, and then GET TRAINED! Highly effective leaders honestly know they don't know everything; therefore, they take advantage of the myriad of opportunities to learn and perfect their skills by reading and attending courses, conferences, workshops and every forum in order to expand their skills to lead and govern well.

Highly effective leaders also learn as leaders. They objectively assess their performance of each of the nine tenets. They decide where gains can be made, then set up the opportunity through workshops to learn the skills to make these gains.

11. Conclusion

The last and probably most important point is this: Effective leaders keep a sense of humor. Leading is serious business for those of us in education. As we deal with vital issues affecting the lives of our students, our teachers, and our systems, and the quality of life we experience daily within them, we must keep a sense of humor. Humor reduces friction and stress, lets others know we and they are human, and is a pause that refreshes our insight and commitment. It is essential to creating and maintaining relationships.

Every school board, superintendent, principal, teacher, parent and student deserves nothing less than highly effective leaders who embrace and accept accountability for their performance in creating its future, and effectively addressing, in the present, those issues and challenges vital to attaining that future. That is what is at stake—our country's future. With few exceptions, every leader can be highly effective and can provide strong leadership, but to do so requires a disciplined adherence to the fundamental tenets of effectiveness. Our training programs for educational leaders must address the nine tenets.

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Understanding of Competitive Sports Conducted by School Under the New Curriculum Standard

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Abstract

Because some teachers and the leaders as well as many sports theorists have some conceptual misunderstanding of competitive sports conducted by school, there're some differences of opinions about competitive sports in physical education field, it would have a negative effect on the development of competitive sports in school. This essay is mainly on the basis of the new curriculum standard, which analyzes competitive sports conducted by school from three aspects such as concept, classification, process of systematization, it makes a conclusion: the competitive sports is formal, semi-formal or informal one that has take the school practical situation into consideration, it conforms to the basic idea of the curriculum of sports and the health curriculum, the requirement of teaching content as well as the needs of development in body and mind.

Keywords: Curriculum standard, Competitive sports, Health

1. Introduction

As the concept of competitive sports is often defined as a formal, high-level tournament competition in many textbooks of physical education(P.E.), and hence two extreme views come into being: (1) Quite a few P.E. teachers hold a negative attitude towards competitive sports, as a result, it is excluded from sports on campus. (2) Teachers treat P.E. as specific training curriculum, lay too much emphasis on formal and professional training, consequently, the school changes into the reserve base for the training of talented people. However, it is not strict rules in the teaching content, but basic requirements for selection of teaching content that in the new standard of P.E. curriculum. In order to completely change these erroneous ideas, help competitive sports to be rightly conducted in school. In the light of the P.E. new curriculum standards, this essay mainly elaborate on the concept of competitive sports, its process of classification and organization, made recommendations on how to conduct competitive sports so as to provide reference for P.E. teachers.

2. Objective and Method

2.1 Objective

This essay takes school competitive sports for object of study.

2.2 Method

2.2.1 The Method of Collecting Documents

This essay mainly collected documents about school competitive sports, and sorted out the data in them.

2.2.2 The Method of Logical Analysis

Under the requirement of the new curriculum standard, make use of the collected data to analyze the competitive sports conducted by school in order to put forward proposals for how to conduct competitive sports in school.

3. Discussion and Analysis

3.1 Misunderstanding of competitive sports

Competitive sports is defined as "competitive sports is to give full play to the athletic ability of individual or team, it turns to be a special training and competition with the goal for outstanding achievements, breaking the record of oneself or rival". In fact, competitive sports is a self-beyond sports. The moral traits such as justice, equality, solidarity, cooperation, friendship, honesty and so on, play a very active part in the growth of adolescents, from this, it can be seen that competitive sports has a rich cultural connotation, so it is necessary to look upon the role which competitive sports

plays in school P.E. curriculum.

3.2 The concept of competitive sports

With the development of society, the concept of competitive sports is constantly changing. Competitive sports is a component element of social and cultural activities in a special cultural state, it is important means of promoting health, physical development, the growth of adolescents and adults, cultivating strong will, carrying out education of moral and aesthetic appreciation, raising the level of national culture, in addition, competitive sports are often organized social activities, with a view to popularizing nationwide sports and raising the level of sports technique (Soviet Sports Theory). Competitive Sports is of game, and also a match that one competes with others, or overcome the natural obstacles (International Association of Competition and Sports). The core of competitive sports is match, regardless of the level of match, the purpose for good score, body-building and entertainment, they are all within the range of competitive sports (Japan Sports Dictionary). Competitive sports is also defined like this: "Competitive sports is a kind physical activity that consists of rules, competition, challenge, entertaining and uncertainties" (by Chinese scholar Aiguang Chou). And thus, the connotation of competitive sports has been simplified, and its extension has been expanding, at the same time, it can also make people to realize that the high-level competitive sports is only one kind of competitive sports, rather than the whole competitive sports.

3.3 The classification of competitive sports

According to different standards, competitive sports can be divided as follows: 1. Nature of tournament: amateur sports and professional sports. 2. The objective of tournament: recreational competitive sports, healing competitive sports, body-building competitive sports, etc. 3 The place of tournament: competitive sports in factory, competitive sports in rural area, competitive sports in school, competitive sports in street or community. 4. Age: competitive sports for middle and old age, competitive sports for young adults, competitive sports for youth, competitive sports for child. 5. The health of body: competitive sports for normal people, competitive sports for handicapped people. (Qu, 2002) and therefore, as an important component element, competitive sports in school is especially for school to conduct, and it is bound to have some features of school.

3.4 The formation of competitive sports

Competitive sports originated from outdoor games in the United Kingdom, all competitive games are the primary form of tournament, and integral parts of competitive sports as well. The development of modern Olympic games has promoted the development of formal competitive sports. During the continuous development of society, the process of gradually organization and standardization of these games is also the process that they gradually evolved into its modern competitive sports. This development has underwent several stages as follows: non-formal competitive games → semi-formal competition → formal competition → professional tournament (Qu, 2002). In the formal competition and the above stage, the rules are established by international sports association; with regards to semi-formal and the below stage, its rules can be partially or completely established by the participants, that is, rules is flexible according to different situations.

3.5 Competitive sports conducted by school under the new curriculum standard

New standards of P.E. curriculum has put forward four basic ideas: 1. Adhere to the guiding ideology "health should come first", and promote the healthy growth of students. 2. Inspire interest in sport and train the students to lifelong sports consciousness. 3. Take the development of the students as orientation, value the dominant position of the students. 4. Pay due attention to individual differences and different needs, benefit each student. Additionally, there are no exact demands but some requirements in the new curriculum standard. : 1. Be in accord with the features of age and gender in the development of students' body and mind. 2. Have lively form to stimulate interest in learning. 3. Be of body-building, information, science. 4. Take effect in promoting body and health. 5. Be simple and easy to carry out (Zhu, 2003). Actually, in the teaching process, it is of much importance is to change or get rid of the outdated teaching models and practices, so as to achieve the desirable goals.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

I have made an analysis of competitive sports conducted by school on the basis of the new curriculum standard, from three aspects such as concept, classification, process of systematization, and make the conclusion: the competitive sports is formal, semi-formal or informal one that has taken the school practical situation into consideration, it conforms to the basic idea of the curriculum of sports and the health curriculum, the requirement of teaching content as well as the needs of development in body and mind.

4.2 Recommendations

In order to make competitive sports reflect its innate value in school, and promote the development of the physical and mental health of students, I specially made the following recommendations for a majority of P.E. teachers:

(1) Update traditional sports concept, enhance theoretical study and improve the quality of personal theories. Any

implementation of P.E. teaching activities must depend on teachers. If the ideas of P.E. teachers still remain the traditional concept, any reform for P.E. curriculum is helpless. Therefore, the teachers should be clear about the purpose and significance of the reform for P.E. and health curriculum, the requirement of the new standards of sports and health curriculum. And they should also know the status and role of P.E. teaching in school, always improve individual theory quality and students' physical fitness.

(2) Resources of P.E. and health curriculum should be fully utilized. According to the present conditions of schools, to make full use of resources of P.E. and health curriculum is both significant guarantee and prerequisite for the desirable goal. Therefore, P.E. teachers ought to allow students to create favorite sports events of their own, to meet the requirements of the new curriculum standards, improve the personal qualities of students.

(3) P.E. textbooks should contribute to the goal of P.E. curriculum. All fit for achieving the goal could be included in P.E. textbooks. So P.E. teachers should choose and adopt sports events in P.E. curriculum (Meng, 2002). "Transform Sports into P.E. means and vice versa" means making processing, transformation, extraction, distillation and reconstruction on the complex competitive sports events for students to develop body and enhance physical fitness, health, and promote the comprehensive development of them, under the law of education and sports as well as the development of the human body. And hence, on the basis of the entity, effectiveness, and acceptance, selectivity, education, fitness, fun and safety, P.E. teachers should improve some competitive sports events to meet the needs and achieve the goal of the new curriculum standard: 1. Simplify the technical structure and reduce the difficulty of sports to achieve the goal for enhancing body and health promotion, and reducing the physical and psychological burden on students sports; 2. adjust specifications of equipment in ground field, make revision on athletic competition rules, so that they can adapt to the students' practical situation and meet the requirements of the new curriculum goals, "to benefit each student" the concept of the curriculum requirements; 3. Level down standards, minimize the sports load, to meet the students health needs.

(4) For the purpose of improving students' physical fitness, P.E. teachers should uphold guiding ideology and philosophy of physical education and health curriculum standards in the practice of teaching, to make the school physical education assume responsibility for cultivating a generation of high-quality talent.

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Research on Evaluation Indicator System for Teaching Quality of College Teachers

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Abstract

This paper conducts research on the connotations and characteristics of evaluation indicator system for teaching quality of college teachers, constructs the contents of the evaluation indicator system for teaching quality of college teachers and applies the contents in the practice of teaching quality monitoring and evaluation so as to prove their rationality and practicability and to achieve the aim of improving management level of teaching quality.

Keywords: Teaching quality of teachers, Evaluation, Indicator system

1. Introduction

The task of higher education is to cultivate talents of high level, high making, and innovation ability whose personalities and characters are developed healthily and who are of strong social and international competitiveness. The cultivation of talents is realized through education and teaching activities. Teaching is the routine central work of colleges and is realized with teachers as the main body. Therefore, the level of teaching quality of teachers determines the level of the cultivation quality of talents and influences the existence and development of colleges. Evaluation of teaching quality of college teachers is an important part in the management of teaching quality of colleges.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance of China jointly issued *Opinions on the Execution of Teaching Quality and Teaching Reform Project in Colleges* and expressly pointed out that the policies and systems on the guidance and evaluation for colleges according to levels and classes of colleges shall be studied and made out. Colleges of different levels and classes shall be given different quality standards and evaluation indicator systems so as to guide colleges to reasonably position themselves, to exert their advantages and to reflect their distinctive features. Effective evaluation on teaching quality of teachers may generate correct guidance and incentive function, activate the enthusiasm of teachers in teaching, advance reforms on teaching contents and methods, and raise teaching quality. Evaluation standard is the ground and key part for the evaluation of teaching quality of teachers and is the premise for ensuring the smooth development of the evaluation of teaching quality of teachers. Therefore, it is of important and realistic meaning to conduct deep and systematic research on evaluation standards of teaching quality of teachers.

2. Functions of the indicator system for evaluation of teaching quality of college teachers

In the evaluation of teaching quality of teachers, fixing evaluation indicator system is the most important point and the premise for the smooth development and conduction of evaluation.

2.1 The construction of evaluation indicator system lays foundation for the evaluation of teaching quality of teachers.

Material evaluation on teaching quality of teachers must be conducted after evaluation indicators are fixed. Evaluation activities without evaluation indicators will result in that evaluation outcomes will vary with individuals and be random, which can not truly reflect teaching quality of the teachers evaluated.

2.2 The construction of evaluation indicator system aims at providing reliable grounds for the management of teaching.

The evaluation of teaching quality of teachers is actually a management activity of teaching quality. As a matter of fact, a scientific and integrated evaluation indicator system for teaching quality of teachers is a set of detailed aims for the management of class teaching quality. Those aims cater for the overall teaching aims of universities. Therefore, they

provide clues and grounds for teaching quality management of universities. Universities may, according to those indicator systems, work out overall working plans for teaching quality management, make clear emphasis and directions for teaching quality management, and ensure the smooth and organized operation of management. Universities could also, by way of referring to those indicator systems, analyze in depth the accumulated relevant department data and find out their advantages and defects in time so as to develop their advantages and diminish defects, fully exert their advantages, make up defects, and regulate teaching management.

2.3 The construction of evaluation indicator system can push the regulation of teaching activities. Indicator system is fixed according to the education aims of universities, whilst teaching activities of teachers aim at realizing such education cultivation aims. In order to realize the education cultivation aims of universities, teaching activities of teachers shall be conducted under the regulation of evaluation standards of teaching quality. Otherwise, the education cultivation aims of universities would become nominal. Therefore, although education theories and education practices advocate teaching without fixed methods and personalized teaching, it does not mean that teaching is without any regulations. From such perspective, the construction of evaluation system for teaching quality of teachers actively regulates the teaching activities of teachers without fail.

3. The construction of indicator system for evaluation of teaching quality of college teachers

Teaching activity is a mutual action teaching process between teachers and students with teachers as guiders and students as the main body. The process is realized through class lecture, practice, course design and graduation design. Most universities are conducting various evaluation activities for teaching quality. However, it depends on whether the evaluation main body and methods are scientific, standard, and feasible and whether the evaluation outcome is credible that whether the evaluation can effectively improve teaching activities, teaching work and teaching management, raise teaching level, and ensure the quality of talents cultivation, whilst the science, standards, and feasibility of evaluation activities and the credibility of evaluation outcomes could only be achieved by adopting feasible evaluation methods. At present, from the perspective of evaluation contents, indicator system for evaluation of teaching at universities can be put into three categories, namely, evaluation indicators for class teaching quality, evaluation indicators for experiment teaching quality, evaluation indicators for practice (including course design, practice, graduation design) teaching quality.

The main body in evaluation of teaching quality shall be students because students directly benefit from the teaching effect. The evaluation of students on teachers could truly reflect class teaching effect of teachers. Self-evaluation of teachers, colleague evaluation, leader evaluation, and expert evaluation can, together with student evaluation, form comprehensive teaching quality monitoring and evaluation system, which could help to achieve monitoring and evaluation on teaching quality from multi-perspective, multi-position and multi-level. According to evaluation contents and evaluators, we make out different models for the evaluation indicator system (please refer to T 1) and make full-rounded evaluation on teaching quality from different perspectives. (see Table 1)

In the process of evaluation, different evaluation aims would have different evaluation contents and standards. The aims of the evaluation are to analyze and diagnose problems existing in teaching process and activities and to provide feed back information for teaching activities so as to improve the quality of the on-going teaching activities. Through evaluation, for one hand, we can provide evaluation information so as to enable teachers and students to understand the exiting advantages and problems in teaching and learning, to exert the advantages and to make up the defects. Hence, reform and improvement of teaching will be advanced. For another hand, evaluation can also enable teachers to constantly reflect their class teaching with evaluation outcomes as the reference and to endeavor to raise their teaching quality. With such aims, it is required not to sedulously pursue objectiveness and exactness of evaluation. However, the key is the effectiveness of evaluation. For the contents of evaluation indicators, we shall focus on the pertinence of evaluation and give prominence to specialties rather than comprehensiveness or details. At present, evaluation indicators for teaching quality that we do researches on mainly include teaching attitude, teaching methods, teaching contents, and teaching effects. For detailed connotations and classes, let us take the evaluation indicators of class teaching quality by students for example. Please refer to Table 2.

4. Analysis on the evaluation outcomes of teaching quality of college teachers

The evaluation of teaching quality of teachers in our school is conducted through internet. After the evaluation, through information processing platform, we collect and analyze various evaluation information of each teacher so as to understand the overall situation of the teaching quality of all teachers and the individual situation of each teacher as well as the problems existing in teaching process.

We collected the original data of students' evaluation, took evaluation indicators for class teaching quality by students as an example, applied principle component analysis method in mathematics to demonstrate whether the item contents of the connotations of evaluation indicator system are all rounded, and did research on the influence imposed by the set-up of the connotations of the evaluation indicators on the scores that students gave when evaluating teaching levels

of teachers. As shown in Table 3, common factor variance refers to the extracted proportion of the information contained in the evaluation items (variables) after the common factor is extracted, or the proportion that can be explained by the common factor in the variance of the original variables. It can be seen from the table that even if one principle component (common factor) is extracted, the smallest in the second column is 90.4% of its original information. Therefore, only extracting one principle component will have strong explanation capacity of the variables.

Extraction method: principle component analysis

Such outcome reveals that if a student accredits his or her teacher, he or she will give high scores to all of the evaluation connotations for the teacher. To put it in other way, when a student scores his or her teacher, he or she usually depends on a general impression rather than reasoning each item and then giving a final score. For example, when a student accredits the teaching of teacher, even though this teacher does not do so well in certain aspect, the student won't give a low score to the corresponding evaluation item. Similarly, if a student is dissatisfied with a teacher, usually, he or she will give low scores to all the evaluation items for the teacher. That is to say, to certain extent, different settings up of evaluation items will not remarkably influence the final scores of teachers. For another hand, such outcome also indicates that the setting up of the evaluation items can be more simple, which will not influence greatly the evaluation outcome.

5. Conclusion

Through analysis on principle components, we can come to such a conclusion: usually, students just evaluate teachers on the basis of their general impression of teachers and the evaluation outcome will not be remarkably influenced by the setting up of the evaluation connotations. Therefore, we can simplify the evaluation connotations to the utmost degree and compress the original ten items to three items, even less, which can save the workload and time of management workers and students, evidently raise work efficiency and will be welcomed by students. However, the human-oriented thoughts reflected in the "quality project" shall not only take the development of students as the basis, but also take the development of teachers as the basis. Besides proving rules for students to evaluate teachers, a more important function of the connotations of the evaluation indicators shall be that teachers could constantly examine their teaching process by referring to the evaluation indicator connotations so as to advance the reform and improvement of teaching.

To sum up, the construction of evaluation indicators for teaching quality of teachers shall not just simply pursue simplicity principle. The key point is the practicability of the evaluation indicators, that is, whether it is beneficial for the improvement and increase of class teaching quality and whether it can positively advance the regulation on education and teaching activities of teachers. To put it simple, the construction of evaluation indicators for teaching quality of teachers shall try best to be simple under the premise of practicability.

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Table 1. Evaluation indicator system model for teaching (EI is short for evaluation indicator)

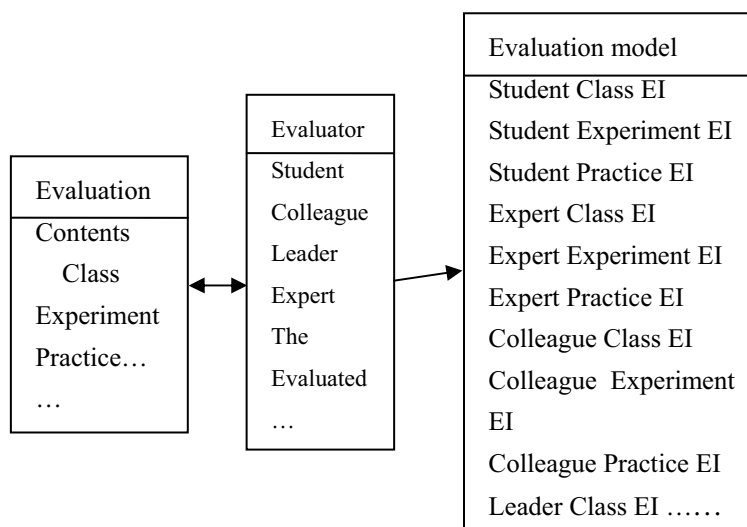


Table 2. Evaluation indicators of class teaching quality by students

No.	Connotations of the evaluation indicators				
1	Teachers are full of ardor for teaching and are freshen when giving classes	Excellent	Good	Medium	Poor
2	Teachers have and dismiss classes on time, do not move classes randomly, and are strict with students				
3	When giving classes, the thoughts of teachers are clear, the contents are well-organized, the information taught is large, and the classes are creative				
4	The arrangement of class progress, experiment/visit and discussion is reasonable and in order				
5	Teachers can choose teaching methods according to teaching contents, which deepens students' understanding of courses				
6	Teachers can check or analyze in time the schoolwork/exams/tutorship				
7	Teachers can adopt enlightening or participation teaching to guide students' reasoning				
8	Teachers guide and encourage students to apply scientific knowledge of their disciplines to resolve actual problems.				
9	The teaching methods of teachers are proper, which helps increase students' interest and helps students gain a lot				
10	Teachers love their jobs and are diligent with noble morality. Students hence respect the teachers				

Table 3. Analysis on the evaluation indicators for class teaching quality by students

	Original	Extracted
T1	1.000	.923
T2	1.000	.904
T3	1.000	.955
T4	1.000	.951
T5	1.000	.961
T6	1.000	.935
T7	1.000	.968
T8	1.000	.956
T9	1.000	.958
T10	1.000	.943



Academic Excellence through International Journal Publications

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Abstract

One of the several roles partaken by academicians in institutions of higher education in Malaysia is the quest in publication. The objective of establishing a critical mass of researchers and knowledge corpus that enable Malaysia to reach the global standard of technology creation and innovation as clearly stated in the newly launched October 2007 Strategic Action Plan of the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia Thrust Number 5, would aptly be manifested in the presentation and documenting all forms of research and innovation through publication. This paper examines the expansive opportunities for academicians to keep in track with the local and global needs, not only in manifestation of the Fifth Thrust, but also of the Seventh Thrust in the strategic plan i.e. activating internationalization initiative. Nonetheless, this also includes active participation in publication in international journals, as a result of active research and innovation activities within and outside the university. A presentation of this nature should provide clearer insights of what it takes and what entails, as far as publication is concerned, to help place Malaysian academic excellence at par in the global arena. Besides, it also seeks to assist potential prolific contributors to get published in international journals. A reminder to all, as this is race of the era, if not participated, academicians can remain in the closet of complacency which has always been proven to be quite lethal as the notion of 'publish or perish' still holds strong and this affects self-development academically.

Keywords: Subject descriptors, Publication, Academic excellence, Documenting, International journal

1. Introduction

Academic publication involves the presentation of document research, review and observatory works which are of high quality, original and important findings within a specific scientific area of studies. In an example of one of the world's acclaimed journal platforms known as WSEAS Transaction, its aim is to publish important findings in science, engineering, technology, education and business areas. Researchers in the academia are very much encouraged to share results of work within the scope and relevance to the mission of respective journals.

Still holding strong, the phenomenon of 'publish or perish' demands the commitment of members of the academia the world over, the seniors and the juniors as well, to get published. This drive for publication opportunity may pose both desirable and undesirable effects on the genuine aspiration of academicians that is to excel in teaching, research and publication or providing professional services. However, taken in with a different stride, with ingenious collaboration and early academic career mapping, academicians can deliver knowledge which would be effectively translated into

publication materials as the world today sees bountiful avenues and vast opportunities to publish, particularly with the advent of information and communication technology in which online publication is found rampantly.

2. Rationale to publish

However pressing the demand to publish, there are academicians who write for several drives. One of these is for peer assessment in which the approach is used to develop faculty members the ability to work cooperatively, to be critical of others' work and receive critical appraisals of their own work. This strategy if driven early among young academicians can spur the desire to work within the expectations of what entails being excellent academicians.

Another driving factor for publication is peer recognition, herewith the term 'peer' need not necessarily be interpreted as 'colleague'. This is a state of which faculty member may be recognized for excellent academic capability or exceptional skills by other academic staff within the institution. Peer recognition also applies to a reputation of excellence in a profession recognized by individuals or groups in the same profession.

In every institution of higher education, publication is a criteria for possible promotion in an academic career path and due to this it has been a mandatory 'sentence' which requires faculty staff to fulfill to meet the requirement. However, besides this push factor to publish, for some faculty member writing has been due to strong motives for the interest and to some of them publication is considered as one of the best ways for academicians to make contributions to the society and to be recognized professionally. Time and again to remain an excellent academic, the race to publish as many papers as possible in a number of prestigious international and professional journals has been the game up to current time.

Apart from the academic proponent, the rationale of publication preceded from the funds that have been spent on research conducted. Much has been spent on research, and subsequently publication is the distillate of that expensive work. Thus, if publication is not propagated, the research conducted will be lost and so will the funds and grants that have been spent to perform the research. It is pertinent that any research done has to be made available to others who may be interested in the area of studies, are learning in the same field, are exploring possibilities and may use it for future referencing of the field. Thus, publication is the significant manifestation of research which is made available to the masses. (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/asgov/docs/ASD23.pdf>). Whether it is for the senior or junior faculty members, there are important websites that may provide the platform for academic excellence as far as publication is concerned.

3. Criteria that renders for publication

In providing direct information for this purpose, particularly for junior faculty members, this paper attempts to assist many in the academia to explore the possibility of sharing research findings and hence, publishing. Academic writing is primarily an exercise in which requirement for highly stylized linguistic capability with distinctive elements of scientific paper calls for proper sequence of components. Research work should be communicated effectively and clearly using simple words of effective meaning. This is when the best English, which is the key language in academic writing, is to make the point in the fewest short words. When writing papers for international journal publication, the use of simple and short sentence instead of complex and long sentence is highly recommended. Where there are long sentences, writer divides the long sentence into two or three simple short sentences. It is worthy reading of simple declarative sentence using clear and short words. Writers can make editors happy with plain, simple, and freshman level composition. Thus, if the ingredients are properly organized, the paper will almost write itself.

The next criteria for an article to be accepted for publication is the originality of writing that is presented in the print. Novel or creative research methodology is highly considered for possible publication. In any research work conducted, new and important findings which are unfolded will be distinctive new knowledge and proves worthy for others to have a share.

Nevertheless, scientific quality of the article is also being considered for publication as appropriate statistical analysis entails validity and reliability of the research undertaken. It also reflects the depth of investigation in which experimental design and methodology have been meticulously considered for findings to be reliably discovered. In accepting submission the publisher would also consider its importance to the scientific field. The usefulness of findings to scientists, specific users and the general public provides future references for decision and policy-making in areas which are relevant to the requirement of the research done.

4. Format for publication

As discussed in the previous section, clarity of presentation is a plus point for publication acceptance, as this ensures cohesiveness and coherence in the presentation of reporting, be it research result, reviews or opinions. Therefore, language competence is not to be compromised as paper has to be grammatically impeccable, acceptable readability level and clarity of message presentation. The organization of presentation follows the stipulated format in accordance with the requirement of the publishing house concerned. Ideal components in original research manuscript are

scheduled as follows for effective referencing, but not necessarily true for international journals publication. (Tables 1-7)

Having all these laid out systematically and orderly, another consideration that an academicians needs to be aware of is the relevance of the article submitted for publication. The subject matter has to be of sufficient interest to the readership to a specific journal as lack of new information may not warrant acceptance for publication, for instance, a mere extension of an already presented and published paper. It is also important to note that inevitable rejection for publication can be due to the detection of results that are trivial, predictable or duplicative of others. An effective write up needs to provide international importance or interest and scientific quality that does not compromise on standard which is possible if it is due to poor experimental design and methodology. In addition, improper conclusion which does not provide in-depths thoughts and insights is another setback for acceptance. Finally, the most too common academic dishonesty, if detected, obviously results in rejection by the publisher. Thus, any form of academic misconduct such as fabrication and plagiarism is definitely taboo in writing for publication.

5. International opportune in publication: some considerations

Several types of journals are available for academicians to attempt for publication and one of these includes Journal Impact Factor (J.I.F.). Journal Impact Factor is from Journal Citation Report (JCR), which is a product of Thomson ISI (Institute for Scientific Information). JCR provides quantitative tools for evaluating journals. The impact factor is involves a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a given period of time. The impact factor for a journal is calculated based on a three-year period, and can be considered to be the average number of times published papers are cited up to two years after publication. For example, the impact factor 2008 for a journal would be calculated as follows:

A = the number of times articles published in 2006-7 were cited in indexed journals during 2008

B = the number of articles, reviews, proceedings or notes published in 2006 – 2007

Impact factor 2008 = A/B

It is useful to note that the impact factor 2007 will be actually published in 2008, because it could not be calculated until all of the 2008 publications had been received. Impact factor 2008 will be published in 2009. The following calculation is also used:

The impact factor = the total number of citations a journal receives in ISI Source Journals in one year/the total number of "citable" articles it published in the previous two years.

A = Total cites in 2007

B = 2007 cites to articles published in 2005-2006 (this is a subset of A)

C = Number of articles published in 2005-6

D = B/C = 2007 impact factor

Impact factors are only meaningful in context with other journals in the same field. However, academicians should strive to get published and not to worry on how it is calculated. Nevertheless, striving to get published in high impact factor journals should be managed within the focus of academia.

In the following examples, the highest of all amongst forestry-based journals are as follows:

Sample 1:

Agricultural Meteorology

Editor-in-Chief:

K. T. Paw U

See: editorial board

For all editors information:

Description

Agricultural and Forest Meteorology is an international journal for the publication of original articles and reviews on the inter-relationship between meteorology and the fields of plant, animal and soil sciences, ecology, and biogeochemistry. Emphasis is on basic and applied scientific research relevant to practical problems in agriculture, forestry, and natural ecosystems. Articles must appeal to an international audience. Theoretical models should be tested against experimental data. Special issues devoted to single topics are also published. Typical topics include canopy micrometeorology (e.g. the characterization of radiative transfer, turbulence evapotranspiration, and the exchange of trace gases and energy within and above managed and natural ecosystems), aerobiology (e.g. the dispersion of pollen, pathogens, insects and pesticides), biometeorology (e.g. the effect of weather and climate on plant distribution,

crop yield, water-use efficiency, phenology of plant and animal development, and the energy balance of animals), forest fire/weather interactions and the role of vegetation on climate and weather.

Audience

Meteorologists, Soil Scientists, Agricultural Hydrologists, Agronomists. Impact factor of this journal 2005: 2.461_

Journal Citation Reports® 2005, published by Thomson Scientific

Sample 2:

Description

European Journal of Forest Research

Editor-in-Chief: Hans Pretzsch

ISSN: 1612-4669 (print version)

ISSN: 1612-4677 (electronic version) Journal no. 10342 Springer Berlin Heidelberg

Online version available

Online First articles available

Description

Aims and Scope:

European Journal of Forest Research publishes Research Articles and Reviews addressing the following subjects:

- biological, ecological and socio-economical knowledge relevant to wood and forest
- systems analysis and modeling of forest and landscape
- forest ecology, conservation and management
- forestry-to-wood production chain

European Journal of Forest Research is aimed at researchers, managers and policy makers.

Impact factor: 0.562 (2005) Section "Forestry": Rank 25 of 36

There is another category of worthy publication, which is the Citation Indexed Journals. The citation indexing began in the 1950s. It has been responsible in tracking references that authors put in the bibliographies of published papers. The publication has been dominated by the Institute for Scientific Information (now Thomson Scientific), the creator and publisher of the three citation indexes available today namely:

- Science Citation Index (SCI)
- Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)
- Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI)

International publication considers a high role of editor-in-chief who is the guardian of scholarly record and he has to ensure that the published article has high quality scientifically and is free from error. The manuscripts written based on the opinions of other scientists have to be evaluated by the editor-in-chief through his judgment on the quality of submitted papers. This evaluative undertaking is known as peer review process (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/rowland.pdf) which is applied to several kinds of scholarly activities, and it is centrally done on the scholarly journal articles publication. The main criteria of article acceptance decided upon by the editor-in-chief includes 'the dissemination of current knowledge, archiving of the canonical knowledge base, quality control of published information and assignment of priority and credit for their (editor's) work to authors'.

6. Conclusions

For the attainment of academic achievement, faculty members at the beginning of their career, need to be informed that it is worth getting papers published in local or international journals or merely for self-interest. They are advised to try getting published in journal of impact factor, citation indexed journal and refereed journals. It is advisable too that cooperation between the senior and junior faculty members are enhanced through engagement with co-authors and established or renowned researchers and paper writers, if necessary.

In supporting the aspiration of the Ministry of Higher Education, international linkages established with the top 10 world class universities such as Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, Stanford and MIT has to be a dual obligation one striving for such collaboration and the other an undivided support to local academicians financially and morale. Which are sometimes much challenged and shortchanged.. For reality check, universities in the country must have undivided commitment to ensure the academia have the opportunities to be attached to world class universities, centers, laboratories.

However, the crucial possibility of financial support should start from the university by giving opportunities to academic paper presenters to thrust on at world class congress, conference and seminar abroad after which, from this exposure and experiences, confidence and commitment ride on easily for publication to be enhanced, especially in journals of high impact factor. After all, for the top notch ranking of university, publication amount is the key criteria of selection as listed below in accordance with THES-QS World University 2007, which is the aspiration of university the world over.

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Appendix A

The listings of the citation indexed journals include:

The WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON HEAT AND MASS TRANSFER

ISSN: 1790-5044 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON FLUID MECHANICS

SCI mago: to be announced

ISSN: 1790-5087 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON SIGNAL PROCESSING

ISSN: 1790-5022 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

ISSN: 1790-5079 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON POWER SYSTEMS

ISSN: 1790-5060 Indexing

The next listing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS

SCI mago: 0,039

ISSN: 1109-2734 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON SYSTEMS

SCI mago: 0,038

ISSN: 1109-2777 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON SYSTEMS AND CONTROL

ISSN: 1991-8763 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS

SCI mago: 0,039

ISSN: 1109-2742 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON COMPUTERS

SCI mago: 0,038

ISSN: 1109-2750 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON MATHEMATICS

SCI mago: 0,039

ISSN: 1109-2769 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON ELECTRONICS

SCI mago: 0,038

ISSN: 1109-9445 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

SCI mago: to be announced

ISSN: 1109-9526 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON BIOLOGY AND BIOMEDICINE

SCI mago: to be announced

ISSN: 1109-9518 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON INFORMATION SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS

SCI mago: 0,039

ISSN: 1790-0832 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON ADVANCES in ENGINEERING EDUCATION

ISSN: 1790-1979 Indexing

WSEAS TRANSACTIONS ON APPLIED AND THEORETICAL MECHANICS

ISSN: 1991-8747 Indexing

Appendix B

IMPORTANT WEBSITES TOWARDS WORLD CLASS ACADEMIA

Nobel Laureates:

Field Medals:

Highly-cited researchers:

Articles published in Nature and Science;

Articles indexed in SCIE and SSCI:

Appendix C

Top Notch University Ranking According to THES-QS World University 2007

HARVARD University

University of CAMBRIDGE, FEB 2008 (30 Colleges)

YALE University, MAC 2008

University of OXFORD, FEB 2008 (39 Colleges)

Imperial College LONDON

PRINCETON University

University of CHICAGO

CALIFORNIA Inst. of Technology, DEC 1996

University College LONDON

MASSACHUSETTS Institute of Technology

Table 1. Title

	The primary purpose of Title is to describe the nature and content of research concisely and accurately.
	Title should describe the content of study with the fewest words, say less than 12 words.
	Title should be clear and informative.
	Title should capture the importance of the study and the attention of the reader.
	Title should describe actual findings that can be supported in the manuscript.

Table 2. Abstract

	The primary purpose of Abstract is to enable readers to identify the basic contents of a paper quickly and accurately.
	State what has been done and how it was done.
	Presents results concisely.
	Information in the abstract should be presented in the main text.
	Not exceeding between 200-300 words depending on the organization requirements.

Table 3. Introduction

	The primary purpose of Introduction is to provide the readers with sufficient background information to evaluate the results of the research.
	No more than 1 typed page
	Focus on the main subject
	Brief and well integrated review of pertinent work
	Cite key and current literature references
	Extensive review of the literature is not needed
	Explain the importance of your research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new or important scientific information is needed to strengthen the subject area? • Provide rational or state the problems clearly why the research is needed and worth doing
	State the general objective (goal) of your work + specific (aim) objectives

Table 4. Materials and Methods

	The primary purpose of Materials and Methods is to provide sufficient analytical information so that work can be repeated.
	Use appropriate experimental design to answer the research question.
	Cite and use the accepted and current methodology.
	If a published method is modified, such modifications must be described in detail.
	Describe new methods in detail
	Describe statistical analysis of data if appropriate.
	Use subheadings as needed for clarity.

Table 5. Results and Discussion

	The primary purpose of Results is to present research data concisely and to interpret the data scientifically.
	Results should be short and sweet with no excess verbiage.
	Work done should be consistent with the objectives stated in the introduction.
	The reproducibility and sensitivity of analytical method.
	Report representative data rather than endless repetitive data.
	Numerical data with the correct number of significant digits.
	Present results concisely using tables and figures as needed.
	Table and figure legends should be accompanied with sufficient information for main point so that the minimal text is needed.
	Do not present the same information on tables, figures and in the text.
	All tables and figures must be numbered in the order in which they are mentioned in the text.

Table 6. Conclusions

	The primary purpose of Discussion is to show the relationships among observed facts.
	Point out any exceptions or any lack of correlations, and define any unsettled points.
	Discuss the discrepancies between new results and previously reported results in similar studies.
	Discuss the research limitations.
	Discuss the theoretical implications and possible practical applications of your research.
	The primary purpose of Conclusion is to point out the key findings and application to your research
	Conclusion should not be a summary of the work done or a virtual duplication of the abstract
	Conclusions should be justified by the experimental design, methods, and results

Table 7. References

	Cite current and key pertinent references.
	Reference citations are accurate and complete.
	The number of references should be appropriate without a complete historical bibliography



Discussion on Statistics Teaching Management

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Abstract

The teaching management requires reasonable deployment of all kinds of teaching essential factors in teaching process to promote students' comprehensive and harmonious development. Having analyzing questions which appears frequently in statistics teaching management of college, the article finds out their causes, according to which this article proposes effective measures for optimizing statistics teaching management.

Keywords: Statistics, Teaching Management, Optimization

1. Introduction

To optimize the teaching management, we should adjust teaching factors reasonably and systemically tackle all kinds of contradictions in teaching management in order to keep the teaching in a harmonious and unified state with an ultimate aim of achieving the harmony in teaching goal, the course content, the teaching order and the relationship between teachers and students. The teaching management should set up a students-oriented education notion, transform the wrong idea that regards students as test machine and meet students' various needs, thus can help students develop in a harmonious and sustainable way. In the teaching process, teachers should be organizers of students' learning activities as well as their guiders, encouraging students think positively and initiatively and solve problems by themselves. On the basis of the characteristics of statistics courses in college, the article summarizes the main problems and related reasons in statistics teaching management, accordingly proposing the effective measures.

2. The Problems That Appear Frequently in Statistics Teaching Management

2.1 A Few students skip classes

According to a sketchy investigation, about 5% university students or so often skip statistics class.

2.2 Some students are inactive in class.

According to a sketchy investigation, about 15% university students or so doze off, read some entertaining books or chat in statistics class.

2.3 Most students only passively listen to the teacher rather than take the initiatives to think and comprehend actively in statistics class.

2.4 A Majority of students only can solve statistical problems which have been taught but feel quite at a loss to a changed topic.

2.5 Most students are only good at memorizing concepts and formulas while poor at applying the statistical soft wares.

2.6 Many students are only ready to study the statistical knowledge in their textbooks, while unwilling to spend time in extracurricular statistical knowledge.

2.7 Many students would pay much more attention to key points in the exam than those non- examined points.

2.8 Many students only do the assignments given by the teachers, never bothering to find questions on their own, let alone solving problems initiatively.

3. The Reasons for these Problems

3.1 The exam-oriented education turns students to a kind of "test machine"

The Exam-oriented education overemphasizes the teaching's utility, consequently neglect its ability, emotion, manner and values targets and thus weaken the essential functions of teaching.

Most students under such a teaching mode tend to pay all their attention to the test result with not even a little interest in statistics itself. Students take their study as a way of finishing tasks. Therefore, they study in a passive way rather than on their own initiative.

3.2 Most students believe that knowledge taught in class is absolutely correct and objective and that teacher's function is to pour the knowledge into student's brains, while the students' responsibility is to accept and grasp the knowledge undoubtedly.

These wrong viewpoints cause students not to or dare to propose any questions, thus cause students lack innovative spirits.

3.3 Because the statistical functions are not fully introduced to students in their first class, they know far from enough about the importance of statistics.

Ineffective introduction to each class and obsolete teaching methods lead to students' ignorance of the importance of each statistics class and their lack of interest in it.

3.4 Students who spare themselves relax routinely in statistics class due to the degree variation of teacher's request for different curriculums.

3.5 Statistical course content involves much knowledge on higher mathematics, theories of probability in particular.

Therefore those students who have not so solid mathematics foundation often feel awe-stricken.

3.6 If statistical class's content only focuses on the derivation and proof of formulas and does not involve software application, students would have no statistical application ability.

4. Measures to Optimize Statistics Teaching Management

4.1 Optimization Principle

4.1.1 Teaching goal needs an overall design

In teaching management we should adjust and control student's study behavior through establishing teaching target system in order to obtain students' approval of teaching prospects.

4.1.2 Teaching content should be rich and varied

In the teaching content design, we should improve the educational model and teaching methods, by any means excite students' learning interest, stimulate and satisfy all students' inquisitiveness and let them experience happiness of success in autonomous and interesting study.

4.1.3 Teachers and students should cooperate with each other and promote mutually.

Teaching needs the unification between teachers' teaching and students' study, which is interaction in essence. Harmonious, democratic and equal relationship between teachers and students can only be established by the means of contact. In teaching process teacher should be converted from an egoistic to the participant, collaborator and promoter of students and promote their mutual interaction through equal communications with students.

4.1.4 Teaching appraisal should be fair

If teaching appraisal is utilized properly, it will be helpful to promote students' mood stability, stimulate their self-respect and self-confidence and encourage their insistent new goals pursuit.

When utilizing teaching appraisal, we should insist in multi-dimensional appraisal instead of sole appraisal and apply a comprehensive and scientific appraising way rather than an appraisal only based on test scores. Moreover, we should combine the examinations of their cognitive ability and skills and by unifying the formative appraisal and terminating appraisal, achieve a harmonious unification between teaching process appraisal and study result appraisal.

4.2 Specific measures

4.2 .1 Teachers set up some situations and stimulate students' interests.

At the beginning of class teachers firstly propose the practical problems to solve, by which they can establish a kind of inquisitive environment aimed at stimulating student's desire to inquire.

4.2 .2 Teachers propose questions and encourage students to think

A doubt is a beginning of thought and foundation of innovation. In the teaching process, teachers should not be eager to give conclusions directly. Instead, they should let students solve problems themselves.

4.2 .3 Students participate in teaching process and learn to explore in academic fields.

Student's study should not be a passive absorbing process. Even if the scientific knowledge they learn is results of predecessor's thoughts, students still should think themselves before they accept.

In teaching process, we should emphasize students' participation in study, which means fully demonstrating the occurring and developing process of knowledge and transforming the static knowledge to a dynamic exploration object so as to let students receive training and raise their exploring spirits during the process of exploring unknown domains.

4.2.4 We should encourage students to develop their radiating reasoning ability and innovative awareness

In teaching, we should encourage students to solve problems from different angles and with different methods, especially encourage students to propose unique opinions and creative ideas.

4.2.5 Teachers perform appropriate stimulation.

Encouragement is a teaching art, which can fully arouses students' enthusiasm of study, make lessons vivid, lively and virtually effective. If students obtain respect, warmness and friendship from their teachers, they will show more passion in statistics class. Once teachers arrange work in an encouraging tone, student's self-respect can be satisfied, thus their potential talents can be explored to a maximum degree. In teaching process, students' biggest expectation is nothing less than obtaining the appropriate praise and encouragement from their teachers. In class, if contradictions bring up between teachers and students, teachers should tolerate students' shortcomings and not cherish prejudice against them, meanwhile treating students with great warmness and deep emotion.

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On Design Experiment Teaching in Engineering Quality Cultivation

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Abstract

Design experiment refers to that designed and conducted by students independently and is surely an important method to cultivate students' comprehensive quality. According to the development and requirements of experimental teaching, this article carries out a study and analysis on the purpose, significance, denotation, connotation and characteristics of design experiment and then elaborates on the general design methods and specific steps in this kind of experiment. By practicing in design experiment, students will have their abilities in innovation and scientific research as well as comprehensive engineering diathesis improved.

Keywords: Design experiment, Practice teaching, Engineering quality

1. Introduction

With the development of science and technology as well as the quickening pace of reform and opening in China, higher comprehensive skills have been demanded for engineering technicians since the beginning the 21st century. Especially advanced polytechnic universities and colleges, the cradle for the cultivation of engineering technicians, are intended to improve students' engineering quality. Currently, experiment and practice courses are set in many polytechnic universities and colleges to train students in practical skills and engineering. Experiment-based courses should be one of the important knots in the basic training of an engineer with the focus on students' independent practical ability and innovative ability. With the in-depth development of teaching reform, the verification-based experiment teaching can't adapt itself to the demands of social development. Therefore, only by developing the design-based teaching method can we cultivate high-level professionals in conformity to our social demands.

2. The Purpose and Significance of Design Experiment

Experimental teaching is the core of the fundamental practice in the whole practical teaching system. With the strategic adjustment of China's economic structure, the whole Chinese society has called more for students' capacity in skills, comprehensive quality as well as innovativeness. Therefore, design experiment is intended to cultivate students' capacity in solving practical problems, innovation, organization, management and scientific research.

3. The definition of Design Experiment

Here design experiment refers to breaking the current experiment scheme to design new plans and steps for experiment in specific requirements and conditions and to fulfill the given requirements. Therefore, it is a kind of exploratory experiment either combined with the teaching of a specific course or independent from teaching. Due to the flexibility of design experiment, students are required to arouse their innovative ability besides solid knowledge and basic skills. Accordingly, it is an important way to cultivate students' creative thinking.

The experiments in textbooks are mainly instructive, in which teachers prepare the devices according to experiment instructions, and students are expected to conduct them according to instructions, record the result and then complete their reports. This kind of experiment is mainly designed to solidify some significant basic theories, to help students know about some phenomena, grasp basic experimental knowledge, methods and skills.

Design experiment is an independent activity designed and conducted by students themselves, in which students are

expected to choose devices, design experimental plans, study out experimental steps, conduct their observation, analysis and measurement activities and finally draw their conclusions. Generally, design experiment is based on routine and synthetical experiment and set after those experiment from simple to complex experiment. Before a design experiment, teachers will give the subject, purpose, principle, conditions, main methods and instructions to students clearly. Then it is up to students to reflect on and discuss their plans for their experiments independently, to put up with theoretical evidence, to choose their experimental methods, to establish the content for observation and presume the possible result. However, students should hand in their experimental schemes to teachers for instruction and approval. In addition, teachers are expected to help students to optimize their experimental content, to instruct the operation of their experiments, to solve the problems in their experiments, organize analysis and discussions on the result and help them to learn from their experiments and then get improved. More advanced design experiment is carried out by students totally independently to exert their enthusiasm for learning to the largest extent under teachers' instruction. This kind of experiment is intended to cultivate students' independent research ability. Only by referring to some materials to answer relevant questions can they understand the relevant principles, study out their experimental steps and then achieve the requirements of their experiments. By conducting these experiments, students will further their understanding of principles, improve their ability in self-teaching, practical operation, design, analyzing, studying and solving problems and have their innovative spirits inspired.

4. The Characteristics of Design Experiment

First, design experiment is innovative. Whatever kind of design experiment will involve the process of conception and design, in which students' creativity is called for. Due to its flexibility, students are required to have creativity besides a mastery of basic knowledge and methods.

Second, design experiment is comprehensive. Because such an experiment is based on verification experiment, students are required to apply their theoretical knowledge and skills to their experiments in a comprehensive way. Therefore, it will help to cultivate students' ability in solving practical problems with what they have learnt in class.

Third, the scheme of design experiment is diversified. Even with the same purpose, principle and requirements, diversified schemes can be produced if different devices are provided in the process of an experiment. Therefore, in our experimental teaching, a typical subject can be chosen for students to try different schemes in order to enlarge students' thoughts.

Fourth, design experiment is relatively independent. Students are required to refer to and collect materials, design their schemes and conduct their experiments independently. Obviously, during the whole process, with students being the subject, the student-centered educational idea can be reflected and students' enthusiasm and innovativeness will be exerted.

Last, the result of design experiment is relatively uncertain. Both success and failure can be expected of the whole design process. An analysis can be conducted to explore into the causes of success and failure, which will be quite useful in talent cultivation.

5. The Specific Procedures and Requirements of Design Experiment

According to the curriculum, students are expected to meet the following requirements:

- (1) Freely choosing their experiment projects from the given range, leaning about their subjects and specifying their tasks.
- (2) Referring to some relevant materials, putting up with possible schemes for experimental design, drawing necessary electric circuits and picking out the best scheme among all through analysis and comparison.
- (3) Defining the most proper method and conditions for experiment through an analysis on the relevant methods and specifying the method of operation.
- (4) Producing an adequate scheme for experiment design and conducting a detailed analysis on it.
- (5) Conducting their experiments to observe relevant phenomena and measure some targets to improve their ability in discovering, analyzing and solving problems.
- (6) Writing a complete and excellent design report different from those ordinary ones in format and paying their special attention to choosing experiment schemes, controlling experimental process, analyzing result and summarizing what they have learnt from their experiments.

It must be emphasized that the whole design process should be examined on its correctness. For example, with the expansion of the scale of the whole system as well as complexity in the courses based on electric and electronic experiments, the traditional way in which examination and attempt in forming circuits and making sample machines are conducted by human beings has to give way to EDA (Electronic Design Automation). During the verification process, analysis is employed as the basic method and EDA is used for simulation.

In addition, the Documents of design experiment are also of great importance and therefore should be emphasized throughout the whole design process. Design documents should be established at the very beginning, in which the design idea for each step, comparison and choice of schemes, the result of analysis and calculation and the final design blueprint should be recorded and compiled with clear structure and concise expression. During the process of document design, necessary communication should be conducted between managers and designers as well as designers and clients in order to exert management and restriction on the complexity of management design. Since the design of a large-scale system is fulfilled by many persons, it tends to be a failure without necessary communication and effective management of its complexity. Therefore, the establishment of documents has direct influence on whether the design of the whole system will be successful or not. In addition, design documents provide evidence and support for the system to be maintained and managed as well as for the design of the system to be applied to engineering production.

6. Conclusion

As famous educationist John Dewey once said, “students cannot have their intelligence and personality developed in their learning activities if they are only required to listen to the textbook and their teachers. Actually, only when they get opportunities to do something successful in their own experience do they really get educated no matter how poor their experience once was.” Design experiment will encourage students’ enthusiasm in learning, improve their ability in analysis, judgment and logic thinking, hence providing them with good opportunities to exercise their creativity. In this sense, design experiment will help to improve the overall quality of experimental teaching and college students’ engineering quality, hence cultivating more excellent professionals for the whole society.

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How Global Academic Stratification Affects Local Academies: The Inflated Role of Knowledge Reception in the Philosophy Discipline in Modern Japan

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Abstract

Sociologists of knowledge find that academic stratification is present among individual scholars, genders, networks, fields, and all kinds of scientific organizations, while communications scholars have been studying global cultural asymmetry for a long time. Yet few researchers have explored the global dimension of academic stratification. In this essay, I approach global academic stratification through examining one of its major negative impacts on academies in culturally peripheral countries. I investigate how the inflated function of foreign knowledge reception in peripheral academies leads to distorted academic organizational developments. I draw on historical data on the philosophy discipline in modern Japan to illustrate this negative impact. I find that academic publishers in modern Japan exploited the inflated function of knowledge reception, enriching and empowering themselves to the point that they became a major network base, sponsor, and decision-maker of the discipline.

Keywords: Modern Japan, Academic stratification, Academic globalization, Academic publishers, Global hierarchy

1. Introduction

Sociologists of knowledge, examining academic stratification mainly in the national context, find that academic stratification is present among individual scholars, genders, networks, fields, and all kinds of scientific organizations (Zuckerman, 1988: 526). Those in the top stratum command a disproportionately large share of the material, human, and symbolic resources of a discipline, and their abundant resources in turn enhance their ability to produce research of superior quality and to remain in the top stratum (Merton, 1968; 1988). This stratification is caused by meritocratic and fair standards of resource allocation as well as particularistic and unfair ones (Allen, 1990; Bedeian and Feild, 1980; Cole, 1978; Crane, 1970). If academic stratification is prevalent and not completely fair in the American domestic context, one would expect academic stratification in the global context to be even more severe because numerous additional factors including national boundaries, cultural differences, communication and logistic complications, and academic networking difficulties are present to obstruct meritocratic mobility in the global context.

Media scholars have paid much attention to the issues of cultural imperialism, global cultural asymmetry, media imperialism, and the global digital divide (Schiller, 1992; Tomlinson, 1999). Because academic knowledge is not considered to be a media product and the academy not as a media organization, media scholars have not extended examination of global cultural asymmetry to the area of academic knowledge. Yet if media products such as serious news can be internationally stratified, there is no reason to assume that academic products such as research monographs are entirely immune from international stratification.

Although global academic stratification has not been systematically studied, it is a daily experience of academics outside the US and Western Europe. It is manifested in numerous structural aspects such as the predominance of American and UK universities (eg. in the two world rankings of universities), the use of the English language as the defacto official academic language, or the lion's share of US-based academic journals in scholarly databases and citation indices (Marginson and van der Wende, 2007). Global academic stratification is a central part of the reality of contemporary academia and it is becoming increasingly salient in the context of accelerating globalization. This essay aims to contribute to our understanding of global academic stratification through examining one of its major disruptive effects on peripheral academies: inflation of the knowledge reception function in local academic organizations.

It is my research design choice to approach global academic stratification through its effect rather than through providing empirical evidences to demonstrate that it exists. It is because I want to bracket contested theoretical definitions of stratification, hierarchy, and inequality as well as normative judgments of whether stratification is just or not. Additionally, I will not in this essay trace the origins of global academic stratification or explicate its sustaining mechanisms, though I think they are worthy undertakings for future research. What I wish to focus on is how global academic stratification practically impacts on the less developed academies of the world. With such a focus, I do not only clarify an unexplored aspect of global academic stratification, I also indirectly illustrate that global academic stratification exists and that it practically matters to knowledge production.

2. Global academic stratification impacting on peripheral academies

Academic organizations in a globally central country and those in a globally peripheral one can face very different institutional circumstances, operational functions, and legitimation opportunities even though the organizations in the two countries are similarly endowed. For example, the flagship universities of wealthy East Asian countries such as contemporary Japan, South Korea, and China enjoy huge budgets and highly-trained staff. Yet these universities host no internationally prestigious academic journals and they can hardly compete with Harvard or Cambridge in world university rankings.

Leading academic organizations in globally central countries perform the most rewarding and prestigious functions such as working on research frontiers and hosting leading journals. Those in the lower strata, peripheral countries are pressured to perform the less rewarding functions. For example, leading academic organizations in the periphery are compelled to divert resources from research frontiers to the less rewarding functions of translating, localizing, and disseminating the latest knowledge products from the center. They also have to invest a great deal of material and symbolic resources in cultivating a basic level of professional autonomy and cultural legitimacy in their own domestic social contexts. The negative impacts are often exacerbated by the self-reinforcing mechanisms of academic stratification. Once a global division of academic functions is formed and tacitly acknowledged, academic organizations in the global center will keep pursuing research frontier work while those in the global periphery will keep focusing on the less rewarding functions. As time goes on, academic organizations in the center become increasingly better equipped than those in the periphery in producing knowledge of superior quality, which in turn reinforces and justifies their occupation of the top international stratum.

3. An inflated role of peripheral academies: reception of knowledge produced in the academic center

There is a not very rewarding function of academic organizations that is often greatly inflated in the academic periphery: the reception of knowledge products made in the academic center. Knowledge reception is a regular component of the distributive and gatekeeping functions of academic organizations. It is present in most types of academic organizations, both in academic centers and peripheries. But in the context of peripheries, the reception of knowledge produced in academic centers represents a compulsory and particularly heavy workload. The element of gatekeeping is weak and reception is relatively passive. Notice that scholars and their organizations in academic centers have much more freedom in dealing with knowledge produced in the peripheries — that is why they can often afford to choose to ignore them. That is, these academic organizations have the option to choose to minimize their foreign knowledge reception function. This is especially true in the humanities and the social sciences, where foreign knowledge reception requires difficult prerequisites in terms of language and background knowledge.

With the knowledge reception function inflated, academic organizations in the periphery gear their activities and structure towards the dissemination of knowledge to audiences. Because of the additional technical requirements of cross-national communication such as translation, it takes a substantial amount of specialized resources and organizational restructuring to adapt themselves to the inflated function. This in turn strains their limited organizational resources. The negative consequences of the inflated function of reception are very visible and they are discernible in a wide range of organizations in the discipline of philosophy in modern Japan.

Dedication of organization resources to the inflated function was observable in libraries, departments, and professional journals and associations. Although a large portion of books in most libraries were in the native language, all leading universities had to make the effort to acquire a sizable Western language collection. The library of Kyoto Imperial University, for instance, increased the volume of its collection of Western books from 12 percent to 33 percent of the total from 1900 to 1940, and that of the library of Waseda University stayed at approximately 33 percent throughout the period (Kyoto Daigaku fusoku toshokan 1961:90, Waseda Daigaku toshokanshi hensan iinkai 1991: 254-5). Since domestic books were sometimes obtain for free from publishers and the prices of foreign books were higher than domestic ones, the actual percentage of funds of acquisition spent on Western books should have been even higher than those figures. For instance, the library of Waseda spent more than half of its funds for book acquisition on foreign books in the 1930s. While professional journals were supposed to be a channel for disseminating original research, some philosophical journals let translations of Western philosophical works occupy a considerable amount of their space and a few were actually specifically oriented to the translation and introduction of Western philosophy. Examples included

the journals Riso and Koza. Professional associations also devoted a significant amount of their resources to translation.

4. Academic publishers and knowledge reception in the philosophy discipline in modern Japan

The inflated receptive function impacts on the peripheral academy as a whole, affecting all major types of organizations in an academy including universities, academic departments, professional associations and journals, libraries, academic publishers, and research institutes. An important consequence is that the organizational types that are more structurally suited to perform knowledge reception than others in the organizational set are able to capitalize on the inflated function and gain a disproportionate share of resources of the discipline. With their increased share of resources in the discipline, they also tend to encroach on organizational functions that are originally specialized by other types of academic organizations. Academic publishers played such a role in the philosophy discipline in modern Japan. In this section, I examine how Japanese academic publishers extensively enriched themselves through the inflated function of knowledge reception and how their success distorted the distribution of authority and academic functions in the organizational ecology.

There are two organizational features of academic publishers that allow them to profit from the inflated function of knowledge reception more than others types of academic organizations. First, the specialized resources and organizational structural changes required by an academic publisher to adapt and take on an inflated receptive function are minimal. The academic publisher is originally an organization that specializes in knowledge distributive functions rather than productive ones. It does not maintain a specialized staff of academics, a library, or other overhead that would need serious institutional re-orientation in case of functional change. Second, an academic publisher is more capable than other organizations of nullifying the negative effects of the inflated knowledge receptive function on it. This inflated function jeopardizes the production of original knowledge, but the degree of originality of works that academic publishers publish is not highly dependent of two of the main goals of academic publishers: financial profit and socio-cultural influence. Most of the operations of an academic publisher — the printing of books, editorship, and administration — are also indifferent to the degree of originality of works they publish. In contrast, originality is essential to other academic organizations that focus on knowledge production as a main goal.

4.1 Academic publishers in modern Japan

In modern Japan, university presses were present but were neither extensively developed nor very receptive to philosophical works. For instance, the Waseda University Press was one of the largest university presses at the time, but it has not chosen to publish the philosophical journal organized by its own department of philosophy. Four commercial academic publishers — Iwanami shoten, Risosha shuppanbu, Omura shoten, and Kobundo shobo — developed a powerful presence in the discipline of philosophy. The establishment and growth of the first three especially heavily depended on their being able to profit from the increasing demand for Western philosophy.

Established in 1913, the Iwanami Press was the oldest, most financially successful, and most powerful in the discipline of philosophy among the four (Iwanami, 1964; Iwanami shoten, 1983). It expanded into many academic fields throughout the modern decades and became the largest academic publisher in modern Japan, but its initial success came from profitable publications on Western philosophy. The young intellectual and publisher Iwanami Shigeo started the risky publication project, the Iwanami Series on Philosophy, in 1915. His fledgling publishing business could have easily gone broke if the series was unprofitable, but he was convinced that the liberal cultural atmosphere in early 1910s Japan has created great demand for serious publications on Western philosophy. The magnitude of its success turned out to be phenomenal and it transformed Iwanami overnight into a financially established and prestigious academic publisher (Abe 1960: 140-3). The volume of sales went so much beyond expectation that the first three volumes of the series exhausted the paper supply reserved for all twelve volumes. The success prompted Iwanami and other publishers to invest in large projects of publication on Western philosophy.

Similar to Iwanami, Risosha and Omura presses gained business take-offs through doing large publication projects on the introduction and translation of foreign philosophy. The Risosha Press was a medium-sized publisher established on the financial and institutional basis of the intellectual journal Riso. The journal was established in 1927 by Okawa Seiichi, a lecturer and former graduate of the department of philosophy at Waseda. It focused on introducing foreign thought to a general intellectual audience. The first several issues gained immediate success both in terms of financial profit and popularity among the educated public. In editorials of the first few issues of Riso, it was said that reader response was unexpectedly enthusiastic. Riso apparently sold well as it was regularly announced that specific issues ran out and the journal could not accept any more back orders. Shortly after, Risosha Press turned into a publisher that specialized in publications of philosophy and social thought. Omura Gunjiro organized a journal, Koza, in 1919 that dedicated specifically to translations of important Western philosophical texts (Ide, 1963: 240-6). Since it lasted only until 1925, its influence on the discipline of philosophy was not as visible as the others, but its dependence on the inflated demand for foreign philosophy was similar to Risosha and Iwanami.

All of the four publishers gained academic authority and encroached on the functions of other major types of academic

organizations in the philosophy discipline in various ways. First, they became a key player in the production of knowledge through administering many large publication projects. Second, they gained significant command over the rewards system through providing a large amount of material resources to philosophers in terms of jobs and grants. Third, they played an importance role in the dissemination of research through operating house journals that feature philosophy as the primary subject. Fourth, they acted in the capacity of philosophical associations that provided cohesive institutional environment for scholarly networks. I elaborate each of the four processes below.

4.2 Publication projects and book series

There were many large publication projects of translations and introductory guides of Western philosophy in modern Japan. Although these publications did not have much claim to originality, most of them were packaged as more than mere reiterations of Western philosophy. They were marketed as serious, professional, and specialized knowledge. The first Iwanami Series on Philosophy provided a blueprint for subsequent publication projects. It featured introductory summaries of major fields in Western philosophy, a task that did not allow many personal and original elements, but the works were all written by highly recognized figures in their respective fields. The authors, including Abe Yoshishige, Abe Jiro, Ueno Naoki, Nishida Kitaro, and Tanabe Hajime among others, have gained professional reputations through original research and were too established to be regarded as mere translators. Most subsequent projects followed the example of the first Iwanami series and employed established philosophers as authors and/or very prominent philosophers as series editors.

The number of these publication projects was large and their coverage was broad. Iwanami's first project of translation of foreign philosophy was the Selected Works of Kant that began in 1925. The 18-volume series was edited by chaired professors of Tokyo Imperial and was translated by emerging young philosophers. A comparably large-scale project was the Complete Works of Hegel, the publication of which lasted from 1931 until after the Second World War. The second Iwanami Series on Philosophy was published between 1929 and 1932. Many series of lectures on various fields came out between 1930 and 1939. The first was a 12-volume series on intellectual thought and the seventh was an 18-volume one on philosophy. Miki Kiyoshi and Nishida Kitaro, the most recognized figures in the two respective fields at the time, were employed as editors of the two series. Translations of individual philosophical texts of the modern period, such as those of the German neo-Kantians, were continuously published by Iwanami since 1915. Several of them came out every year in the 1920s. The first project of translation of Risosha Press was a 20-volume Series on Major Modern Western Philosophical Works that began in 1929. It was edited jointly by Kaneko Chikusui and Kuwagi Genyoku, the leading Western philosophers in Waseda and Tokyo Imperial respectively. Individual German philosophy texts and a Series on Current European Philosophy began publication in the following years. Introductory guides that Risosha produced included a Lecture Series on New Philosophy, one on Anthropological Thought, a World History of Thought, and a Series on Philosophical Questions. In the short life span of the Omura press, it organized two publication projects, including a Series on Major Philosophical Texts and a series on Contemporary Essays on the Humanities. Its house journal can also be seen as a large and collective project of translation. Omura commissioned a group of established philosophers to translate philosophical monographs in small instalments and filled the issues of *Koza* with them. Kobundo was not as aggressive in organizing projects on Western philosophy because of its ties to indigenous schools of philosophy. It was responsible for only one series of translations on modern Western philosophy.

Because of the large number and wide scope of these book projects, they represented a considerable amount of the productive efforts of the philosophical community and allowed publishers to become as involved as others in the organization set in the productive function of the discipline. If not carried out under the initiation, administration, and funding of Iwanami, Risosha, and Omura Presses, the production of works in these projects would have been different. Some of these translations and introductory guides to philosophy would not have been written and others might have been produced at a slower rate, for example. The choice of works to be introduced would have also been less affected by the owners of academic presses, the series editors, the editorial staff of the presses, and the demand of the educated public.

4.3 An alternative reward system

The financial success of publication projects on Western philosophy guaranteed that editors, translators, and summarizers of Western philosophical works were in great demand. Japanese philosophers found themselves a rich and stable source of material rewards in academic publishers, a source that rivalled more conventional sources such as salaried positions at universities. Academic publishers functioned as major arbiters of rewards that are quite independent of the community of professional philosophers and the educated public audience. The Iwanami Press was most capable of functioning as an autonomous power in the rewards system of the discipline. Its behavior resembled research institutes that funded philosophical research without regard of immediate profit. Iwanami would discuss with established philosophers the appropriate kind of publication project to undertake and suitable philosophers to involve. Once those decisions were made, Iwanami would start making monthly payments to designated philosophers even before they wrote a single page.

The case of Tanaka Michitaro, a prominent specialist in Greek philosophy, illustrated this vividly. The young and yet to be established Tanaka was recommended to Iwanami for the job of translating the works of Plato. Tanaka, however, did not hand in the assigned translation until decades after the scheduled deadline (Tanaka, 1987). Although he already had received many months of commission without producing any work, Iwanami did not stop the funding or ask him to refund the commission. The case of Miki Kiyoshi demonstrated how the rewards of academic publishers constituted a significant alternative source of support to philosophers. Although recognized as a promising young philosopher in the 1920s, he failed in his bid for the position at Kyoto Imperial and hence was deprived of a chance to receive training abroad. Iwanami appreciated his potential and sponsored him to do several years of study in Europe. When Miki returned, he served as the chief editor of *Shiso* and various projects of Iwanami. Miki might not have been as successful and respected without training in Europe and exposure through the Iwanami press. Many other philosophers received small grants from Iwanami. When Watsuji Tetsuro, Tanabe Hajime and others left Japan for study abroad, they received a significantly large sum of *senbetsu* (pocket money to the departee) from Iwanami. From 1934 to 1936, Iwanami distributed special research grants, each worth a thousand yen, to ten scholars and students. Nishida Kitaro's niece and Tanabe Hajime were on the list. A large fund was established in 1940 through the private donation by Iwanami for supporting young scholars in fields including philosophy, with Nishida and Tanabe as two of the managers of the fund (Abe, 1960: 443-462).

4.4 House journals

The distributive function of academic publishers originally focuses on the publication of monographs, whereas that of professional academic journals lies in the gatekeeping of research through journal carriage. Even though academic publishers may contribute to the technical printing of professional journals, academic publishers do not usually control them. However, Japanese academic publishers encroached on the functions of professional journals in philosophy by producing house journals that featured philosophy as their major theme. The house journal *Koza* (Lectures) of Omura press was completely dedicated to philosophy, Risosha's journal *Riso* (Theory and Thought) also started out with a singular focus on philosophy but gradually extended to general intellectual thought as well, and Iwanami's *Shiso* (Thought) covered the humanities broadly with a discernible emphasis on philosophy.

These journals have been considerably successful in the competition with professional ones for manuscripts, readership, and prestige. Although *Riso* and *Shiso* catered to general intellectuals in addition to the professional community of philosophers, they were treated by professional philosophers as two of the most prestigious professional journals. Their prestige as a distributive channel for philosophical research was second only to *Journal of Philosophy* and *Philosophical Research*, the two leading professional journals of philosophy in modern Japan. Regular contributors of *Riso* and *Shiso* overlapped with those of *Journal of Philosophy* and *Philosophical Research*. Among their frequent contributors were Nishida Kitaro, Kuwagi Genyoku, and Kaneko Chikusui, the most prominent philosopher at Kyoto Imperial, Tokyo Imperial, and Waseda respectively. That even these three figures had to submit fairly frequently to the house journals despite the concurrent need to support their own department based professional journals showed how attractive these house journals were.

Established, operated, and funded by academic publishers, the house journals were partly autonomous from control by the discipline and community of philosophers. Most of the editors of *Riso* and *Shiso* were highly talented scholars that for one reason or another did not obtain a faculty position in philosophy departments. For example, the three most important editors of *Shiso*, Miki Kiyoshi, Watsuji Tetsuro, and Hayashi Tatsuo, were regarded as talented philosophers but also as renegades of the discipline who had ventured too far into general intellectual and cross-disciplinary activities. Another evidence of the relative autonomy of the house journals was the case of the journal *Shicho* (Tides of Thought), the predecessor of *Shiso*. Abe Jiro, an established liberal philosopher, convinced Iwanami and several fellow philosophers to organize *Shicho* in 1917. Iwanami decided to close down the journal in 1919, however, because he felt that it belonged too much to Abe and did not adequately coincide with the views and interests of the Iwanami press (Ikimatsu, 1981). *Riso* cultivated an image that distinguished itself from both the discipline and the general intellectual audience. It functioned as an informant on the latest trends of Western philosophy for both audiences and it later claimed to cover indigenous trends of philosophy as well. Most of its issues were organized around a philosophical topic or figure that had received recent attention in the West.

4.5 Providing an alternative organization basis for professional networks

As academic publishers controlled a large amount of rewards and wielded them autonomously in the discipline, philosophers formed networks on the basis of academic publishers as they would on the basis of professional organizations such as academic associations and professional journals. The network around Iwanami was sufficiently identifiable to earn the slightly derogatory appellation 'Iwanami batsu' (Iwanami clique). It outgrew from the earliest group of collaborators in Iwanami's large publication projects and from Iwanami's higher school friends who subsequently became philosophers. It was composed mostly of associate and chaired professors in Tokyo Imperial, Kyoto Imperial, and other imperial universities. The clique helped to reinforce the authority of these departments at the

expense of those in private universities. Another facet of the power of the Iwanami clique was illustrated through the Haraoka Incident. Haraoka Zoroku was offered a position in the newly established Tohoku Imperial, but members of the clique felt that the offer was unfairly secured through Haraoka's personal connection to the dean of Tohoku and that it upset the seniority system among the different generations of Tokyo Imperial graduates. Watsuji Tetsuro, a member of the clique and a senior to Haraoka, wrote a scathing critique of Haraoka's work that resulted in the withdrawal of the offer to Haraoka. The influence of the clique reached a peak around the early 1920s and gradually dissolved as a younger generation of scholars including Miki Kiyoshi and Hayashi Tatsuo replaced older philosophers as the chief editors of Iwanami.

Philosophers associated with Risosha did not form a very identifiable network because it did not offer as much resource as Iwanami. Nonetheless, it was clear that a specific group of younger and less established philosophers at Waseda, Kyoto and Tohoku Imperial, and Tokyo Arts and Sciences gained support from Risosha. Their articles were featured frequently in Riso and they became authors of publication projects initiated by Risosha. Omura press was too short-lived to have set up a network around it, but it gained the support of Ide Takashi, a professor of Tokyo Imperial. In contrast to the three Tokyo based academic publishers, Kobundo operated in the city of Kyoto. It cultivated connections to philosophers at Kyoto Imperial and convinced many members of the Kyoto school of philosophy to publish their works through it and to work for it as editors. Even Nishida Kitaro and Tanabe Hajime, long time contributors to Iwanami, began to publish their monographs through Kobundo beginning from the 1930s.

Apart from the four academic publishers, a book seller in modern Japan took advantage of the large demand for Western knowledge and gained a disproportionate amount of academic authority. Booksellers usually hold a negligible amount of academic authority, but Maruzen Book Company, the largest book importer in modern Japan, ascended to a recognizable presence in the discipline of philosophy through its efforts of importing Western books and journals. Maruzen accepted orders from individuals for purchases, published a monthly journal of information on Western books, and became the most convenient channel through which philosophers obtained specialized foreign publications. Although academics at the time often complained about its high prices, they prized it as an exceptionally bold and prescient selector of Western texts. Philosophers came to trust what was available in the bookstore as an approximate reflection of current trends of the discipline in the West. It became as important a gatekeeper in determining what and when philosophers read as libraries. And it also carried important books that libraries had overlooked. Its influence on the academic disciplines led philosophers to coin the term 'Maruzen-ism' in 1920s (Ide, 1963: 98).

5. Comparisons with the philosophy discipline in modern China

A comparison of the modern Japanese case to the modern Chinese one is instructive. Heavily influenced by old dynastic scholarship standards and practices, modern Chinese philosophers were generally less eager to internalize the latest philosophical developments in the West than modern Japanese philosophers (Chew 2005). One of the results was that academic publishers in modern China could not capitalize on an inflated knowledge reception in the discipline of philosophy; knowledge reception never became as inflated a function as it did in modern Japan. Many departments of philosophy in China, including those at Peking National, Qinghua, and Yenching, have more than half of their undergraduate courses specializing in topics in Western philosophy (Beijing Daxue zhaxue yenjiuxi, 1994; Xiao, 1987). Translations of Western philosophical work and introductory guides to Western philosophy occupied a significant percentage of the publications on philosophy in modern China, but to a lesser extent than that in modern Japan (Chew, 2000). Professional associations devoted some of their resources to translation. For instance, one of the few projects organized by the Chinese Philosophical Association in its short reign was the establishment of a national 'Committee on the Translation of Western Philosophical Works.'

Academic publishers in China did not prosper from foreign knowledge reception as much as Japanese ones did. While the big five publishers, including Shangwu, Zhonghua, Shijie, Kaiming, and Dadong presses, published more translations and introductory works of Western philosophy than others, their establishment and success did not depend on the publication of philosophical publications. Translations and introductory works to Western philosophy never gained a conspicuous presence as they did in Japan. Many of them were published without much editorial planning or as a part of general projects on Western academic texts. For example, translations of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel were published through a general translation series, Great Books of the World. There were few publication projects on philosophy apart from the one edited by Zhang Dongsun and published by the Shijie press. Although publishers were responsible for the mechanical process of publication, professional associations, departments, and individual philosophers initiated and administered most of these projects. For example, the Chinese Association of Philosophy organized an ambitious series of translation of Western philosophy and a part of it was published by Zhonghua. The rewards that academic publishers offered to philosophers were not especially rich. Whereas a philosopher in modern Japan who was willing to translate or write introductory guides to Western philosophy could expect to receive commissions as he began writing for a publisher, those in modern China could not. In some cases, they instead had to pay a deposit to the publisher for the publishing cost (Hou, 1985: 33). The five publishers did not cultivate close

personal ties to philosophers or establish house journals that focused on philosophy. The house journal of Shangwu, Dongfang zazhi, was comparable to Shiso as the foremost general intellectual journal in their respective countries. But in contrast to Shiso, articles on philosophy were not especially favored and the chief editors of the journal did not network with the discipline of philosophy.

There was an exceptional group of small publishers and booksellers that made full use of the demand in Western philosophy to cultivate themselves into a challenge to other academic organizations in the discipline, however. Most of these were the numerous socialist publishers who focused on Marxist philosophy and social thought. The most important of them include Shenghuo and Dushushenghuo presses, and there were an additional number of tiny, local, or short-lived ones. For example, there were thirteen affiliate publishers under Shenghuo, and five under both Dushushenghuo and Xinzhi. They did not have stable financial resources but they had ample organizational support and audience. Many of these publishers were run and supported by Marxist intellectuals and communist activists. Social enlightenment and political influence, instead of profitability, constituted the main criteria in their operation. Translation and introductory works in Marxist philosophy attracted a large extra-professional audience composed of students and the politically conscious public. The larger ones among these publishers were fairly successful at creating an alternative organizational space in the discipline to challenge mainstream professional organizations of philosophy. For instance, the journals Dushushenghuo and Shenghuo carried the very successful series of introductory articles to philosophy, 'Dazong zhaxue' (Philosophy for the People), written by Ai Siqi in the 1930s. The publishers provided the distributive channel upon which Ai could critique philosophers positioned in university departments. The series catapulted the young Marxist intellectual Ai to fame and brought professional appeal to Marxist philosophy. Another example was that intellectual journals including Dushushenghuo and others organized by the socialist publishers initiated and disseminated the important 'Debate on New Philosophy' that lasted from 1931 to 1934.

6. Conclusion

Viewed from the conventional perspective of intellectual history, academic publishers' important role in the philosophy discipline in modern Japan may well be regarded as interesting and even positive. At a first glance, those academic publishers did not appear to do anything harmful; they were only reacting to the educated public's demand for Western philosophical works. Even though they gained power over the philosophy discipline and control over professional philosophers, they did not appear to abuse it. Additionally, they provided an extra source of material resources for the discipline. However, viewed from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, modern Japanese academic publishers were interfering with disciplinary coherence, which in turn could disrupt scholarly network-building and complicate the processes of knowledge production. They were also setting up alternative rewards systems and organizational bases that fragment the disciplinary community. In the context of global academic stratification, modern Japanese academic publishers exploited the inflated function of knowledge reception to enrich themselves. Although they utilize their wealth and power to contribute to philosophical knowledge production, they did so in a particular way that reinforces global academic stratification. For example, by investing singularly and heavily on translations and introductions to Western philosophy, they unintentionally discouraged modern Japanese philosophers to focus on original knowledge and research frontiers.

The modern Japanese case that I analyzed is historical, but the findings based on it are also relevant to peripheral academies in the present. The foreign knowledge reception function is still much more inflated in the academic periphery than the academic center. While information and communications technological advances are probably lowering the per unit resources needed for receiving foreign knowledge, faster and more voluminous foreign knowledge reception is also expected. For example, the enormous amount of library resources required for acquiring Western academic journals is still a practical difficulty for peripheral academies. The reception of foreign knowledge still involves translation efforts and background understanding. That is why the scholarly communities of academic centers still import far less foreign knowledge than those in academic peripheries do. Academic publishers' exploitation of the inflated function of knowledge reception may perhaps not be replicated in contemporary times; their success in modern Japanese philosophy was specific to a particular discipline, nation, and historical period. But the inflated function of foreign knowledge reception could keep on burdening knowledge production in peripheral academies and further reinforcing global academic stratification.

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Discourse Analysis and Cultivation of Conversational Competence in English Class

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Abstract

The essay is to discuss in perspective of teaching how to apply the results of Discourse Analysis study to English class to train students for successful communication through taking turns, controlling turns, teaching exchange, organizing transaction, spreading topic and taking into account contextual factors as well in order to cultivate students' conversational competence.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Conversation, Conversational competence, Cultivation

The purpose of conversation is to exchange information, establish and maintain the relationship between people. The participants in a conversation always follow certain principles to develop towards some general directions. The goal of practical conversation in English class is to train students' language skills according with context to control conversational activities and develop their all-round conversational competence from short-turn to long turn and from transactional turns to intersectional turns, that is, the competence to apply their acquired language knowledge fluently and creatively to the communication with contextual consciousness. The essay is to discuss in perspective of teaching how to apply the results of Discourse Analysis study to English class to train students for successful communication through taking turns, controlling turns, teaching exchange, organizing transaction, spreading topic and taking into account contextual factors as well.

1. Taking Turns

Over these years, some linguists began to pay attention to analysis of language snippets larger than sentences, that is, to study how sentences build the larger and more meaningful units such as paragraphs and conversations. Thus the theory of Discourse Analysis has been created. J. Mch. Sinclair and B. M. Coulthard even discussed the structure and category of class communication to help teachers understand teaching process and evaluate teaching in order to make a further study into the relationship between teaching and learning.

H. Sacks, E. Scheloff, G. Jefferson developed the theory and method of Conversational Analysis, studied mainly the restrictive relation between the sender and receiver and relation between discourse and context. They also explored the principles and criterions that people should follow in communication and deepened the understanding of everyday life communicative speeches and that of rules, applied gradually to English class. H. Sacks thinks that a conversation consists of at least one turn-taking which has related meanings and is the basic structural unit of conversation and turn-taking is the basic element of conversation. In everyday conversations, some language signs are always used to imply that a turn is finished while another is ready to start. The evident problems that the students come across in English conversation is, no clear signs to imply the start and end of a turn, or taking turns in advance, or breaking conversation off. Turn-taking demands that speaker focus on what is going on attentively and adjust anytime his own discourse and predict that of the partner, which can make the conversation go smoothly. In the process, speakers, to some extent, can be thought to be competing each other for turns. Thus it is quite necessary to train the students how to enter turns, take turns, interrupt turns, holding turns, passing turns and withdrawing turns in order to successfully take part in conversational activities. Sacks concluded eight steps which can be applied to English class and has been proved efficient if it is used wisely. They are: (1) pre-planning a turn; (2) taking a turn; (3) interrupting a turn; (4) holding a turn; (5) passing a turn; (6) repairing a turn; (7) upshot; (8) close.

Ethnomethodologist E. A. Schegloff thinks that typical turn includes adjacent pairs, i.e. certain response that one of the speakers would make, such as, greeting---greeting, questioning---answering, complimenting---expressing thanks, etc. Each adjacent pair has two choices: preferred and dispreferred. Such as, invitation---acceptance or refusal, comment---agreement or disagreement, question---expected answer or unexpected one, etc. Generally speaking, in cooperative conversations, the dispreferred is used cautiously because it is high-structuralized dialogic frame and it is often put at the beginning or the end. We can design some brief adjacent pairs for the students to practice everyday

conversational formulae according to different contexts. Consequently, they can cultivate their short-turn conversational competence. For example,

A: Did you do well in your import and export business last year?

B: Yes, we earned \$5,500,000.

A: Oh, congratulations!

B: Thank you.

Apparently, there are two adjacent pairs in the conversation above, that is, question---answer and congratulate---express thanks. But there is a cross-pairs—A's feedback (Oh, congratulations!) to B's response (We earned \$5,500,000), which could be called statement---opinion pairs. If the speaker is not aware of it, the conversation will be interrupted after the first pairs, conveying only information without any social function.

Because adjacent pair is very structural conversation, it only fits the beginners in the early stage of their conversational practice. On that basis, students should be encouraged to add some necessary information or even creatively feed back the first part of the adjacent pairs, which can make the turns go on. For example, "Are these cakes fresh?" Besides the answer "Yes, they are." Creative answer could be "I bought them this morning. Help yourself."

Sacks, Scheloff, and Terasaki concluded several special sequences applied to turn-taking. They are pre-sequence, insertion-sequence, side-sequence, etc. (1). Pre-sequence is tentative discourse used to arouse the attention of others. It includes pre-request, pre-invitation, pre-statement, pre-disagreement, pre-addition, pre-statement, etc. In English conversational practice, teachers can provide some pre-sequence as models for students to prepare new turns consciously. For example, "we are having a party this afternoon." (offering invitation), "That's like what happened to me." (statement), "I'm afraid, I do not agree with you there." (disagreement), "Have you heard the one about..." (telling a story). (2). Insertion-sequence is used to insert another related topic in main conversational sequence and then return to the main topic. (3). Side-sequence is used to insert unrelated topic in main conversational sequence. Insertion-sequence and side-sequence are often used while doubt, addition, correction, giving tips or asking for clarification. Teachers should offer more chances for students to practice the sequences mentioned above. Students could be more active and find conversations more interesting, more informative with better expressing and understanding.

2. Teaching Exchange

Exchange is the basic unit of conversation. Exchange in class conversations generally includes two steps: initiation and answer. Sinclair, Coulthard, and Edmondson studied and analyzed the models of class conversations and drew a conclusion that conversational structural system model is made up of act, move, exchange, transaction and interaction. An act is a language action. A move is formed by one or more than one acts. It has complete meaning and function which is like a turn. An exchange is composed of more than two moves (initiation and response). Transaction is formed by exchanges while interaction by transaction. Class conversational model is formed by act, move, exchange, transaction and lecture. The "Three-Move Exchange" they created is typical class conversational structure between teacher and students, including teacher's initiation, students' response and teacher's follow-up.

Teaching is spread in a series of initiation-response-follow-up. The present problem is that the roles of teachers and students play are too much fixed. Teachers always control initiation and follow-up while students most of time are restricted to response. The conversations in real world need continuous response whereas active initiation and follow-up are demanded in more cases, which will benefit both the participants. Another difference between class conversation and everyday conversation lies in that teacher's follow-up attaches more importance to quality of discourse expressed for accuracy and preciseness while common speakers pay more attention to the content expressed for substantiation and novelty.

Besides the part of initiation in exchange training, teachers can also design functional activities to train students' skill of follow-up and response to different discourses. The following is a conversational sample designed to train students' response competence to the case in which the required information is not available.

A: Well, what happened in this country in the last six days?

B: I really can't tell you. I haven't read any newspapers.

A: Wasn't there a big event in politics?

B: Yes, it turned out the Democrats got a new leader.

A: Oh, I see, that interesting. Can you tell me more about it?

B: Awfully sorry. I heard it over the radio, but I was too tired and I don't remember.

A: Doesn't matter. What about Manchester United's game?

B: Sorry, I'm not interested in football.

A initiated B to tell what happened in the last six days. B didn't know and explained. No matter what point of view A initiated from, B's response was negative and reason must be given, which made the conversation complete turns.

By understanding the concept of exchange, students will cultivate reciprocity and interactivity, that is, exchange each other ideas and maintain the relationship with others, which the conversation avoids developing into one direction to monologue of teachers and a few talkative students.

3. Organizing Transaction

Transaction is part of a conversation which can achieve certain communicative functions or topics. One or more transactions form an interaction activity. Transaction possesses its specific function and topics. Class conversation, business conversation, telephone conversation, etc can be divided into several transactions according to different purpose and development, such as lecture transaction, business transaction, telephone transaction, etc. therefore, it's very important for the students to distinguish transaction and sentences made off and cuff. In order to cultivate the consciousness of transaction, what the teachers should do at least is to mark the lecture transactions in class in clear language to make the tasks of different parts of a conversation clear. This framing move make the lecture transactions clear in order to let students understand how the class is going. What the teachers should do the following is to design and organize all kinds of conversational activities that need several exchanges to finish, cultivating, and training students' ability to divide and build transactions themselves. There are two ways suggested: 1. one certain assignment is given to students to design and discuss the steps of each stage, such as the vivid conversational situation scenes in arranging a room, welcoming foreign guests, holding business talks, etc. 2. A transaction without beginning and end is given to the students to add the possible and suitable beginning and ends. In addition, students can be divided into groups or pairs to play roles in telephone conversation, visiting conversation and business conversation, etc. for more complicated transaction training, students could narrate or comment according to different structures of text, such as, narrate (personal experience, tales, and jokes, etc), descript(subjects), exposit(how to operate), persuade(not smoking) and argue.

4. Spreading Topics

Conversational topic is the theme of speech action. Conversation is a process in which a topic begins, spreads, ends and even new topic involves. A series of main topics and sub-topics make conversation related and coherent. The relevance is one of the cooperative principles that speakers should follow. Brown and Yule thought that, as a dynamic process, the topics of conversation include common topics and personal topics of the participants who spread the topics surrounding the common topics and express their own points of view and attitude. Thus, many sub-topics derive from main topics and more related sub-topics derive from sub-topics. Teachers should initiate the students through mind map to provide possible topics that can be derived from before doing conversational practice, which can enrich topic, make it coherent and avoid closing turns hastily.

5. Contextual Consciousness

Production and development of discourse is restricted by context while discourse creates new contexts. Context is knowledge beyond language including scene and background. The former generally includes time, place, topics, and relationship between the participants. The latter includes social rules in a certain culture, general knowledge of the world, mutual understanding of the participants, etc. as to the students, what is important is not to judge true or false but to pass information accurately and effectively. For example, "I am a man. My wife is a woman." There are no structural mistakes at all in the two sentences. But when it is used in such a context as self-introduction, it is meaningless and loses the function to pass information because it is common sense that husband is a man while wife is a woman. Therefore it's necessary to train students to take into account the factor of context when choosing topics and making sentences. In scene conversation and role-play, teachers should give correct language tips to students, guiding them to predict discourse of the partner according to context information and hold turns in with discourse suitable to the context.

In a word, in English class, real communicative scenes and necessity should be provided as many as possible for students to learn to communicate in communication. Meanwhile, teachers should apply useful theories of Discourse Analysis to English class conversational practice and cultivate students' all-round and flexible conversational competence.

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Innovating Our Higher Education Models Based on Experience in UK and USA

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Abstract

Our higher education need to innovate education models and actively connect every member in big social system, for example, enterprises, society and environment. This paper shows some new ideas on innovating educational development based on author's studying experience in UK and in USA.

Keywords: Industry university, Contract education, Higher education, Social system, Operation

UK and American are not only big but also strong countries in education. The top ten universities in the world are all in these two countries. Fortunately, as an academic visitor, I studied in both USA from March 2007 to March 2008 and UK from April 2001 to August 2002. During the period in both countries, I visited many top universities, such as Harvard University, MIT, Princeton University and Cambridge University, Oxford University, Birmingham University and experienced studying process and educational model in person. Based on the studying experience, this paper introduced educational models happening to universities in both countries, and then analyzed their educational features with system theory. Finally, this paper gave some new ideas on innovating our higher education models.

1. Industry University in UK

The British thinks that popular innovation and creation in the general public is more important than advanced invention in limited geniuses for making its country strong and rich. So, UK government provides its citizen with well educational equipment and environment and creates many valid study models to support its citizen for life study. And Industry University is one of many study models.

Industry Universities are organizations which offer wide range of services for learners and learning providers. Students in these universities are mainly adults who want or need to get continual further education, such as employees, managers, and all kinds of social labors. With modern internet and IT technology, Industry Universities can evolve open, long-distance or internet study service. The universities orientate to public education not gifted education, offer for life education not for graduate education, train skills or update knowledge of labors not theoretical research. It is mainly responsible for encouraging the public for life study with varied education models and flexible education time.

Industry Universities provide all levels education, from necessary skills of basic reading, writing and calculating to professional skills and business management knowledge as well. According to program of industrial development in UK, the universities firstly offer training in industries which urgently need to renew labors' skills or knowledge, for instance, industries in IT, auto parts industry and service industry for new technology and then expand their training to all other industries while needed.

With modern communication technology, industry universities can provide various study service or program by telephone, television, CD-ROM and internet for learners of all levels. By internet technology, learning users can easily and conveniently study any module at any time and at any place. Every module or course is split up into many small projects which answer unique question so that learners can easily study these courses for their selves. Hence, personalized study website can be created in order to give learners assistance, for instance, websites for studying basic skills, for getting professional skills, for improving skills or for learning new knowledge if needed. Learners can gain personalized study service while industry universities extend their courses information from campus to whole society. These convenient studying services make learners easily get courses knowledge which gave only on campus and also greatly increate study requirement from society and individuals for life. What's more, these services validly improve competitive ability of small-medium sized enterprises due to their employees' continuously studying new knowledge

and professional skills. Just like Mr. Gordon Brown (former financial minister in UK) said: industry universities are of the same function now which brings every enterprise and every individual opportunity for easily studying for life by modern communication technology as open universities provided the young in 1960' with getting higher education opportunity by TV set in family.

2. Contract Education in USA

Contract education originated in southern states in USA in 1960' is one kind of prevalent training model of vocational education. Through development of many years, contract education has been one of important education models and also trained many good skill labors for American economic growth.

According to the requirement of enterprises, contract education provides training program mainly in two kinds of models. One is for adults of looking for jobs called training-for-job and the other one is for employees of improving skills called training-for-promotion. The former tries to make adults of having no work experiences or of wanting a new job gain skills needed for new job, for instance, skills of operating computer, maintaining machines or equipment, repairing buildings or servicing advice. And the later is mainly for employees' getting new knowledge, operating new equipment, learning new technology process and so on. So enterprises get stronger competence to challenge increasing competition and employees get better ability to meet requirement of new positions or higher managerial positions by training-for-improvement.

Teaching in contract education is flexible for meeting different learners or enterprises. Colleges often innovate existed teaching models with modern IT and internet technology and create some personalized teaching, such as discussing in small group, talking face to face, giving courses in class, opening forums, studying in practice and so on while needed. So, many enterprises or companies in USA connect colleges like these to train their employees or managers not rely on their selves.

Programs in contract education are also flexible and adjustable according to local industrial structure and economical development. Colleges provide different learners with various "program package" for their personalized study. For example, knowledge of computer and mechanics-electronics integrated technology were offered for American IT industries development in 1960', and knowledge of business management, marketing, software design and accounting were given for pulling service industries in 1980', and then knowledge closed relationship to local main industries were provided since 1990'.

Thinking features of skill training, many part time instructors or professors in contract education are technicians, engineers, business managers directly from companies, enterprises and advice organizations. And they not only give some courses in campus but also make training programs to meet wide range of increasing economic development and changing technology progress.

3. Thinking in System Theory

Thinking of teaching views existed between industry universities in UK and contract education in USA, we are easy to find there are two things in common. One is that colleges or universities think them selves as a member of big society system and build very close relationship and various operation with other members of big society system, for example, local government, enterprises, companies and service organizations. And the other one is that study on campus is only a very small part, not all, for life study because they think that high quality of general public is more important for making their countries strong and rich.

The system theory suggests that system can emerge many special characteristics such as wholeness and openness when members in system have continually dynamic interaction or they disappear at once. These characteristics, called as "new" or "emergent", mean that "the whole is more than the sum of parts". In other words, these characteristics may not be simply derived from the characteristics of isolated actor. For example, the non-inflammation of H₂O molecule is a new characteristic emerged from the interaction between an atom of hydrogen (inflammation) and an atom of oxygen (combustibility) and is not available for isolated hydrogen or oxygen element. By understanding the inherent nature of system, we can suggest that connect among colleges with other members of big social system enable education to gain a greater number of external recourses needed in development. These recourses emerge potential for innovation when they are exchanged, perfected, congregated among system members so education can greatly improve its capacity to innovate in specific ways.

4. Implications to Innovate Our Education Model

With IT and internet technology used in education industry, present teaching views and models has been greatly challenged. Universities not only give learners knowledge but also, what's more, develop learners' imagination and creativity because knowledge is limited but creativity is unlimited. So in internet society, colleges and universities should innovate teaching views to face increasing challenge.

4.1 Being a member of big social system

Colleges and universities should think their selves as a member of big social system and actively develop deep operation with companies, government, and service organizations with wide range of scope. Guide of governmental policies, need of enterprise and assistance from society can make education be full of activity. Society has made direct and big contribution to provide and accept students from universities and universities should try their best to build sustainable education system for the public for life study.

4.2 Building platform of information exchange between universities and enterprises

In traditional education view, campus is unique place of innovating, creating and diffusing information, knowledge and technology. In traditional operation with enterprises, colleges and universities cultivate students with academic degree, train employees and provide research achievement for enterprises, whereas enterprises choose to accept “products” from universities. In fact, these views and operation implicate a deep meaning which only campus can create and develop knowledge, whereas enterprises are only accept and digest knowledge. To a great extent, they limit or close access for colleges and universities to get external resources and knowledge needed in higher education development.

Colleges and universities should actively extend operation with enterprises in many ways. A kind of platform should be built for staff in universities and employees in enterprises to keep no-distance touch so that staff conveniently explores implicit knowledge in practice and also put their research achievement into production. Staff’s research or professional knowledge are trained or updated not only on campus but also in enterprises, for example post-doctor research station, teaching research station built on the first production line in enterprises. By doing so, it is more effectively for staff to transfer their research into money and for enterprises to generate innovation thought. On the other hand, successful business managers or engineers with rich experience should get into campus as part time instructors and give students knowledge from their practice and work. The platform builds a bridge for exchange of knowledge and information between campus and enterprises to create new knowledge.

4.3 Developing close relationship between universities and government

In present models, governments at all levels guide and control development of universities by making relative policies and transferring financial money to them whereas universities do routine work and make program based on government benefit. This means that governments are recourses’ holders and distributors of policies, funding, information and labors whereas universities are only users and takers of various recourses. They limit or constrain universities innovational insight.

Universities should develop close relationship in many ways. For example, they should try to create more opportunities to take part in local decision on social development, economic growth, and technological improvement. Therefore they enable to train their students to meet social need. Whereas government turn to paying more attention on how to create good environment for university development just as Xu Guanhua, former minister of Ministry of Science and Technology, said: Government function is to build good environment, to perfect service and to create helpful culture for social innovation development. Just like mushrooms, they can naturally grow when temperature and moisture are appropriate.

5. Conclusion

Higher education is a kind of social behavior and need to interact with other actors in all social fields. So colleges and universities should put their selves into big social system and develop more operation with enterprises, government and service organizations with wider range to transfer external resources into internal development opportunity more effectively.

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Adult Participation in Self-Directed Learning Programs

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explain the various concepts related to self-directed learning and also the various theories and models regarding adult participation and also non-participation in self-directed learning programs. Because of the extensive amount of previous literature and research findings dealing with self-directed learning, it is necessary to synthesize the relevant literature so that it can be useful as a basis for this and also for further research in this field. Conceptualization of self-directed learning will be reviewed in the wider and broader perspective. Also reviewed will be the development of self-directed learning, the definitions and characteristics of self-directed learning. Different conceptualization and factors contributing to adult participation in self-directed learning will be touched. In order to design an instrument and to develop a conceptual model, which adequately reflects those factors that have been reasonably determined to be relevant, it is felt that there was a need to identify those variables or factors, reported in earlier studies, which have been found to be significantly associated with adult participation in self-directed learning.

Keywords: Self-directed learning, Adult participation, Distance learning programs

1. Introduction

In 1961, Cyril Houle commented, adult learners are goal oriented, activity oriented or learning oriented. Malcom Knowles (1970) in his book entitled 'Modern Practice of Adult Education' postulates that adults are self-directed in other areas of their lives, and therefore they prefer self-directed learning. He also presented with the assumptions of

andragogy, which explain the characteristics of adult learners. From 1971 to 1979 Allen Tough with his famous 'Adult Learning Projects' did an extensive research on 'adult self-learners', especially focusing on how they learn, how many learning projects they complete on their own per year and also the resources they used for learning. The study found that, median of eight learning projects per year and seventy percent were self-planned. In the year of 1989, Sandra McCune in her study entitled 'A Meta-analytic Study of Self-direction in Adult Learning' identified most frequently used research tools (Guglielmino's SDLRS and Tough's interview schedule). She also verified a variety of variables associated with self-direction in learning across studies using different methodologies.

In 1984, Lorys Oddi developed an instrument to measure self-directed and continuing learning of professionals (Oddi Continuing Learning Inventory). Breckett and Hiemstra in 1991 came out with a 'Personal Responsibility Orientation Model' which suggests individuals taking responsibility for their own learning is central. According to them, self-directed learning can be seen as both an instructional method (self-directed learning) and a personality characteristic (learner self-direction). They also further lamented, the 'social context' in which the learning itself takes place is also important. Gerald Grow developed a model of four stages of readiness for self-direction learning in 1991 and followed by a self-direction learning perception by Jane Pilling-Cormick in 1996. In 1996, Gary and Sharon developed another learner profile called 'Learner Autonomy Profile'.

In 1988, Caffarella and O'Donnell introduced five categories of self-direction in learning. The first was on the nature of the philosophical perspective of the process (conceptual perspective of the process). The second was on the verification studies (descriptive investigations of learning process) followed by the nature of the method of self-directed learning. Nature of the individual learner was the fourth category and the final category was about policy questions. Merriam and Caffarella in 1999 looked at self-directed learning on three broad categories. The first category is related to goals of self-directed learning. Second is examining self as a process or form of study. The third category is considering self as a personal attribute of the learner.

In sum, the earlier research considered to be less interactive and found to be guided by linear model approaches which move from diagnosing needs to identifying resources and instructional formats to evaluation outcomes. The previous studies mainly focus on the three important aspects of adult learning. They are the goals, the process and the learner itself. The work of Merriam and Caffarella, which open the eyes of the adult learners and the adult educators especially explained the development of the learners' capacity to be self-directed, fostering of the transformational learning and also the promotion of emancipatory learning and social actions (social context). From teacher-centered approach in pedagogy the dimension of adult learning moves into a new paradigm of learner-centered approach in andragogy. The adult learners have more control and authority of their own learning and they are responsible for all their personal learning. Self-directed learning becomes an important aspect in the adult lifelong learning. They want to plan their own learning activities. They also want to have a full control of their personal learning and also the resources they choose for their various learning activities. In final, the adults have more power in creating their own path in the journey of continuous learning throughout their life.

2. Self-Directed Learning

Caffarella (1993) have commented that, self-directed learning has contributed to our understanding of learning by identifying an important form of adult learning and providing insights into the process of learning, challenging to define and debate the salient characteristics of adult learners and expanding the thinking about learning in formal settings. She further lamented, self-directed learning does not necessarily mean solitary learning or isolation. Rather, the adults in this type of learning seek assistance in the form of human and material resources like friends, colleagues, experts in the content areas, books, magazines, journals and other audio-visual materials.

Knowles (1975) has identified self-directed learning is often been used to describe as a form of study in which people take the primary initiative, with or without the help of others, for planning, conducting, and evaluating their own learning activities. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) pointed out that self-directed learning is a form of study in which learners have the primary responsibility for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences. Kasworm (1983b) cited in Merriam and caffarella (1991) proposes that self-directed learning "represents a qualitative evolvement of a person's sense of cognitive definition and developmental readiness for ambiguous and non-defined actions". Chene (1983) offers three elements that characterize an autonomous or self-directed learner: independence, the ability to make choices, and the capacity to articulate the norms and the limits of a learning activity.

Based on the ongoing works on self-directed learning, Knox (1986) identifies several characteristics of adult learners that can enable educators to plan and organize learning activities around adults' background and aspirations whether in the formal or non-formal situations. These characteristics may be grouped under four categories: enhancing proficiencies, development and learning, influences on participation, and the importance of active learner participation. Rogers (1986) delineates four characteristics of this adult natural learning process. Firstly, this form of learning may not be continuous, i.e., episodic in nature depending sometime on whether the purpose is achieved. Secondly, the learning goal is usually concrete or to solve some immediate problem of importance. Thirdly, in pursuing self-directed learning,

each adult adopts one own learning style and a range of strategies employed is typical of adults than by other group of learners. Fourthly, since self-directed learning is directed toward specific goals, adult learning tends to focus on how to cope with the particular situation rather than the general principles. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) mentioned that Tough and Knowles were among the pioneers to describe how adults go about learning on their own and elaborate on the key decision making points about choosing what, where and how to learn. They were the first to urge that learner self-direction be incorporated into organized learning for adults. Greater learner control means that learners are given the time and opportunity to think about what they want to learn (that is meaningful or useful to them), how they want to go about learning (techniques, resources needed, location, and pacing), and which criteria will be used, and in what ways, to determine whether the learning experience was satisfactory and worthwhile.

Brockett et al (1991) provided with distinct ideas that incorporated the concept of self-directed learning; a self-initiated process of learning that stresses the ability of individuals to plan and manage their own learning, an attribute or characteristic of learners with personal autonomy as its hallmark, and a way of organizing instruction formal settings that allows for greater learner control. They also have suggested that the focus of learning is on the individual and self-development, with learners expected to assume primary responsibility for their own learning. The process of learning, which is centered on learner need, involved in the learning process, their most important role is to act as facilitators or as guides, as opposed to content experts.

3. Theories of Self-Directed Learning

Knowles (1975) mentioned that, underlying all attempts to engage adults in self-directed learning are the beliefs that (a) self-directed adults will learn more, learn better, retain, and make better of learning than do reactive learners; (b) effective adult living requires lifelong, continuous, effective, and creative self-guided learning; and (c) the motivations, attitudes, inner resources, and skills needed to engage in this lifelong learning can be developed and enhanced by participating in well-designed learning situations that give the opportunity to practice them in conscious way. Also underlying these programs is the hope that self-directing adults to gain greater control over their own destinies both in their personal lives and in society (Herman, 1982).

Knowles (1975) compares the assumption on which self-directed learning is based with those of teacher-directed learning in the areas of concept of the learner, role of the learner's experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation. He makes similar comparisons on "process elements" of climate, planning, diagnosing needs, setting goals, designing a learning plan, learning activities, and evaluation. Boud (1981) made a clear statement of working assumptions as a composite from his own work and his study of a number of programs in several countries. His list of assumptions is divided into three groups; the nature of autonomous learning, characteristics of students, and role of teachers.

Gugilielmo (1977) cited in Griffin (1989) has developed a self-directed learning readiness scale, reflecting eight factors: openness to learning opportunities, self-concept in an effective learner, initiative and independence in learning, informed acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning, love of learning, creativity, future orientation, and ability to use basic study skills and problem-solving skills.

Taylor (1981) reports her findings that adult learners in a self-directed learning course experienced four phases in their learning: detachment, divergence, engagement, and convergence; these four phases contain ten critical points in the learning process. According to Brookfield (1986), "The most fully adult form of self-directed learning...is one in which critical reflection on the contingent aspects of reality, the exploration of alternative perspectives and meaning systems, and the alteration of personal and social circumstances are all present." Hammons and Collins (1991) cited in Merriam (1993) operationalized this critical learning notion of critical practice. They emphasize reflective thinking as a key part of each component of their model as well as include within their "analysis" component an in-depth look at the "structure and functioning of the society in which we work" so that learners can better understand and respond to the context that, at least in part, shapes what and how they learn.

4. Adult Participation Theories

The central assumption is that learning in adulthood means growth in self-direction and autonomy (Candy 1991; Chene 1983; Kasworm 1983; Knowles 1980) cited in Merriam (1999). One of the four major tenets of andragogy is "the adults have a deep psychological need to be generally self-directing". The learner characteristic of adults has become for many adult educators, including self-directed distance learning program providers one of the major goals of their instructional processes; allowing and, in some cases, teaching adults how to take more responsibility and control in the learning process. These two theories are generally emphasized on the adult's life situation- about their experiences, roles and responsibilities. Arshad (1993) asserts that these particular four theories perhaps reveal more about the true characteristic and the motives for participation in adult self-directed learning or continuing education.

There are many studies of motivation for participation in adult education view it as defined by the goals adult learners hope to reach by means of participation, such as job advancement, acquisition of a new skill, or development of new

friendships (Houle 1961; Courtney 1991; Cross 1981; Collins 1985). The question of participation in adult learning programs especially focusing on self-directed learning programs then becomes a matter not of ascertaining what it is that the adults want to learn or what teaching and learning strategies are most suitable in view of the special characteristics of adult learners, but rather of establishing which factors dispose some people to regard adult education as a good thing, others to see it as irrelevant to their lives, or boring, or snobbish.

To answer the question “why” adults participate in self-directed learning programs needs an understanding of adult learning motivation. This requires a closer look into several learning theories namely Andragogy Theory, Characteristics of Adult Learners Theory, Margin Theory and Proficiency Theory. The first two theories, Knowles’ Andragogy and Cross’s Characteristics of Adult Learners can be categorized as adult learners’ characteristics theories. Knowles’ (1980) theory was based upon certain assumptions, all of which are characteristics of adult learners as follows:

- Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They need to be free to direct themselves. Their teachers must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. Specifically, they must get participants' perspectives about what topics to cover and let them work on projects that reflect their interests. They should allow the participants to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership. They have to be sure to act as facilitators, guiding participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts.
- Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. They need to connect learning to this knowledge/experience base. To help them do so, they should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic. They must relate theories and concepts to the participants and recognize the value of experience in learning.
- Adults are *goal-oriented*. Upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goal they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an educational program that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Instructors must show participants how this class will help them attain their goals. This classification of goals and course objectives must be done early in the course.
- Adults are *relevancy-oriented*. They must see a reason for learning something. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. Therefore, instructors must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins. This means, also, that theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. This need can be fulfilled by letting participants choose projects that reflect their own interests.
- Adults are *practical*, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work. They may not be interested in knowledge for its own sake. Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job.
- As do all learners, adults need to be shown *respect*. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

Boshier and Collins (1985) suggested that a six-factor model was the most theoretically and psychometrically defensible in understanding the need for adults participating in any form of adult learning including self-directed learning programs. According to them, the adult participants were deemed to enroll or participate because of a need for:

- Social contact: these participants want to make and consolidate friendships, to be accepted by others, to gain insight into personal problems, to improve relationships and their social position. They participate because of their need for group activities and congenial friendships.
- Social stimulation: participants enrolled for this factor want to get relief from boredom, overcome the frustration of day-to-day living, to escape intellectual narrowness, to have a few hours away from other responsibilities. The essence of the factor is the use of adult education as an escape from boredom or frustration.
- Professional advancement: participants enrolled for this factor want to secure professional advancement, higher status in their job, or knowledge that will help in other courses. They are primarily job oriented.
- Community service: participants enrolled for this factor want to become more effective as citizens, to prepare for community service, to gain insight into human relationships, and to improve their ability to participate in community work.
- External expectations: participants enrolled for this factor are complying with the instructions of someone else. They are enrolled on the recommendation of some authority who is usually an employer, social worker, friend, religious head or counselor.
- Cognitive interest: participants enrolled for this factor enjoy learning for its own sake. They merely want to “satisfy an enquiring mind” or “seek knowledge for its own sake”.

Cross (1981) postulated the CAL theory. This theory was mainly based upon two categories of variables, personal

characteristics and situational characteristics. The personal characteristics include the psychological stages. These were presented along a continuum, which reflects growth from childhood to adulthood. The situational characteristics on the other hand, focuses on variables that unique to the adult's participation in self-directed learning activities namely, part-time versus full-time versus compulsory participation. The adult learning is therefore based on the interactions of these two variables. Generally, the theory was considered comprehensive and holistic in explaining "what and how" adults learn, but the variables were broadly defined and it has yet to be empirically tested (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991).

Mc Clusky's Margin theory cited in Merriam (1991) assumes that the adult's "load of life" needs to be balanced-up with the adult's "power of life". Load of life here represents the adult's development, roles, problems and various other responsibilities. Power of life refers to the knowledge and skills that an individual needs in life. If power of life is greater than the load of life, there is a "margin in life".

Knox (1980) defines "proficiency" as "the capability to perform satisfactorily if given the opportunity". This performance in all tasks involves same combination of attitude, knowledge and skill. Adult motivation and achievement in both learning activities and life roles depend largely upon the discrepancy between the current and the desired level of proficiency. The purpose of adult learning is therefore to enhance proficiency in order to improve performance and effectiveness.

5. Barriers to Participation

Within the literature of adult learning a good deal of attention has been given to 'non-participation' as well as to 'participation'. As McGivney (1993) comments, a common finding in participation research is that non-participants have little or no knowledge of the educational opportunities available. One way of looking at some of the barriers to participation is to differentiate between situational, institutional and dispositional factors as discussed further. These are called the perceived barriers to learning according to Smith (2002) in his article entitled "participation in learning projects and programs". He provided the following barriers;

(1) *Situational barriers*: those arising from one's situation at a given time.

- Lack of money- the cost of studying, the cost of child care and so on.
- Lack of time, for example, because of job and home responsibilities.
- Lack of transport to study venue.

(2) *Institutional barriers*: those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage adults from participating in learning activities.

- Inconvenient schedules or locations for programs
- Lack of relevant or appropriate programs
- The emphasis on full-time study in many institutions.

(3) *Dispositional barriers*: those related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner.

- Feeling 'too old' to learn.
- Lack of confidence because of 'poor' previous educational achievements.
- Tired of school, tired of classrooms (Cross, 1981).

Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) cited in Cervero (1988) studied a statewide sample of physical therapists, medical technologists, and respiratory therapists, and, using the statistical procedure of factor analysis, found six types of deterrents to adult participation in self-directed learning activities. Akintade (1985) cited in Cervero (1988) also obtained similar results with two statewide samples of social workers. In Scanlan and Darkenwal's study (1984) cited in Cervero (1988), the first deterrent was labeled *disengagement* and reflected a general apathy toward participating in self-directed learning programs. The second deterrent denoted a general dissatisfaction with the quality of available programs and was called *lack of quality*. The third deterrent, *family constraints*, relates to adults' extra-occupational responsibilities, such as parenting. The *cost of attending programs* was the fourth deterrent identified. The fifth type of deterrent was that adults failed to see the relative worth of participating in adult education; it was labeled *lack of benefit*. The sixth reflected the conflicting demands on adults' work time, particularly scheduling difficulties, and was called *work constraints*.

6. Conclusion

Much of the research done on self-directed learning activity particularly related to successful E-learners suggests that adult students who are attracted to this type of learning share certain common characteristics, including that they are

voluntary seeking further education, are highly motivated, have high expectations, are more self-disciplined, are independent, are active learners, possess good organizational and time management skills, and can adapt to the new learning environments. They tend to be older than the average student do and have a more serious attitude towards their courses, education and learning. They are working more flexible schedules. They are not necessarily looking for campus-based educational and social opportunities. Consequently, they bring with them a different set of assets and expectations to the learning process (Lyman, 1999; Palloff and Pratt, 2001; Willis, 1993). A comprehensive questionnaire on motivating factors in E-learning was designed by Kamal and Lee (2003) to obtain views of adult students pursuing degrees from University Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR). The empirical research done for this study revealed that the top five motivating factors in choosing self-directed learning program through E-learning course were as follows: (a) It fulfills the need for increased flexibility; (b) It fulfills the need for geographical independence; (c) Web-based environment can potentially offer many opportunities for enriching the adult learning process-can have the world at your fingertips; (d) E-learning suits the rapidly changing nature of knowledge; and (e) E-learning offers temporal independence (learning can be done anytime convenient to the students).

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The Effect of Changes and Innovation on Educational Improvement

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Abstract

All organizations require constant change and innovation for improvement. Educational changes are often perceived as being so problematic, that is, it is not the nature of the change itself but the nature of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of those involved and the way that these are expressed in action. Educational reforms involve many aspects like human resources, teaching method, finance and lost potential. Change and innovation is a hard and long-term process. Any progress in history is the result of change and innovation.

Keywords: Educational change, Innovation, The nature of the change

1. Defining change

There are almost as many conceptions of the change process as there are writers on the subject, but despite this there are some broad areas of agreement on it.

Robbins & Delenzo (2001:230) give the definition of change: “Change is an alteration of an organization’s environment structure, technology or people.”

“Change can be described as the adoption of an innovation, where the ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practices”. (Carlopio, 1998:2).

Bell & Ritchie (2002:157) state that change is the way people improve. It is not going to go away nor should it.

Fullan (1992:22) claims, “Change is a process of learning new ideas and things. It is learning to do and learning to understand something new”.

Of all the definitions, people are given an idea that change is a process of improving your practice. The process of change is complex, with many different types change possible. Further, there are a number of different strategies for implementing these changes, with the success of implementation being highly variable. Handling change is not easy and can sometimes a painful process. Therefore implementation is the most important procedure in the change.

2. The need for change

People need change to improve their work. Robbins & DeCenzo (2001:231) pointed out that factors that drive change are both external and internal forces that constrain managers.

These forces also bring about the need for change. In educational institutions,

changes are imposed from outside or motivated by internal pressure. The ultimate goal of change is to make practice better or more effective in the work.

Preedy et al (1997:69) mentioned three perspectives on education force the need to change: the technological, the political and the cultural.

The technological assumes a rational view of the world. People live in non-rational world, most educational policy assumes a rational logic: If A happens then B will follow. When the “if-then logic does not work, it is common to resort to ‘if only’ statements. If only X had not happened, then B would have occurred. The problem with ‘if-then and if only’ thinking is twofold: 1) it only rarely mirrors reality, and 2) it encourages individuals to externalise blame and not take action themselves. Be this as it may, the technological approach continues to be the dominant perspective, and by trying to pretend otherwise one also falls into the ‘if-only’ trap.

The political perspective emphasizes that educational change inevitable involves conflict. Change by its very nature involves certain individuals and groups doing new things, which inevitably disturb the status quo.

The culture perspective is concerned with the social setting in which innovation intervenes. It demonstrates a commitment to the everyday reality, the cultural norms that are disturbed when innovation threatens.

Swenson (1997), cited by Credaro (2001) notes that external force refers to 'globalisation' of society has produced an imperative for continual reappraisal of practices in order to maintain a competitive edge. In educational terms, this may be interpreted as the need to update practices in keeping with the findings of international research, and to continually conform to national trends.

Internal to the school are the pressures brought to bear by curricular reform. Further, alterations in staff---student relationships from teacher-centred to student-centred create the need for modification of teaching practices, and policies and procedures.

3. The change process

Change management is the core activity in realising organisational goals, whilst implementation is the practical or physical process of delivering an innovation. Change is ongoing process of delivering an innovation. According to Fullan (1991:117), "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think---it is as simple and as complex as that." Many people have written about managing change in organizations. (e.g. Eason 1985; Fullan,1991; Whitaker 1993). The origins of a change and its nature will clearly affect teachers' responses and subject leaders' approaches to managing it. In the change process, people and relationship are the major components to successful implementation. Support mechanisms are required to achieve an improvement in practices and procedures.

Therefore, managing change involves identifying needs, planning, implementing plan and evaluating the success of the change. In the changing process, leaders are the key role in managing the change. They should facilitate each element of the change process and looking for opportunities to delegate in order to make their staff be involved in the change process. MacGilchrist et al (1997), cited by Bell & Kitchie (2002:60) offer some key messages about change:

It takes time.

- A school's capacity for change will vary.
- Change is complex.
- Change needs to be well led and managed.
- Teachers need to be the main agents of change.
- Pupils need to be the main focus of change.
- Change agent refers to people who act as catalysts and assumes the responsibility for managing the change. The processes are called change agents. (Robbins & DeCenzo: 232)

The above messages give us a clear change process and the positions of teachers and students in the change process. It is well known that not all changes are successful. A successful change in school can take place simultaneously through: first subject leaders should have a plan; and then practise the plan. The implementation will involve behaviours, beliefs and attitudes.

Fullan (1991: 105-109) provides a set of assumptions as follows:

- Don't assume that your ideas about changes are the ones that ought to be implemented.
- Assume that individual who are attempting to implement changes will continually need clarification about them in order to make sense.
- Assume that successful change will inevitably involve some conflict and disagreement.
- Assume that people will only change if there is pressure to do so, a supportive environment, and opportunities to share experiences with others in similar situations.
- Assume that it will take two or three years for significant change to take place.
- Don't assume that the change itself has been rejected if it fails to be implemented---there may be other factors, which have contributed to the failure.
- Assume that it is impossible to bring about widespread change in a school: aim to increase the number of people affected.
- Don't assume that knowledge can be the sole basis for decision. They will usually be based on a combination of knowledge, politics and intuition,
- Assume that change will be fraught with problems and new challenges.

Therefore any change in education may not seem to be as simple as it seems. The implementation will take longer and people need time to understand it. Change and innovation is a complicated process. Fullan (1993:46) notes that

education reforms are “hard to conceive and even harder to put into practice”.

4. Barriers to effective change

It has been recognized that not all change is improvement, but all improvement involves change. Effective change to any educational institutions is not an easily obtainable goal. During the change process, dynamics in operations may resist the proposed change, such as school culture, the lack of holistic approach, absence of follow-up or support and even the process of change itself all present barriers to achieving effective change.

There are many barriers to effective change. One-way people have the ideas of change; on the other hand, they worry about failure. Newton & Tarrant (1992:191) pointed out that resistance is as natural as a phenomenon as change itself. Plant (1987), cited by Newton & Tarrant (ibid), outlines a number of factors that can fuel resistance and unwillingness to change which including the following:

- Fear of the unknown
- Lack of information
- Threat to core skills and competence
- Threat to power base
- Fear of failure
- Reluctance to experiment
- Reluctance to let go

These resistances have great effect on the process of change and innovation.

5. School culture

Handy (1988), cited by Dunham (1995, p.44), describes of four different types of culture in the school: Power, role, task and person.

Power culture has a central power figure surrounded by ever widening circles of power and influence, just like a spider's web. The ability of the person in the centre is the key to understanding how these relatively small organizations function.

Role culture is as carefully and thoroughly organised as a bureaucracy, which is closely resembles. It is managed by means of an organization chart which defines the role occupants, their job descriptions, who they are responsible to, who they are responsible for and so on.

In task culture, specialist groups or teams together to solve, particular cross-curricular problems or achieve specific multic-disciplinary objectives. Person culture puts the individual first and makes the organization the resource for the individual work.

Obviously different resources affect school culture. Change in a school will involve many aspects. A school has many small groups. They may have different ideas among them. This raises the possibility that not all groups can understand the implications and for the change, and thus will not effectively participate in the process of change. Fullan (1991, p.XIV) pointed out, ‘ It isn't that people resist change as much as they don't know how to cope with it.’ Subject leaders need to accept this as natural and, to some extent, inevitable, It must be emphasized that practice must concentrate on listening, suspending judgement and seeking common understanding. Senge (1992, p. 5) comments that many of the “best ideas” are not put into practice due to conflict with “deeply held internal images”.

6. Teacher development and school development

It is essential to understand the relationship of change, teacher development and school development. Fullan (1992, p.22) states ‘ change is a process of learning new ideas and things’. People want to make things better and more flexible. But just as Marris(1986, p.321) states, “ The fundamental problem of change is that it disturb the framework of meanings by which we make sense of the world. It challenges, and thereby potentially threatens, the values, attitudes, and beliefs that enable us to make experience meaningful and predictable. Yet, like growth, no development is possible, with such disturbance...”.

So change is a process of growth, no conflict, and no change. School review and evaluation are always done with a purpose and that purpose is to improve school. Not all change is necessarily an improvement.

In the school, teacher development is the core concept for implementation. It is well known that implementation involves new beliefs and behaviours. Teachers are the main roles of implementation. In teacher development, in-service training is thought of as a form of professional development.(Newton & Tarrant 1992, p.135). . Duigan & MacPherson (1989, p.13) states, “ An initial assumption was that professionals would want to take primary responsibility for their own learning, and in-service education. This meant that the content and processes of in-service

education had to be sensitive and responsive to learners' perceptions of needs. It also implied that in-service activities had to be seen as opportunities for real growth along intellectual, emotional, social, educational, aesthetic, skills and career dimensions." Therefore, teacher development is a long-term task.

"School improvement is a distinct approach to educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change", according to Hopkins et al. (1994, p. 3). Change in a school will involve the awareness of the first and engage in the second. Sammons et al (1995, p.8) offer a concise summary of characteristics found in effective schools. These are:

- Professional leadership;
- Shared vision and goals;
- A conducive learning environment;
- Concentration on teaching and learning;
- Purposeful teaching;
- High expectations;
- Positive reinforcement;
- Monitoring progress;
- Pupil rights and responsibilities;
- Home-school partnerships;
- A learning organization.

It is clear that as subject leaders have a key function in the change. Improvement is a dynamic process that should lead to a school moving forward a situation of improved effectiveness or a greater degree of success in their core function—pupils' learning. Pupils' learning is the result in terms of teachers' development. The success of pupils' learning and teachers' development is closely related with school development.

7. A case study

Since China began its door policy, it has increased contact with foreign countries, which has given more importance to the use of foreign languages. Nearly all trades and professional need people who have attained foreign language proficiency in varying degrees. Learning a foreign language is also conducive to the development of children's intelligence, culture awareness, and outlook on the world. With the china's entry to WTO, more and more professional English people are needed, especially in spoken English. From the international situation, Chinese English Teaching Method which emphasized grammar –centred was required to be changed.

The State Education Commission organized a team of experts as early as 1986 to design new curricula and syllabi for all the school subjects in light of the new syllabi and the new textbooks. The new syllabus for English in schools calls for modern language teaching theory and highlights the use of language for the purpose of communication. It states that ELT should aim to develop the students' four basic skills, especially in listening and speaking. It is the first time in the history of ELT in China that the actual use of the language for communication has been placed in such a prominent position. The syllabus pays careful attention to the students' needs and interests.

According to the teaching syllabus, the new English textbooks require the emphasis on listening and speaking, reading and writing the second. In some places, since 1997, listening test was added in the College Entrance Examination. Listening in the College Entrance Examination guided the teachers to change their teaching method.

Facing the external need and the internal need, the English teachers had to make changes about their teaching method.

SheXian High School is an old school in HanDan City. In 1998, Considering the Grammar-Translation Method out of fashion and the new environment needs, the English teachers began to make some change about their teaching methods. A new teaching method ----The Lexical Approach was introduced.

The Lexical Approach was devised by Michael Lewis (1993). In SheXian High School, it was introduced through teacher-training and new syllabus. (1997). First the English teachers had a meeting and were told what was the Lexical Approach. The Lexical Approach argues that "Lexis is the basis of the language". (Lewis, 1993, p.95). "It places communication of meaning at the heart of language and language learning". (Lewis, 1997, p.15). Its idea is based on the Communicative Approach. The centrality of lexis touches deep theoretical roots of language. It makes the teachers thinking about changing their teaching methods. The new English textbooks also adopt a spiral approach so that items taught are systematically revised and extended periodically. Listening is required to teach as a separate lesson.

The English teachers received the new teaching method easily, however, it is difficult to accept it and completely

change their old teaching method in terms of a new method. The change process is hard.

First the teachers are convinced that the Lexical Approach emphasizes listening. Listening lessons need recorders, tapes, audio visual aids and electrical equipment for creating a foreign language environment. So the English teachers need the subject leaders to support. The school invested a lot of money on English teaching method change.

Many teachers don't know how to give an English lesson in English. The teachers learn from each other. Some professional English teachers gave presentations. The school also bought some video tape and show the teachers how to change their teaching method step by step.

Any change in education first takes into account of the students' needs and interests. Feedback from the students is the best test for the new teaching method. The teachers collected feedbacks in different forms, for example, meetings, interviews, questionnaire. They can change according to the students' needs.

In order to improve the students' ability in listening, the teachers arranged the "English Corner"; play authentic films. The students are offered much more opportunities to be exposed in real situation.

After three years' efforts, the students' ability in listening and speaking has improved a lot. The result of listening and testing of SheXian High School is 72%, while the other three schools: 65%; 62%; 60%. (This is the average result of all the students).

8. Conclusion

It is well known that change in education focus on the students learning. The whole change is very complicated. It involves teachers' development, outcomes the students learning. School development is based on the both. Therefore, students learning, teachers' development and school development are closely related. It can be said that students learning is the centres of change, teachers are the key roles in the change, and school is the supporter. School improvement cannot be perfect without any of them.

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The Three Stages of Coding and Decoding in Listening Courses of College Japanese Specialty

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Abstract

The main focus of research papers on listening teaching published in recent years is the theoretical meanings of decoding on the training of listening comprehension ability. Although in many research papers the bottom-up approach and top-down approach, information processing mode theory, are applied to illustrate decoding and to emphasize the significance of the existing background information in one's memory on listening comprehension, the formation process of the background information, i.e. the formation process of the "code" or "scheme", is not explained and explored. This papers discusses and explores the three stages in listening comprehension of students of Japanese specialty, that is, the stage of "coding", of "decoding" and of "making notes" and aims at clarifying the inherent characteristics of Japanese listening courses.

Keywords: Japanese listening, Coding, Decoding, Making notes

Many academic papers on listening comprehension repeatedly state and explain that the process of listening comprehension is where the listeners analyze and process the language sound waves transmitted into their brains and then transform those sound waves into information codes; subsequently, the listeners will make notes to those codes based on the lexical meanings and grammatical structures they master. To put it simply, it is a process of decoding. Although many research papers put forward bottom-up approach and top-down approach, the information processing mode theory, the papers do not explain and emphasize the fundamental basis of the decoding, that is, the formation of "codes". This paper analyzes the cognitive and psychological process of students of Japanese specialty when they are listening Japanese and divides the process into three stages. The first stage is coding; the second decoding and the third making notes. This papers emphasizes the significant meanings of coding, does not view listening comprehension process as a mechanical and passive process of receiving information symbols, but rather defines the process as a learning process where students are actively involved, can make selection and are constructing their knowledge trees.

1. The formation process of codes

Each consumption symbol (note) has particular background relationship formed by its own symbol network. The result of the symbolization of hearing makes listening activity not longer just "listening" of the physiology sense, but a kind of information exchange activity. "Listening" becomes the interpretation of symbols (notes). However, what are the "meanings" of the symbols? Who indeed endows the symbols with "meanings" and how? How do listeners interpret the symbols and understand their meanings? Is there any discrepancy in the interpretation? To solve those problems, we must make analysis on the formation process of the codes.

1.1 To expatiate coding from the perspective of semiology

From the perspective of semiology, the process of listening comprehension is indeed a process of recognizing the codes and decoding. Correct decoding depends on the coded information of large volume existing in order in the brains of

human beings. The process of decoding needs to eliminate the

pragmatic blocks of foreign culture. "In language acquisition, the acquisition process of a learner on certain category is a process where the principal part sets up parameters for objects, while the setting-up of parameters is based on exterior language stimulus." (Dunkel, 1991 and Feyten, 1991). It is obvious that the said "the principal part sets up parameters for objects" is the process where the listeners decode the sound symbols of listening context. Cognitive psychology compares interior psychological process of human beings as computers: computers receive symbol input, conduct coding, make decisions on the code input and store them, and then output the symbols. This is similar to how human beings receive listening comprehension information. The first step of listening comprehension is to divide the sound information into small units according to pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax. Sometimes, the boundary is not that obvious when dividing the sound information. For example, there are lots of homophony words in Japanese and people have to guess based on the context. Only the common rules will be analyzed in this paper. Small pronunciation unit will all have a code. Let us presume that the information code for the word "flower" is "011010". In listening comprehension process, human beings will instinctively search in their mind for the code "011010" stored in their minds. What is connected to this stored code is the image of flower. Therefore, listening comprehension process transforms the language information codes into material images and then the information transferring process is completed. The Schemata Theory of F.C. Barlett could be applied to explain such process. "For decoding newly input information, the coding relies on the existing information scheme, frame or networks of human beings' brains. Only when the input information is consistent with the scheme, can the information process be completed, that is the process from receiving information, to decoding, to re-organizing and to storing". (Yang and Yi, 2005)

As mentioned in the above, the coding is of two meaning levels. One is the coding for splitting the information and the other is that exists in the brains for a long or temporary period, which, hence, brings about two problems. How do the codes existing in the brains for a long or temporary period come into existence? Some of the language symbols formed by the language information (children) are able to find their matrix, while others could not find their correspondent matrix, which causes that the imagination and images that are connected to the listening comprehension cannot be generated and the blind spots of comprehension appear. The generation process of code is divided into two parts. Some codes formed by the listening comprehension could find correspondent matrix while others become the memory. The part that becomes memory will follow the forgetting rules of memory, remained or missed. Therefore, the more information codes a person has in his or her brain, the wider his or her knowledge is and it is more easier for him or her to understand information transmitted. Therefore, to improve listening level, students need to listen more, practice more and try their best to enlarge the codes related to Japanese notes or information schemata in their brains (F.C. Barlett).

1.2 To explain coding from the perspective of linguistics

It is mentioned in many academic papers that the process of listening comprehension is the process of decoding. "The sound goes into ears in the form of audio frequency, which vibrates the eardrums and is then transformed into nerve pulse which reaches the frontal area of the brain following hearing nerve. The brain analyzes and processes the language waves and transforms them into information codes. The listener applies his or her own lexical meaning and grammatical structure knowledge to make notes. Information codes being given the notes are endowed with true meanings." (Yang and Mo, 2005; Wang, 2004). "Nerve pulse" involves circuit and coding. The "on" and "off" switches shunt-wound in the circuit brings about nerve pulse of different forms and power. These the symbols for the switches, "on" or "off", are the presuming information codes, such as "011010" for flowers.

2. The stage of decoding

Chinese students majoring in Japanese study Japanese without Japanese culture. In addition, most of them start to learn Japanese at the age of 18 or 19. Although Chinese and Japanese are seemingly similar, they actually belong to different language families. It is impossible for students to apply Chinese code systems existing in their brains to interpret Japanese code system input in Japanese listening comprehension. Therefore, students have to re-construct Japanese code system in their brains. Even though students have constructed new language code systems, due to different experiences, cultures and statuses, listening comprehension units of the same code system could still generate different interpretation according to their own conditions. According to the decoding theory of Hall, roughly, the decoding status of students in listening comprehension can be divided into three types.

The first could be defined as complete understanding. Listeners of this type (refer to the students majoring in Japanese) feel that the codes in the listening comprehension (they are actually the codes that the speakers establish in the listening comprehension context under the presumption that the target group is Japanese) are the same as or similar to their "codes". They could completely understand the coding in the listening comprehension context and could correctly transform the speeches of the speakers into images that are easy for them to understand, which shows that the listeners have established the information code system that is related to the listening comprehension context.

The second type could be defined as uncertainty. Listeners could not find the "codes" that are in full consistence with

the “coding” of the listening comprehension context. They are not sure about the meanings the speakers want to express. If with the supplementation of the following listening comprehension context, their listening status may become the first type. Whilst, if there is no supplementation in the following listening comprehension context, they will develop towards the status of completely failure of understanding, which shows that the listeners have not constructed a perfect information code system that is related to the listening comprehension context.

The third type is defined as complete failure of understanding. Listeners could not find the “codes” that are consistent with the “coding” of the listening comprehension context and do not understand at all the contents of the speakers in the listening comprehension context, which shows that the listeners have not yet established in their brains the information code system that is related to the listening comprehension context.

After analysis on the differences of the formation of listening comprehension abilities of students, it is found that “to construct comparatively perfect Japanese code system” is the key to improve students’ listening ability. “To construct comparatively perfect Japanese code system”, students must listen more and practice more. The accumulation of Japanese knowledge of learners (especially, the familiarity on Japanese vocabulary, common phrases, common syntax) prompts their knowledge structure. When the knowledge comes to be perfect, the cognitive structure and ability of Japanese listening will have a substantive improvement.

3. The stage of making notes

Listening comprehension is a process of listening and comprehension. “Listening” is a passive act while “comprehension” is a subjective and active psychological process. The active and positive psychological process is related to self-judgment and selection. While the judgment and selection of individuals is based on their culture experience. Therefore, cultural differences must be mentioned here. Because different peoples have long been lived in different cultures, traditions and atmospheres and have formed special aesthetic customs of their own, which build up particular aesthetic “receiving blocks”. To put it other way, because of different social and cultural environments and psychological structures and that the detailed conditions determine human beings’ aesthetic value tendency, culture differences are formed among different peoples.

In listening comprehension process, listeners compare the independent language meaning unit with the information stored in their brains and apply their knowledge on lexical meaning and grammatical structure stored in their brains to make notes. After the notes are made, the information is meaningful. However, due to cultural difference in the sub-consciousness of listeners, the information, after notes are made on, obtain different meanings. Therefore, the meaning of the speech after the notes are made may not be in consistent with the original meaning of the speaker. Chinese students majoring in Japanese are confronted with two kinds of cultural differences when having Japanese listening comprehension class. One is culture difference between Chinese and Japanese culture. Students shall not use Chinese cultural knowledge system that have already been established to interpret language ideas of foreign cultural knowledge system. The other is that students come from different culture regions and there is individual cultural difference among them. In Japanese listening comprehension, the influence of regional cultural difference is not the influential element.

At this stage, teachers shall focus on introducing the social and cultural background of Japan to students. It could be seen from the characteristics of “top-down” information processing mode that the knowledge obtained previously is the key for decoding. Cultural difference between China and Japan is large and the difference brings about different languages, living customs and behavior rules. To improve Japanese listening ability, one must understand and could use Japanese social and cultural knowledge. Many students lack knowledge in cultural background of Japan and do not master the imagination meanings, social meanings and pragmatic rules of some of the Japanese vocabulary. Or, under the condition that they do not have a full understanding of Japanese cultural background information, they misunderstand the meanings of the speakers. Hence, comes the situation that the listeners understand each word but still do not understand or misunderstand the meanings of the speakers.

4. Conclusion

Thought analysis on the three stages in listening comprehension process, it is understood that Japanese listening course integrates human beings’ ability in memory, summing up, forecasting, and language transformation. With clear understanding of the nature of Japanese listening course, teachers will be able to avoid blindness in designing Japanese listening course and in teaching practices, to change from the single teaching mode, i.e. vocabulary teaching, tape playing and answer checking, and to organize Japanese listening teaching activities systematically and gradually with aims and key points by following scientific teaching mode of listening system decoding rules.

Let us take the activities before the listening comprehension as an example. First, the students shall be informed of the knowledge related to the listening comprehension context, the information combination of different contexts, relevant culture background, the aim of the listening, and the to what extent that the students should master the listening comprehension context. Such activities will be conducive to helping students to forecast before they listen and to listen

to the context with aim, which will get twice the result with half the effort in training listening comprehension ability.

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Cooperative Learning (CL) and Academic Achievement of Asian Students: A True Story

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Abstract

This paper reviews research examining the effects of CL strategies on the academic achievement of Asian students. Fourteen studies are included in the review. Sample characteristics, measures, findings, and effects are reported in a table. Achievement outcomes are found mixed with 50 per cent of the studies reporting neutral and negative findings and 50 per cent reporting positive findings. The paper also reveals mismatches between CL's principles and Asian cultures based on what was reported in the reviewed studies. Future research needs to further investigate this issue. Also, for CL to work more effectively in the Asian context, there needs to be some further research that investigates how to change those principles of CL that may be inappropriate in the Asian context so they may be more compatible with Asian culture and conditions.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, Mismatches, Values, Principles, Strategies

1. Introduction

Entering the 21st century, under the impact of global forces, all nations are facing a range of political, social, economic, technological and educational changes. With the growth in science and technology, it is widely accepted that the world is increasingly becoming 'small'. Actions in one part of the world exert powerful influences on other parts of the world. There is more engagement of communities and individuals throughout the world. Now individuals are required to depend on each others and think with others if they want to obtain any success. The ability to work together cooperatively has become one of the skills which enable people to survive in the global workforce (Foyle & Shafto, 1995). Therefore, teaching students how to communicate effectively, cooperate with others and engage in self-learning has become the basics of education (Cheng, 2003b). Consequently, many Asian countries have been recently put under pressures to carry out a series of educational reforms. The focuses of these reforms show that Western teaching and learning approaches such as student-centred learning, team work, and especially CL have become priorities in Asian education institutions. The increasing adoption of such approaches comes from a belief among Asian educational authorities that borrowing modern (Western) philosophies and practices would mean taking advantage of the forerunners, making a huge leap by skipping the painfully long research stage (Walker & Dimmock, 2000).

However, so-called global imports have led to a situation in which many Western teaching and learning principles do not suit the local context in terms of both cultural values and infrastructure conditions, leading to rejections from different levels. In the case of CL, although this approach has been demonstrated to be able to equip students with the essential elements for work places of today and the future (Adams & Hamm, 1990; Johnson et al., 1994), it consists of many principles and values which completely contrast with those in Asian countries. Consequently, when experimenting CL in Asian classes, many researchers have found that besides those studies which reported that CL can improve Asian students' academic performance, there was still a number of studies which found that CL was not better,

even worse, than the traditional lecture-based teaching method in terms of increasing students' academic achievement. Therefore, in reality, some Asian educational institutions have decided to return to their traditional teaching methods.

Such inconsistent findings, to some extent, have brought about uncertain feelings for Asian educators to continue their innovations. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to conduct an analysis that examines the percentage of those studies that reported positive effects of CL on the academic outcomes of Asian students and the percentage of those studies that reported negative effects of CL. Such an analysis will provide insights into the effectiveness of CL in the Asian context. The purpose of this paper is to review research addressing the effects of CL on the academic achievement of Asian students. More importantly, the paper attempts to investigate the mismatches between CL philosophies and Asian cultural values. This will help Asian educators and future researchers to take cautious steps when applying this radical approach to the local educational settings.

2. Methods

2.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This paper reviews all available published and unpublished studies of CL methods that met the following criteria:

(1) The study measured the effects of CL on the academic achievement of Asian students at all schooling levels from primary to college. This criterion excluded a large number of studies which investigated the effects of CL on the academic achievement of Western students. Also, the criterion excluded some studies which measured other effects of CL rather than academic achievement such as one study by Hing et al. (1999) which measured behaviours and perceptions of students toward CL, one study by Ng and Lee (1999) which examined the effects of CL on the cross-ethnic friendship, and one study by Lee, C. and Others (1997) which investigated the effects of CL on promoting thinking.

(2) The study must be designed as a true experimental or quasi-experimental study in which a CL method was compared with a control group that could be considered initially equivalent (because of random assignment or matching plus analysis of covariance), or appropriate single-subject designs were used (Hersen & Barlow, 1976). This requirement excluded those CL studies that failed to use control groups. For example, the review did not review one study by Chan (2004) because this study did not compare the effects of CL and the control group, but compared the effects of CL under different conditions. Also, the review excluded three studies by Wan (1996), Lee, Soo-Im. (1999) and Jacobs (1997) because they were not experimental or quasi-experimental in design.

(3) The study was conducted in an actual classroom or programmatic setting for at least two weeks. This excluded those studies of CL interventions that investigated the effects of CL on distance education (e.g., Lee, Yi-hui, 2006), and those studies that were considered laboratory studies in field settings or under more controlled laboratory conditions rather than true field experiments because of their brief durations.

(4) The study included CL as an intervention or intervention component. Studies that focused on peer-mediated instructional strategies and group learning other than CL, such as small group learning, group activities, and peer-tutoring were not included because the author considered the interactive structures of these strategies to be qualitatively different from those characterizing CL. For example, group learning typically just required students to seat together to accomplish an assignment cooperatively, and peer-mediated strategies typically employ a more accomplished or older student to instruct another student. Such a strategy is different from CL which requires the instructor and students to follow specific principles. For example, the review excluded one study by Ismail and Alexander (2005) because it used peer - tutoring approach, one study by Cue (2006) because the treatment method was learner - centred approach, and three studies by Speece (2002), Tam (2001) and Csete et al. (1998) because they applied only group work.

2.2 Documents reviewed

The studies included in this study were identified through a thorough search for relevant published and unpublished studies. The authors explored multiple electronic databases, including Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Psychological Abstracts (PA), Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI), the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), examined relevant bibliographies, searched reference sections of the studies included in this study to identify further relevant studies, and contacted relevant researchers and organizations.

Eventually, the authors selected 14 studies which met the criteria for inclusion. Table 1 presents these studies in the order of the conduction year. This table includes study characteristics such as names of researchers, sample size, school level, location, treatment methods, duration, subject areas and achievement effects.

The achievement results of the 14 studies are presented in the last column of Table 1. A + sign indicates that positive achievement effect was found, meaning that the CL group scored higher than the control group on a test of content to which both were exposed. Zero signifies no differences, and a - sign indicates that a control group significantly exceeded an experimental group in achievement.

Results presented in Table 1 show that CL has brought about mixed achievement outcomes to college students, including negative, neutral and positive ones. Noticeably, the results reported that among 14 studies reviewed above, there are 7 studies (50%) reporting neutral and negative results. This ratio challenged a very common conclusion of Johnson, Johnson and Stanne (2000) and many other researchers (e.g., McMaster & Fuchs, 2002; Slavin, 1983; Ravenscroft et al., 1995) that CL efforts result in higher individual achievement than do competitive or individualistic efforts. As such, the effectiveness of CL seems very questionable in the Asian context. This leads to a question of why CL failed to improve the academic achievement of Asian students. The following section attempts to provide some explanations.

3. Why did CL fail in the Asian context? Some views from the reviewed studies

It is really hard to find a study whose findings are completely reliable. Almost all studies hold some weaknesses in terms of design and implementation process leading to some biases. And all studies reviewed in this study are similar. Each study may have some aspects which were not implemented correctly, so causing some unreliable findings. Investigating remaining weaknesses to better inform future research and practice is necessary. However, it would be beyond the scope of this paper to cover this issue roundly. Within this paper, the authors only attempt to examine if mismatches between the principles of CL and Asian cultural values play any role in the unsuccessful CL implementation in the reviewed studies.

Taken together, the authors identified an interesting point that all those studies which reported neutral and negative outcomes (seven studies in Table 1) commented that mismatches between principles of CL and Asian cultures were one of the main causes of the CL failure. For example, in their study, Tan et al. (2007) explained that the failure of their group investigation experiment was related to the relevant features or characteristics of the students. The students were accustomed to learning passively from teachers, taking notes, and preparing for tests and examinations. They were not accustomed to investigating a topic, acquiring information by themselves or from their peers, or learning in groups. Therefore, they wanted teachers to present the academic material to them instead of being asked to search for information. The students also encountered difficulty researching topics because previously they did not have to conduct research, but only recorded the material that teachers presented (prepackaged knowledge) (*Such passive learning culture completely conflicts with one of the main CL principles which emphasizes that students must be active and independent in their learning. What students find can bring teachers' knowledge into question*). Besides, students in Tan et al.'s study also commented that group investigation required more of their time than did traditional whole-class instruction, so they had insufficient time to study for their other class tests and to revise for the forthcoming examinations. As a result, although most of the earlier studies on group investigation (Lazarowitz & Karsenty, 1990; Shachar & Sharan, 1994; Sharan & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 1980; Sharan & Shachar, 1988; Sharan & Shaulov, 1990; Sharan et al., 1985) yielded significant differences between the two methods of classroom instructions, Tan et al.'s group investigation study failed to work with Singaporean students.

Lee, Ng and Phang (1999) reported that their study was not well conducted because of two main difficulties. First, the instructors did not support the study wholeheartedly because they were doubtful that CL would work as well in the Singapore school culture. There was also reluctance among some teachers to change to a classroom organization that was so different, and which seemed to de-emphasize competition and individual merit. Second, student groups did not work effectively because the participants had a strong culture of competition. Even in the team work, team members spent much of their time engaged in competitive and individualistic learning (*What was reported in this study proves that Asian students are not interested in the notion of 'sink or swim together'. This means that the interdependent component, one of the five essential elements of CL, would be hardly implemented properly in the Asian context*).

Struggling with another problem, Sachs et al. (2006) explained that most teachers in their study could not complete cooperative tasks properly because they needed to spend a large proportion of time setting up and explaining the task procedures. Teachers explained that this time was necessary because if they did not instruct students in detail, students would be unable to complete the tasks (*This is completely different with CL's principles as CL requires teachers to provide a low amount of formal structure, an ill-structured task and a synthesis skill. As such, Asian teaching and learning practice is a big challenge of what CL requires: teachers should move from the position as the 'sage on the stage' to one as a 'guide on the side'*). Moreover, Sachs et al. also complained that his participants often felt anxious when sharing points of view in groups (*This limits the effectiveness of CL remarkably because group discussion is an essential procedures of all CL strategies*).

Having the same problem related to group discussion, participants in both studies of Eva (2003) and Chung (1999) reported that they were uncomfortable with the arguments and conflicts in groups. Therefore, they were unwilling to participate fully and honestly in the group discussion. This led to ineffective group discussion because almost every group member ended up with his/her own decision (*Such culture of 'survive in harmony' does not suit one of the five CL essential conditions, namely 'Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction' because this condition requires cooperative students to challenge each other's conclusion and reasoning, then come to the best answer*).

Slightly different, Messier (2003) did not have any problem with his students but he claimed that a significant effect on academic achievement of his participants was that teachers encouraged memorization and put less value on students, cooperatively learning, working in groups and asking questions from group settings. Therefore, they did not encourage students to do much group discussion (*This is against one of the most important instructions of CL that teachers need to encourage students to work in team to develop their critical and creative ideas*).

Finally, even for those studies which reported positive outcomes (seven studies in Table 1), some of them also found that there were a lot of barriers related to mismatches between CL philosophies and the participants' culture. For example, Hassim et al. (2004) reported that one of the biggest problems in his study was the existence of students who had strong 'individualism culture', so they refused to cooperate hence their groups became dysfunctional. This point is very similar to what Sugie (1999) argued about Japanese students' culture. Sugie claimed that one may say that collectivism is one of the characteristics of Japanese culture, but at the same time there are data that indicate that children are quite competitive. Therefore, the main issue which many recent Japanese educational reforms need to address is how to unite students together. Unfortunately, Sugie also reported that no educational reforms, so far, have solved this problem successfully. For example, she revealed that the aim of the 1989 curriculum renovation of implementing cooperation among students is not practical enough to be brought to the classroom because the underlying problems arising from the competitive educational culture remain.

Similar to the case of Missier's study (2003), Zakaria and Iksan (2007) found that among many other challenges of implementing CL in Asian countries, Asian teachers' perceptions toward teaching and learning are a big barrier. They specified that the culture of "Do not trust students in acquiring knowledge by themselves" of Malay teachers was a big challenge for CL. Malay teachers think that they must tell their students what and how to learn. Only the teachers have the knowledge and expertise (*This is opposite to a preference of CL which allows students to investigate individually then share their investigation within a group. To this point, their knowledge is even higher than their teacher's*).

4. Conclusion

Although we attempted to be systematic and thorough in our search and selection procedures, it was occasionally difficult to determine where a CL study had been implemented. Therefore, this study may have excluded a study that did involve the investigation of CL on the academic performance of Asian students. Before we can fully understand whether CL is an effective strategy for improving the academic achievement of Asian students, a greater number of larger and longer-running field-based experiments must be conducted. Based on what has been found in this study, the authors can only attempt to issue a warning that many classroom teachers have embraced CL as a preferred instructional strategy. However, in the light of inconclusive findings in the literature regarding the efficacy of using CL with Asian students, teachers may wish to be cautious about mismatches between CL's principles and Asian cultures.

With the best efforts, we have revealed some of such mismatches reported in the reviewed studies. These findings add more information to a previous study conducted by Phuong-Mai et al. (2006). The difference between the findings of this study and Phuong-Mai et al.'s is that while what Phuong-Mai et al. discussion was just based on theoretical literature, the findings in this study were taken from real experimental research, thus they, to some extent, sound more reliable. Moreover, these findings explored some points which were not discussed in Phuong-Mai et al.'s study.

Our aim of revealing these mismatches was to help Asian CL instructors to notice which principles of CL are not appropriate in their classes so that they can avoid or do necessary modifications. However, taken together all what has been found in this study and in Phuong-Mai et al.'s study, these findings seem still very narrow. There need to be more research investigating more mismatches. More importantly, there need to some research looking for how to modify inappropriate principles of CL toward a way which suites teaching and learning philosophies of Asian teachers and students and also can be done under infrastructure conditions of Asian countries. Once such research is conducted, it would provide Asian teachers with valuable instructions to implement CL in their classes. Also research examining the effects of CL on other outcomes of Asian students, such as CL's impact on the behaviours and attitudes of Asian students toward CL strategies, toward learning subjects, retention, peer relationship also needs to be conducted. Data from such investigations will enable us to better quantify, synthesize, and interpret CL's effects on Asian students.

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Table 1. CL studies and academic performance of Asian students

Researchers/Y ear	Location	N	School Level	Treatment Methods	Duration	Subject Area	Achievement Effects
Sachs et al., 2003	Hong Kong	520	Primary	Project team	1 year	English	-
Chung, 1999	Hong Kong	23	College	Mixed	1 semester	Math	-
Lee, C.K., Chew, J., Ng, M., Hing, T.S., 1999	Singapore	4 teachers	Primary	Mixed	1 year	Social Subjects	+ (teachers reported)
Lee, C.K., Ng, M. & Phang, R., 1999	Singapore	286 (3 classes)	Primary	Jigsaw and others	1 year	Social Studies	0 (1 class) + (2 classes)
Betty, 2000	Hong Kong	Not reported	Primary	STAD	1 semester	Not reported	+
Eva, 2003	Hong Kong	21	Secondary	Mixed methods	2 terms	English	0
Messier, 2003	China	145	Secondary	Mixed	4 weeks	English	-
Hassim et al., 2004	Malaysia	128	College	Mixed	1 semester	Industrial Engineering	+
Law, 2005	China	Not reported	Primary	STAD	1 term	Social Sciences	-
Hwang et al., 2005	Hong Kong	122	College	Group Investigation	1 semester	Accounting	+
Chang, 2006	Taiwan	Not reported	Primary	STAD	10 weeks	Visual Arts Curriculum	+
Cheng, 2006	Taiwan	98	College	Group Investigation	8 weeks	Technology	+
Liao, 2006	Taiwan	84	Not reported	Mixed	12 weeks	English	+
Tan et al., 2007	Singapore	241	Secondary	Group Investigation	1 semester	Geography	0

Notes

In the column of achievement effects: 0 indicate no differences; + indicates a positive achievement; - indicates that a control group significantly exceeded an experimental group in achievement.

(1) In the column of treatment methods: Mixed indicates the researchers taught an experimental group by CL techniques, but did not follow any specific CL strategy.

(2) Findings of the study by Lee, C. K., Chew, J., Ng, M., Hing, T. S., (1999) were obtained from reports of those teachers who implemented CL in their classes.



The Probe on the Children's English Acquisition

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Abstract

English has become the medium for communication in so many areas, and children are the hope of the future and shoulder the duties to structure the future. Children's English becomes more important and spreads all over the world, especially in recent years.

The children's English is not perfect and it exists its own disadvantages, so this paper gives four Optimizations and suggestions in teaching children's English in order to solve the problem. Then it lists several relations to the children's English study, and these four relations are very important because they are the keys to lead the children's English to a healthy and developing road. And in the next chapter, it talks about the trends of the children's English in the future and lists the reasons why these kinds of trends appear.

At last, overlook the whole paper and give a conclusion, which show that the children's English has a great potentiality in the future in China.

Keywords: Children's English, Language acquisition, Advantages and disadvantages, Relations, Trends

1. Introduction

As is known, the English language has become the dominant medium for communication worldwide in books, newspapers, magazines, international business, pop music, advertising, travel, and thanks to the Internet, English language proficiency has become a major requirement for attaining the highest level of professional and economic success around the world. And the children coming from all over the world are the main part of the studying English. Because they are the hope of the future and they shoulder the duties to structure their own societies. So children learning English is becoming a more important project in recent years. More and more parents pay increasing attention to children's English and more and more children join the study of children English. So the children's English training has already occupied a very important position in English training field. As the development of the children's English, a lot of gratifying achievements achieved. Li Zhejiang, a seven year old child, who conquers the judging panel and honorable foreign guests so as to the absolute advantage, obtains the champion of the preschool group of "national children's English elegance match"; In announcement in the CET -4 examination of score, an eleven years old boy passes the CET-4 examination a little just in Nanjing.

From these facts it is possible for children to learn English and do it well at a low age, even one month old, because children have the gifts to learn language.

2. Language Acquisition

2.1 First language acquisition

Babies are born with the ability to distinguish speech from other sounds they hear, even though they do not understand what they mean. By the time children reach school age, they are speaking in complex sentences, having conversations, and can understand most of what they hear. How does the development of language occur?

Children's brains are designed to help them learn language. From the time they are born, their brains register and process the sounds they hear. As a child's brain, thinking skills, and motor systems develop, so do his/her understanding and the use of language to communicate. Underlying language development is the ability to think about the world, and to explore it with vision, hearing, smell, touch, etc. As a child begins to make sense of the world through exploration, language is attached to those experiences. Language develops gradually, from single words at about twelve months to complex sentences at five years, and from simple concepts (juice, shoes) to those that are more abstract (frustrated, addition). School-age children continue to learn and use increasingly complex and abstract language.

Because early language develops through sensory exploration and understanding of the world, language development for a child with a visual impairment or deaf blindness will be effected by the nature and severity of the sensory impairments, and by other factors such as motor and cognitive skills. Some children with mind to moderate vision and hearing losses can be taught to compensate for limited visual and auditory information. They do this by using their other

senses, thinking skills, and hands-on experiences to learn the meanings associated with words and sentences.

2.2 Second language acquisition

The development of a second language can occur in different ways. For example, a child may be exposed, from birth, to two languages at the same time; or a high school student might take a foreign language elective. I want to talk specifically about the children who learn a language other than English at home, then begin to learn English when they enter school. Depending on the parents' requests and services offered by the local district, these children may be placed in an English speaking classroom, an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, or a Bilingual Education classroom. It is important to note that a child's classroom placement will have an impact on the development of both first and second languages. Bilingual education classes foster development of skills in English and the child's first language. ESL classes only support skill development in English, a strategy that may be associated with slower acquisition of abstract language.

In general, these children enter school with proficiency in their native languages, which they then use as natural foundations for learning English. The process of acquiring English is gradual and follows a pattern of development similar to first language acquisition. For example, simple sentences are produced before complex ones. Children make errors in English that reflect the linguistic rules of their first language. For example, a Spanish speaking child may say, "I want the ball green," because in Spanish speech, adjectives are spoken after nouns. Conversational skills are acquired (in about 2 years) before the abstract language required in a classroom is fully developed (in 5 to 7 years). These children still learn language best through exposure and experiences.

Second language acquisition, however, often occurs during classroom activities where specific, targeted English skills are being taught, rather than through the hands-on experiences typical of first language acquisition. Children are challenged to learn English quickly, while keeping up with the new concepts introduced in their classes every day. They have little time to learn basic English before it must be understood and used in highly abstract and decontextualized academic activities.

2.3 visual and auditory impairment and second language acquisition

Generally, it has been assumed that if a child's first language develops normally, the second language will also develop normally. Why might this assumption NOT be true for children with visual impairments or deaf blindness?

Many professionals have observed that verbal children with visual impairments or deaf blindness sometimes have great difficulty acquiring a second language. They also may have difficulty transitioning from bilingual education to English-only instruction. I think the differences between learning a first and second language come from the ways those two languages are acquired. As with all children, verbal children with visual impairments or deaf blindness also learn their first language gradually, over many years. While the information they are getting from the environment is reduced, within the context of multiple, highly meaningful, multisensory experiences, other senses are used to support and compensate for limited visual and auditory information. A foundation of relatively normal language is built, upon which is added the complex language required in school.

Second language instruction in a classroom is by nature primarily visual and auditory. One language is used to teach another language, either through use of the first language or by simplified explanations of concepts in the second language. Because children are expected to use and understand abstract academic concepts in English almost immediately, they often don't have time to develop complex language gradually. Children with visual impairments or deaf blindness have difficulty compensating for the limited or distorted information received through their visual and auditory systems. They often cannot use touch, smell, taste, or movement to learn abstract concepts that are taught visually and auditorially. Therefore they must rely upon prior knowledge to understand what they are hearing and seeing. They can quickly and easily miss or misunderstand the concepts being taught.

3. The analysis from two different points

3.1 The objective Analysis according to children's psychological characteristic

Researcher analysis the activities of the brain to children and adult foreign language learners respectively and found finally, the children, while studying a foreign language, the brain stored it in "Brocas district", namely the same position as mother tongue, but adults are unable to store the foreign language in this district while studying the foreign language can only set up a memory structure in another position in brain again, and the new memory structure is not sensitive to the "Brocas district", and need to establish the connection with "Brocas district" while using. The position "Brocas district" that is responsible for studying the language in the brain is very developed and sensitive in people's childhood, and people's mother tongue is stored in this area promptly. But with the growth of age, the sensitivity of this area presents the downward trend.

The foreign scholar once studied to the victory mechanism that children studied mother tongue and the second language. For example Kim 1997 experiment research indicate, the children learn the second language very early, the study

centers of its mother tongue and the second language are nearly on the same position of the brain; if children can study the foreign language with mechanism of mother tongue, it can have made the studies of second language very easily. There is scholar's research of doing brain radiography of functional nuclear magnetic resonance, find that studies the first language and the second language at the nearly same time, area deals with this bilingual to near, even overlap partly. Let children keep in touch with bilingual early, children inherent language learning mechanism can early accept two kinds of different languages amazingly, and the independence is developed. It is obvious, that the study of the mother tongue and study of the second language complement each other, and do not set against.

3.2 *The objective analysis to foreign language study*

There are various kinds of ability possessed often ignored or underestimated before children begin to study English. In fact, they have certain experience of life and have their own world, and are good at understanding the things around according to one's own way, and have already learnt a language at least. Study is an interdynamic course.

The theory of Vygotsky ZPD (Zone of proximal development) has emphasized the high-quality interdynamic contacts, for example, the interdynamic lead by adult or lead by someone who superior to one's own is very essential.

Holliday supports the interdynamic view too. He thinks "The study of mother tongue and the second, the third language is a cognitive course, it is an interdynamic course at the same time, its form of expression is oneself and others' successive exchange" (1975:139)

Communication language teaching rule regards it as its key thought to understand and transmit information; its importance has even exceeded the accuracy of the language. Fisher has emphasized the importance of talking in developing people's thought too. This is being echoed with another view of linking the Vygotsky: It is very important in development in an all-round way to stimulate and transform the thought into the course of the language.

The important principle of cooperating talk in meaning in the language has sufficient embodiment in teaching method communication language. In such true activity, the students exchange the views each other, and solve the true problem and reach the unanimous understanding. Obviously, all students need to think, it is not merely to state the objective fact to exchange the views; Cooperating talk has true meanings, which can just excite the talk interest of participants.

The child's task is to form the language system that can represent one's own social realistic mode meaning. This course will be produced in his head, and is a cognitive course. But its production needs an interdynamic environment in communication. Never have other methods that it emerges except this kind of environment. (Halliday 1975: 139)

Study is a positive and cognitive course. Child should not be filled with as a waiting empty pot, but should be a positive seeker of thought and language. Just as preceding paragraphs talked about, the child has already had many kinds of ability; all these are foundation stones of structuring the new abilities. Barnes describes like "we everyone can get the goal of learning through understanding the things around constantly and structure one's own world actively."

To the child who participants in the learning process actively in terms of cognition, what they need is the challenge and taking risks. Tasks or activities that offered have not certain challenges and child who takes the risk of, and the child's unable independence forever. Even stagnate at some time, lose the motive force of studying. But these challenges must have proper supports of teachers, classmates too, and accord with the theory of ZPD that put forward "New knowledge must in close to in the area, child of development level at the same time, promptly 'Zone of proximal development'".

The importance in the second language which is studied of positive participation in this kind of learning process is self-evident too.

There are a lot of discussions about foreign language studying. For many years, people have always cut the language apart into the independent unit- the structure unit or the grammar unit-which were taught by professor bit by bit; then student spell piece of these together as playing picture arrangement game, then go to understand this language.

However, it is not such a course while the children studying the mother tongue. They place themselves in the midst of the wide language environment, absorb and use the intact language, and get to understand its structure and grammar in deeper subconscious Lewis (1993) advocated the foreign language teaching should set out from " language section or the intact language that a lot of vocabularies form" to develop the abilities to use intact language. Tough (Brumfit 1991) has discussed to the function of "systematized language" in the classroom instruction too. Teacher should replace some vocabularies of language when child is talking at any time as mother at home, to form the new intact language.

It is regrettable that most adults and children are exposed to language in exercise and confined to level of sentence that "digest already" in studying in classroom. But in fact, teacher should not simplify the course of study so, and should be through specifying the study way of structurization, thus making students exposed to more complicated language environment. No matter how students' study habit, taste, ability, comprehensive development level and language development level are, they can get caught up in this kind of learning method. In children's English teaching, the teacher can use more stories, songs and directory, etc., and make students exposed to and study the intact language among the intelligible environment of language with real significance.

The child does not choose the environment of the language while studying the first language; it is only a part in his daily life to study languages. They use the already existing knowledge to understand the new language phenomenon, set up the unknown from already known, and are adjusting the mode of thinking constantly through “absorbing or assimilating new knowledge dynamic course. All these analysis and theories can prove that children can acquire a second language. But everything has two sides, including the children’s English. Now, let’s talk about the next chapter.

4. The advantages and disadvantages of children’s English

4.1 The advantages

4.1.1 The natural advantages to learn English

The research institution of American Cornell University publishes the thesis to point out on 1996 first “Nature”: the position of the brains between the children and the adults use while studying foreign language are obviously different, cause adult speed to grasp foreign language far children rapidly. Adults study foreign language slow, grasp far firm, either relatively difficult to form the feeling for the language based on “Brocas district” as child does ,so, there are have certain advantages to learn foreign languages in childhood.

Childhood is the initial stage of the people’s world outlook and values; it is the important stage to develop thinking ability and to form the cognitive way too. Different education contents and the ways and different environments have great influence on the development and cultivation of the above factors, so the child’s development has greater plasticity in this stage.

4.1.2 It is apt to train the interest

Under the guide or influence of parents, teachers, classmates, children are very apt to become interested in fresh things. To English too, the children are interested in this fresh language.

4.1.3 Psychological burden is light

Because of the difference between English and Chinese and the culture between east and west, to Chinese, English is a kind of brand-new language, and it is more different to study English than to study other knowledge (for example mathematics, history). Someone thinks study foreign language is to “risk” to a great extent, offends the wrong danger. The psychological burden such as being so shy, timid, anxious is studied about foreign language bigger negative effects of persons who acquire. Comparing with the adult, they dare to open one’s mouth; can participate in various kinds of activities actively. This helps to create the relaxing and happy study environment.

4.1.4 The emotional factor is simple

More and more research indicates, that the emotional factor is an important factor causing foreign language study differently. The emotional factor points the attitude and motive mainly. The learner’s attitude includes two respects mainly: the attitude to study the target language; General attitude to the language and language study. We think, besides the above-mentioned two heavy, the foreign language learner’s attitude still includes the attitude toward school and teacher, the attitude to the studying environment, attitude toward other learners (classmates), the attitude to studying material, etc. And respect these attitudes concrete; press close to reality even more, to more direct influences that foreign language study. Generally, children have simple thought and the attitude is positive, the above-mentioned kinds of attitudes, which we spoke of, cannot be problematic for children. Children study lean intuition and experience, lively study way and study enthusiasm of study with very apt to arouse them content that closely related to their life against generally, and arouse their interest to study foreign language.

4.2 The disadvantages

4.2.1 Children’s psychological plasticity is strong, but automatic control ability is weak.

They are apt to train the interest, and apt to lose the interest too. If meet the setback or fail, or meet dull content of courses or teaching form, it is very easy for them to learn to lose the interest to learn about foreign language.

Children can enjoy studying in foreign language positively, but their concentrating time is limited. They are very easily to be influenced by external factors and disperse the attention.

4.2.2 Children are not as good as adults in thinking ability

They are not good at holding the system and law of the language; lack the ability of independent study. Lack the plan, arrangement to one’s own study. The dependence on teacher is relatively strong.

5. Optimization scheme and suggestion in teaching children’s English

First, the language should be intact, meaningful; closely relate to the real intact language helps children’s absorbed listening even more, real understanding and application. Secondly, make the children feel languages are meaningful, easy to understand, and should put attention in the meaning that the language transmits. Moreover, the language is a tool socialized. Communicating, the content exchanged should be with the children’s experience of life, the heart demand

maintained close ties; it is independent, joyful, and effectual.

Second, the children's language learning is of many channels, and diversified forms. The language permeates in all the children's social behaviors. So, the teacher should not merely want to design meticulously, and organize the collective educational activities, but should pay close attention to children's moves about each link and their total language study and highly develop in family life.

Third, the children's language should get the positive response to expression. Language ability is not born. The child is communicating with the external world, always trying to use languages. It is essential to encourage children to dare to speak actively. Should go back or appraise the bold try, which supports the child for this teacher, help children to find, revise and create. Child is it take risks to worry only, is it make mistakes to fear, is it give language use effective resource of to store constantly, could control languages finally. As we know, "The more mistakes you make, the better student you will be."

The response and appraises that children get should be whenever and wherever, only in this atmosphere, they will just use boldly, positive application, initiative application.

Fourth, the foreign language teacher's quality is a very important too. Teachers should be study through specialized foreign language, and there are preschool professional knowledge and experience. This has very great front to influence to study about child's foreign language in the future.

6. Several great relations to the children's English study

6.1 The relation between study Chinese and foreign languages

From the practice of children's English teaching, there are two kinds of completely different methods. First, rely on Chinese. Some teachers regard Chinese as the only classroom term; often adopt the method to translating. Second, repel Chinese. Some teachers do not use definitely in each link of the foreign language teaching. I think, these two kinds of methods are both lost biased.

The teacher can make children draw support from Chinese, and children can learn English fast. If the teacher use Chinese to be apt, and use improper, can make Chinese become stumbling block, children of study.

6.2 Positive effects of Chinese to study about foreign language

For the children learning English at the beginning or younger children, teacher can use Chinese very among, and make it become child's walking stick to study foreign language. The teacher uses Chinese to be proper in good time, follows the rules from many to few decreasing, so as to ensure children have enough time to study foreign language in the activity. The teacher wants to expand the range that children are exposed to foreign language, makes children's foreign language learn to move towards other subjects, take each link of life for less than one day, and it lays the foundation for children with habit, foreign language of thinking to form.

6.3 The relation between inputting and acquiring

From inputting to acquire course that get, it is extremely important screening function for emotion not to play in second language. The child of its relation acquires the quantity and quality of the second language. Mood relaxes and feels comfortable children are while studying the second language, will study a little better than the children laden with anxiety, with quite old pressure.

We will input languages to children in lively form. The game, song, dance, rhythm, painting, listening to the story; it is in limbs movement, etc. that children yearn for very much for activity, should application not extensive.

Children make such a mistake like this or that during the process of using the language unavoidably, so long as do not influence normal teaching activity and associating the activity, teachers should not correct immediately, and should accept, in order to lighten children's psychological pressure, strengthen children's study confidence.

6.4 The relation between the form of languages and social culture

The language is a carrier of the culture. If one does not understand the mode and criterion of culture, then he cannot really learn languages well. As carrying on to children foreign language education, teacher should let children study foreign language systematic itself, and let children understand foreign language cultural environment, social customs and ways of thinking that language depends on for existence. For this reason, the teacher needs to proceed with two following respects.

First, improve one's own artistic appreciation. The education of children's English, teachers are not only teaching a kind of language, but teach a kind of culture at the same time. The teacher should widen one's own range of knowledge, and understand different culture and main characteristic, and establish and respect the pluralistic model for children.

Second, train children's cultural consciousness. Children studying English is not only for grasping one communication tool, but also for finding out about certain culture. The teacher should transmit the cultural information related to

language to children simply but profoundly in good time.

In a word, children's English education has all sorts of dispute, we should hold to foreign language education that carry on already rigorous, high-standard demand, make its harmonious, lasting steady development.

7. The future of the children's English

7.1 Children's English trends to American English

On the one hand, there are lots of countries spoken English. For example, Britain, Iceland, Australia, they all speak Britain English. But America and Canada, they speak American English. Britain English has heavy regional accent. And all the parents are willing their children to speak English fluently and exactly. And American English just has these characteristics.

On the other hand, English, as other language, is changing developing constantly. And America has more great effects on it than Britain does. For example, the Internet and system of Window all stem from America and the American do not admit the spelling of Britain. Obviously, America is a great country in the terms of technology and economy, and if you want to get the newest information directly, the America English just offer you a convenient way. So we can get the result that children's English trends to American English in the future.

7.2 Children's English will enter into the Internet

Peter Duckers says, "Online education is the future education". And of course, including the children's English, because it is a very important part of the education. And the reasons of children's English entering the Internet are that the Internet is informative as well as interesting. It takes a wide variety of learning styles: audio video, record-and-playback, chat, games, slang, dictionary and so on. The internet is colorful and useful for children.

Apart from this, the Internet can deliver content in smaller units than a classroom course, promoting greater understanding and better retention of the material.

The interactive features of online courses are designed to allow learners to interact or communicate with thousands of other language learners around the world directly from learner's site so that they can learn from each other and help each other, which is something almost impossible for a single classroom or English training school to do on its own. Learners will surely value this opportunity to practice their skills with others, and therefore their language standard will be enhanced.

8. Conclusions

The children's English is not perfect. It also has its own obvious disadvantages from recent research. So how to solve these problems and drive the children's English to a normal way are necessary. The optimizations and suggestions in teaching children's English should be followed and practice them step and step and perfect it constantly. But the course is very difficult and it will be a long way to go.

In a word, the children's English has a great potentiality. Children can learn English and get knowledge meanwhile the children's English training school can get many benefits from the process. Both of them are the winners of children's English. As more and more parents pay attentions to children's English, training schools take more cares to children's English and more children join into children's English, the children's English will meets its great development and more glorious future in China soon.

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Problems and Solutions Related to College

Students' Belief

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Abstract

With China staying in its social transition period, its changes in economy, politics and culture have influenced college students' thought to a large extent. Currently, in spite of the healthy and upward mainstream thought among college students, there are also some problems. This article elaborates on the problems and manifestations in college students' belief in different stages of college life, analyzes the causes and explores some solutions to them.

Keywords: College students, Belief, Solution

1. Introduction

Belief, a kind of spiritual pursuit at a higher level, converts ideal values into firm faith and then further dominates human thought and action. "Belief is the most fundamental and profound spiritual phenomenon in our human society, which will get expressed in all members following certain outlooks of world and life, values, and the supreme ideological form taking dominance over the others".

At present, China is undergoing the transitions from planned economy to market economy, from public society to mixed society, from leader-dominating society to constitutional one, from rural society to urban one, from poor society to wealthy one and from industrial society to information one, which offer us a lot of strategic opportunities, but bring about some problems as well. Besides promoting social development, such dramatic transitions have also exerted great influence on college students' thought.

2. Problems and Manifestations in College Students' Belief

2.1 Problems and Manifestations in Freshmen's Belief

Compared with others, freshmen have some incomparable characters: first, they are vigorous, energetic and ambitious. College, for them, is a place to cultivate themselves, to lead to success and to get into contact with other ambitious young men. Second, they have got good learning habits and attitudes. More than a decade of learning life, especially in senior high, has cultivated their good leaning habits, including learning a variety of things from different sources especially the library, attending classes punctually and attentively and respecting teachers and knowledge. As a result, most of them hold firm to the correct outlooks of world and life and values, believe in Marxist philosophy. All in all, their attitudes to life, including cognition and emotion, are correct and positive.

However, some problems may hide in such a good beginning. With sufficient leisure time in college life, those students strict with themselves will hold a positive attitude to their learning and life, however, those who lack self-discipline will kill their time in an empty way. Finding the college life boring, they are absorbed in online chatting, computer games all day long. As a result, their classes have to give way to these meaningless things. Actually, not the life, but these students themselves create their degradation (Lijie Chen, 2005). Just as what a sentence popular with college students nowadays says, "although degradation is guilty, it is beautiful". If these problems remain untouched, what is awaiting us is worse condition in sophomores and juniors.

2.2 Problems and Manifestations in Sophomores and Juniors' Belief

Sophomores and juniors take great efforts to collect all kinds of material from the library and the Internet instead of only learning from their teachers. In this period, they put more importance on self-learning and a variety of theories and opinions. Those students with positive outlooks of world and life and correct values will pay more attention to colorful social life, international situations, national policies as well as some events in and outside China, hence expanding their knowledge at the macro level. On the contrary, those students who began to fool along in the first year suffer from spiritual weakness, which is expressed in the lack in interest, concern about things and positive attitudes to life (Junxia Zhang, 2007). Instead of absorbing themselves to online chatting or computer games, they begin to puff those opinions they think right and prefer those odd theories. Boys care for those extreme views while girls are more fond of

constellation theories, fortune-telling and love and so on. They aren't worried about drinking, fighting, their empty college life, not to mention failing in the examination.

Obviously, without strengthened supervision and guidance of school authorities, these students will suffer from ideological myths and great damage, even violate the law and do harm to our society although they are just exceptions. Luckily, most of them will go through their senior life and get into the society finally.

2.3 Problems and Manifestations in Seniors' Belief

The last year in college life is filled with hardship for most college students, during which they have to transfer from their student life to vocational one and therefore, are faced with complicated decisions and reflections about their future jobs, graduation examination, thesis oral defense, their future with their lovers, hence suffering from great psychological pressure and conflicts. Of course, most students have obtained correct world outlook, life outlook and values as well as rich knowledge and can adjust themselves psychologically. However, some others may suffer from psychological problems resulting from defects in study or job hunting. As a result, they may lose their hope for their own future as well as the whole society and turn to money worship or formalism instead. Reflected in behavior, they may damage public properties, fight against others or do some other improper things. What's worse, those serious ones will hate the whole society.

With their special social status, increasing knowledge and skills, establishment of their self-confidence, stronger independence, senior students try to break away from the exterior restriction and interference and hope to decide on their own fate. Therefore, they have strong self-respect, react violently to criticisms and tend to go to extreme in their views about some negative things existing in the current society.

3. Causes of the Problems in College Students' Belief

3.1 Subjective Factors

College students lie in the stage of transferring from childhood to adulthood physically as well as learning to be independent psychologically. Therefore, they have relatively poor cognitive and thinking abilities, hence producing partial opinions about some issues; they are vigorous, energetic and care for new things, including those doubting, criticizing and rejecting the traditional ones, hence having impulsive emotion and psychological states. In addition, influenced by market economy, some students turn to money worship and hedonism. So, when they are faced with a variety of information resources, they tend to feel at loss and then make wrong decisions, which will force them to doubt their former belief, shake it and then end up with wrong one.

3.2 Objective Factors

3.2.1 Drawbacks in Higher Education

Since Chinese college students spend most of their college life in school, the educational system, pattern and culture have great influence on their outlooks of world and life and their values. First, college teachers' theoretical and teaching capacity influences students' moral quality. Some teachers, only paying attention to their teaching tasks while neglecting to communicate with them, fail to learn about their life and belief; some, neglecting college students' psychological endurance, tell too much about the seamy side of our society, which will result in students' extreme understanding about some issues. Second, school regulations also have profound influence on college students' thinking and morality. Currently, most colleges put much importance on students' academic and practical performance while neglecting to cultivate their personality and characters. In addition, in most college students' minds, college stands for justice, fairness and humanity, which calls for our schools to strengthen their institutional construction to eliminate malpractice on campus and those regulations with poor efficiency.

3.2.2 Negative Influences in Social Environment

The transition of Chinese society has not only offered some strategic opportunities but also caused some problems. As a result, there must be some conflicts in the course of building a well-to-do society throughout the country and establishing a harmonious socialist society.

As for political structure, some problems, such as slack work, low efficiency, non-public government affairs and lack in regulations and so on, have degraded the authority and destroyed the image of government in people's minds. Besides, there are corruptions and disordered competitions in government, Communist Party itself, schools and enterprises, which have led to students' opinion that the current society is a money-oriented one and corruption is just a common behavior. In addition, "people are increasingly worried and disappointed at the issues in education, medical treatment and housing. For college students, when they are confronted with great pressure in employment and living competition, the great contrast between their ideal and the reality, between school education and social practice, their belief tend to be destroyed in an instant." (Linli Tang, 2007) Finally, in the aspect of culture, two-thousand-year feudal society in China's history has planted superstition into Chinese people's minds. Just as someone says, Chinese people have no belief and they will try everything coming to them when they really need something. Therefore, the popularity of

Internet has resulted in people's narrower ways of thinking and more superficial thinking as well as their poorer abilities to reflect on and explore into those deep-level issues. Influenced by it, college students begin to believe in western culture, such as constellation and Tarot as well as traditional Chinese culture, such as geomantic omen and temples.

4. Solutions to the Problems in College Students' beliefs

In 1988, it was mentioned in a report issued by Japan Temporary Education Committee that it was urgent to strengthen the moral education in school since it was critical for Japan's future whether the youth in Japan could be cultivated to be qualified in morality and creativity for the future 21st century. In addition, it pointed out that as the central institution of moral education, schools are expected to conduct their education in a multi-dimensional and multi-level way instead of inputting knowledge and skills one way into students (Huifang Chen). In terms of the important role of schools, this article will focus on the solutions available in school education to the above problems.

4.1 Conducting Belief Education through Curriculum Setting

After the reform in the courses of ideological and political theories in Chinese colleges, Marxist contents have been perfected and enriched to exert its influence in college students' action. Under current circumstances, these theories should be connected with students' ideology and life as well as the reality of Chinese society. In addition, we should face up to some problems in our reality and help students to form a correct understanding about a series of unfavorable things in China's development, to distinguish phenomenon from nature, principal from non-principal contradictions and to strengthen the core values of socialism with Chinese characteristics taking their physical and psychological ages into consideration.

As for freshmen, we should encourage them to hold positive attitudes and opinions. We should help them to get familiar with the new environment, blend in with others in their school life. In addition, help should be offered in their knowledge about the characteristics of their majors, the potential employment outlook and the right way to study and live their life during the coming four years. Only by solving their problems in a practical way will they form and hold firm to correct values and outlooks of world and life. When it comes to sophomores and juniors, efforts should be made to establish correct system of viewing and solving problems, especially to form the right view about the Internet, which will enable them to use it not be addicted to it. Besides, if they establish right views about love under proper instructions, they'll be able to support each other in study. And for senior students, right views of employment seem particularly important, which will help them to conquer their emotional disorder, lack of confidence and hesitation about their job orientation.

4.2 Strengthening the Cultural Construction on Campus

Just as someone says, children are surrounded by potential socialization of politics wherever they are. Therefore, schools are expected to put more importance on the construction of their cultural atmosphere. Since the setting of a school's overall environment, its atmosphere and interpersonal relationship can be experienced personally, they are more likely to be accepted by students emotionally and ideologically. Actually, this kind of influence is not imperative but conducted in an unconscious way.

First, some good civic awareness and conduct regulations should be displayed to freshmen to inform them of the importance to cultivate their morality in addition to learning knowledge at college. Besides, educators and those educated should be put to an equal position, their communication should be enhanced and students' dominance and importance should be exerted in their moral judgment and values choices. Those junior and senior students should be encouraged to organize all kinds of community activities, such as part-time Party School, the Communist Youth League School, groups to study the latest theoretical achievements of Chinese Marxism and so on. In this way, students from different grades will get together to study some important theories such as that of socialism with Chinese characteristics to form right values, outlooks of world and life in their minds. In addition, we can manage to establish healthy and active cultural atmosphere on campus by organizing interest groups, cultural activities and some volunteer communities. Seniors should be organized to take part in social practice and labor practice to improve their abilities in dealing with problems in practice and adapting themselves to society and to form their practical values from the plainest work and life instead of nihilism and fickleness presented on the Internet.

As the great poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe says, the unique theme of world history lies in the conflicts between belief and disbelief. All those belief-dominating ages have produced splendid and long-lasting achievements for their generation and their offspring whatever form is adopted in their belief, while those disbelief-dominating ages have only ended up with a few achievements whatever form is adopted. Even if the latter boasts about a kind of false glory, it will fly away in an instant because nobody will bother to know anything about disbelief. Similarly, belief is of great significance for China and the whole human history. Chinese college students are the constructor and successor of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, whose belief is closely related to the stability and development of China. Consequently, great efforts are supposed to be made to solve the current problems in their belief and promote their healthy development.

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Status of Undergraduate Engineering Education in India -An Analysis of Accredited Engineering Programmes

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Abstract

National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a body constituted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is responsible for the accreditation of Technical education programmes in India. NBA evaluates the performance of engineering programmes quantitatively by assessing 70 variables grouped under a set of 8 predefined criteria, and qualitatively by observing the strength & weaknesses of the programme. The qualitative analysis of NBA reports during the period 2000 – 2005 is utilized in this paper for exploring the status of undergraduate engineering education in India. This paper also assesses the performance in terms of the total scores obtained by the UG engineering programmes in the NBA accreditation process during this period.

Keywords: Accreditation, Performance of engineering programmes, Engineering programmes in India, Qualitative analysis

1. Introduction

The system of technical education in India has become a formidable reservoir of technical expertise in terms of the magnitude of human resources and expertise available and of the physical facilities created over the last three decades. As of 2005, India has 1346 degree-level engineering institutions with a student intake of 4,39,689 (<http://www.aicte.ernet.in>). The quality of education received by the engineering students from these institutes will have a direct impact on how the companies, where they are employees compete in and contribute to the global economy. Moreover, in the new economy, technological innovation is central to wealth creation and economic growth (Bordogna, 1997). To sustain a competitive advantage, engineers must act as enablers to wealth creation rather than simply be a commodity on the global market (ABET, 2002).

Along with many success stories, there is a belief, and there are sufficient evidences and reasons to do so, that the science and technology is on the downward swing in India, and standards in Science & Technology education are deteriorating at a rapid pace while the intellectual level of the youngsters is rising (REE, 2003). As the growth rate of engineering institutions has been phenomenal, many problems associated with such fast growths are present in the Indian engineering education system. Some of these problems are inadequate supply of well-qualified and experienced faculty, too many colleges affiliated to a single university and location of many institutions far away from industry centers. An analysis of performance of the engineering programmes is of great interest in this situation, which could also help us in identifying some policy options to improve the quality of engineering education in India. This paper attempts for such an analysis by a search through the assessment reports of the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a body constituted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), India for the accreditation of technical education programmes in India.

2. Framework of the study

National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is the agency responsible for the accreditation of Technical education programmes in India. NBA reports and score sheets can be treated as the basic source of information for the analysis of performance of engineering programmes in India. NBA uses a scoring system with a maximum score of 1000 points in terms of 70 variables for the assessment of quality of engineering programmes. The process has been reviewed from time to time to better its assessment capabilities. The reviewed process has been implemented with effect from January 2003, and further modified in January 2004. The grading systems and accreditation criteria for the three versions of NBA (Manual for NBA Accreditation, 2000,2003,2004) are depicted in Tables 1 and 2.

The first part of the study has been organized to analyze the impact of these revisions on the scoring pattern of the programmes. In addition to the assessed scores, the NBA score sheets include the qualitative judgments of the experts about the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes. In the second part of the study, these qualitative observations

are extracted for the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the UG engineering programmes in India.

3. Objectives

(1) To explore the scoring pattern of the UG Engineering programmes under each of the three versions of NBA assessment processes.

(2) To analyze the strength and weaknesses of the UG Engineering programmes that had undergone the accreditation process of NBA.

4. Data description

Both the studies are developed around the NBA criteria, score sheets and reports. NBA reports and scoring sheets connected with the accreditation visits to 240 UG engineering programmes from 13 states of India during the period 2000 - 2005 have been collected.

The scores obtained by the programmes are categorized in to three groups based on the periods 2000 – 02, 2003 and 2004 – 05 for the first study. The distributions of the scores obtained by the engineering programmes in the accreditation process of NBA in each of the three periods are found out separately for the analysis. These distributions are used for drawing conclusions about the performance of the programmes as well as the assessment process of NBA.

Previous studies (Viswanadhan et al, 2004, 2005) pointed out that the entire accreditation process of NBA could be summarized by 19 factors instead of 70 variables. The summary of these 19 factors is displayed in Table 3.

As the 12th factor, Student Intake (Table 3), is not mentioned anywhere in the NBA reports while listing the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes by the experts, this factor does not seem to be an important indicator of performance of the programmes. Hence this factor is not considered in the study. As the last four factors - Supplementary Processes, Industry Initiatives, Institute Initiative and R&D Activities are the supporting processes of the core process of any educational programme - the Teaching Learning Process; they are combined and named Supporting Processes. Hence sets of 15 factors (Quality Indicators) are considered for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes. The observations of the NBA experts about the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes are categorized under these 15 factors for the second study.

5. Results and discussions

5.1 Study1 - Performance of programmes and the assessment process of NBA

The pattern of scores of the programmes during the three periods 2000 – 02, 2003 and 2004 – 05 are displayed in Table 4. A combined view of the scoring pattern during the three periods is given in Figure 1. Out of the 139 programmes accredited under the initial process of accreditation (before 2003), four programmes (3%) graded as 'Not Accredited' (Denied accreditation status), thirty five programmes (25 %) graded as 'C', seventy five programmes (54%) graded as 'B' and the remaining twenty five programmes (18 %) graded as 'A'. Under the 2003 revised process, out of 23 programmes applied for accreditation, fifteen programmes (65%) got 'Accredited for 3 years' and the remaining eight programmes (35%) got 'Accredited for 5 years'. Four programmes (5 %) got 'Not Accredited', sixty four programmes (82 %) got 'Accredited for 3 years' and ten programmes (13 %) graded as 'Accredited for 5 years' out of the 78 programmes during the period 2004 – 05 (Latest revisions).

A clustering of the programmes is visible around the minimum scores for accreditation in all the three periods (twenty one programmes (15 %) during the period 2000-2002, ten programmes (43 %) during 2003 and fifty programmes (64%) during the period 2004-05). This clustering is more noticeable with the revised processes (43% and 64%), where the grading system changed from three categories to two categories. A trend can be observed that most of the programmes that come forward for accreditation process are getting accredited through the revised accreditation processes. The reason for this phenomenon might be

- (1) The programmes satisfying the minimum requirements are only applying for accreditation
- (2) There is a tendency in the NBA expert teams to give accreditation status to all the applied programmes

5.2 Study 2 - Strengths and weaknesses of programmes

The status of the UG Engineering programmes in terms of the fifteen indicators of performance is analyzed from the qualitative observations mentioned in the NBA reports. The number of programmes judged as strong, weak and normally performing are listed in the Table 5. Performances of more than 25% (60 out of 240 programmes) of the programmes are judged as weak with respect to six indicators. These indicators are supporting processes, Student Performance, Performance Appraisal & Development, Faculty Adequacy, Supplementary Physical Resources and Participatory Management. Pie diagrams depicting the percentages of strong, weak and normally performing engineering programmes with respect to these six indicators are displayed in the Figures 2 through 7.

The commitment of the Managements that are seeking for accreditation is clear from the values of CA in Table 5 (only

1% of the programmes are weak). Main Physical Resources of the applied colleges are also very strong (96% rated as strong or average). It can be assumed that the colleges will assure the minimum standards at least in terms of the infrastructure before undergoing the accreditation process. Academic Calendar, which is almost common to all colleges affiliated to a University, is also intact in all the programmes (100% rated as strong or average).

The Supporting Processes, especially R & D activities and industry institute interaction, are the weakest components of accredited programmes. Inadequacy of faculty and lack of participatory management are the next weaknesses of the programmes. Performance appraisal mechanisms are not alive and student performance seemed to be poor in most of the programmes. It can be observed that managements of engineering institutes give less attention to the development of supplementary resources (hostels, transportation facilities, medical facilities etc).

6. Conclusions

An analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, of the performance of engineering programmes in India has been presented in this paper. It is observed that the programmes applied for accreditation are good in major physical resources and their managements are committed in achieving their intended goals. The major weaknesses of the programmes are the inadequate supporting processes and faculty members. A cautious review of these weaknesses will help in the improvement of quality of the programme, institute as well as the engineering education system of India.

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Table 1. Revisions of NBA accreditation processes - Grading system

Accreditation System	Total Points (Out of 1000)			
	<550	550-650	650-750	>750
Earlier System	Not Actd.	C	B	A
From 1-1-03	Not Actd.		Actd. for 3 yrs	Actd. for 5 yrs
From 1-1-04	Not Actd.		Actd. for 3 yrs	Actd. for 5 yrs

Table 2. Revisions of NBA accreditation processes - Criteria for Accreditation

Earlier System			Present System (Modified from 1-1-2004)		
Criterion Number	Criteria Earlier system	Wts	Criterion Number	Criteria From 1-1-2004 onwards	Wts
1	Mission, Goals and Organization	100	1	Organization and Governance	80
2	Financial & Physical Resources and their Utilization	100	2	Financial Resources, Allocation and Utilization	70
			3	Physical Resources (Central Facilities)	50
3	Human Resources: Faculty & Staff	200	4	Human Resources: Faculty & Staff	200
4	Human Resources: Students	100	5	Human Resources: Students	100
5	Teaching – Learning Processes	350	6	Teaching – Learning Processes	350
6	Supplementary Processes	50	7	Supplementary Processes	50
7	Industry – Institution interaction	70			
8	Research & Development	30	8	Research & Development and Interaction Effort	100
Total		1000	Total		1000

Table3. Summary of Criteria wise Factor Analyses on the NBA variables

Criteria -NBA	Variables (Parameters – NBA)	Factors Extracted
I Mission, Goals and Organization	Decentralization and Delegation, Involvement of faculty, Transparency	1. Participatory Management
	Leadership, Efficiency, Attitude, Motivation	2. Leadership Efficiency
	Mission & Goals, Commitment and Effectiveness	3. Commitment to achieve goals
	Planning & monitoring and incentives	4. Planning and Monitoring
II Financial & Physical Resources and their Utilization	Maintenance budget, Development resources and budget, Capital resources, Operational budget	5. Financial Resources
	Office equipment, Hostels, canteen, transportation and medical facilities,	6. Supplementary Physical Resources
	Land, Building and Support services – water, electricity communication	7. Main Physical Resources
III Human Resources: Faculty & Staff	Attitudes, Involvement, Commitment, Skill Up gradation, Workload, Performance appraisal.	8. Performance Appraisal & Development
	Recruitment procedures, Number, Qualifications/Skills	9. Supporting Staff Adequacy
	Recruitment procedures, number, qualification and development programmes.	10. Faculty Adequacy
IV Human Resources Students	Academic Results, Admission to Post Graduate Courses, Performance in competitive Examinations, Placements and Employer's Feedback	11. Student Performance
	Admission Criteria and number of admissions	12. Student Intake
V Teaching –Learning Processes	Syllabus, Implementation of the Instructional Programme, Library, Computing facilities, Laboratories, Workshops, Modernization and Budget for Consumables	13. Learning Facilities
	Instructional aides, Evaluation Procedures and feedback,	14. Instruction, Evaluation and feedback
	Working days, contact hours/ week, announcement and implementation of academic programmes.	15. Academic calendar
VI Supplementary Processes	Student Counseling and Guidance, Extra & Co-curricular Activities, Alumni Information, Professional Society Activities, Entrepreneurship Development	16. Supplementary Processes
VII Industry – Institution Interaction	Industry participation and curriculum planning, Consultancy, Continuing education and industrial internship for the faculty, Project Work	17. Institute initiatives
	Extension Lectures, Industrial Visits and Training, Placement	18. Industry Initiatives
VIII Research & Development	Institutional Budget for Research and Development, Academic/Sponsored/Industrial Research and Development, Publications and patents	19. R&D Activities

Table 4. Distribution NBA scores of undergraduate engineering programmes

NBA Scores Obtained by the programmes	Number of programmes			
	During	2000-02	In 2003	During 2004-05
< 450		2	0	0
450-500		2	0	0
500-550		0	0	0
550-600		21	0	0
600-650		14	0	4
650-700		44	10	50
700-750		31	5	14
750-800		20	8	10
800-850		5	0	0
850-900		0	0	0
900-950		0	0	0
950-1000		0	0	0
Total number of programmes		139	23	78

Table 5. Performance of programmes with respect to the 15 quality indicators

Sl.No.	Quality Indicators	Number of programmes rated as		
		Strong	Weak	Normal
1	Participatory Management (PM)	46	93	101
2	Planning and Monitoring (Pln)	48	31	161
3	Leadership Efficiency (LE)	18	23	199
4	Commitment to achieve goals (CA)	65	3	172
5	Main Physical Resources (MPR)	94	10	136
6	Supplementary Physical Resources (SPR)	71	78	91
7	Financial Resources (FR)	70	46	124
8	Faculty Adequacy (FA)	70	110	60
9	Performance Appraisal & Development (PAD)	33	66	141
10	Supporting Staff Adequacy (SSA)	49	30	161
11	Student Performance (StP)	47	83	110
12	Learning Facilities (LF)	12	19	209
13	Instruction, Evaluation and feedback (IEF)	48	35	157
14	Academic calendar (AC)	53	0	187
15	Supporting Processes (SP)	20	202	18

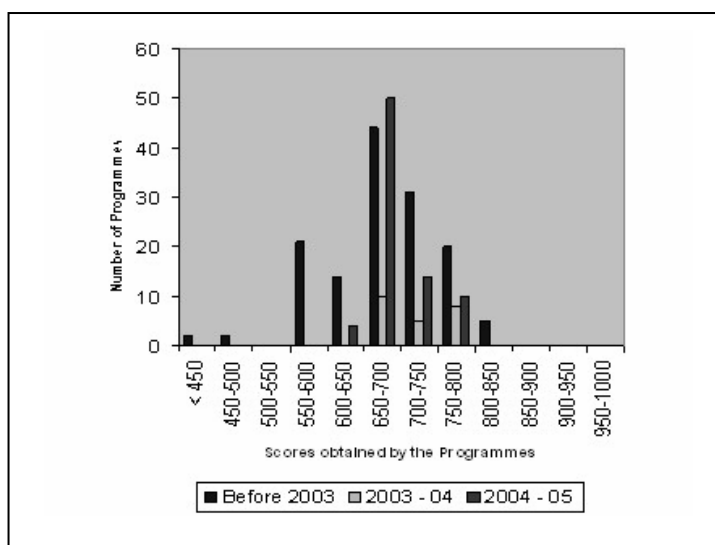


Figure 1. A combined view of distribution of NBA scores obtained by UG Engineering Programmes

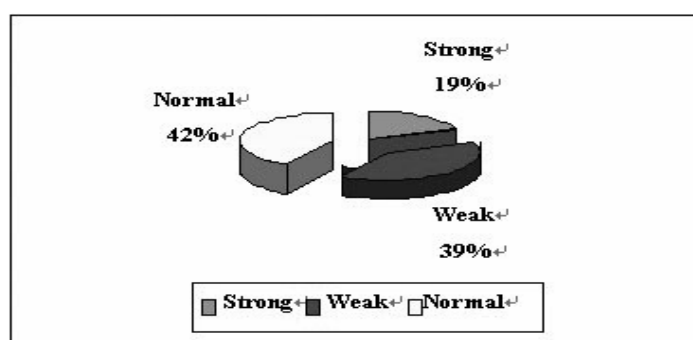


Figure 2. Participatory management of engineering programmes

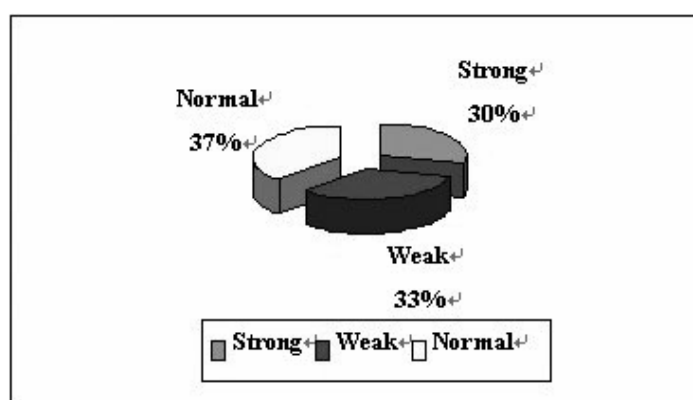


Figure 3. Supplementary physical resources of engineering programmes

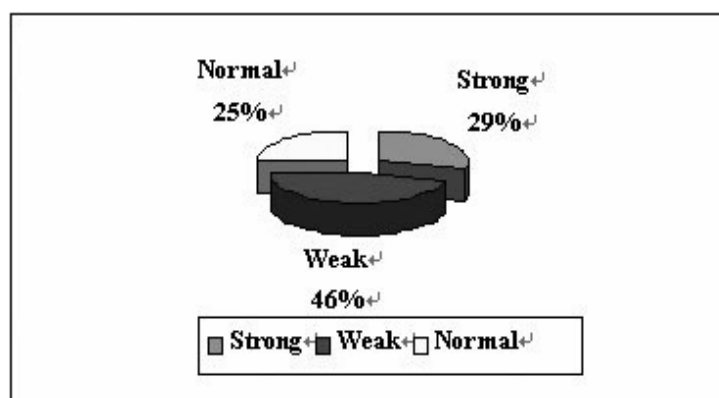


Figure 4. Faculty adequacy of engineering programmes

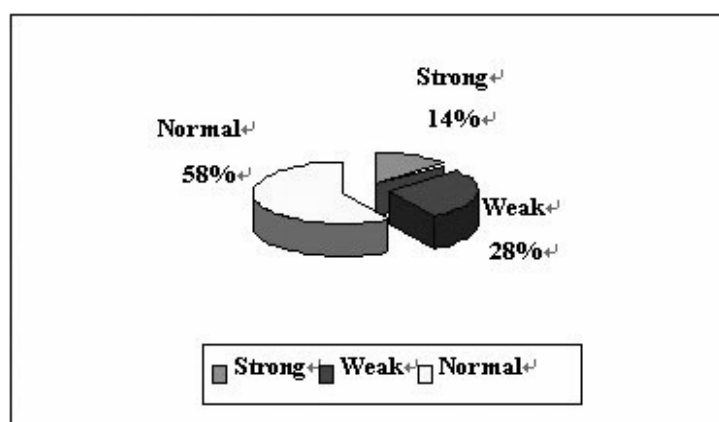


Figure 5. Performance appraisal and development of engineering programmes

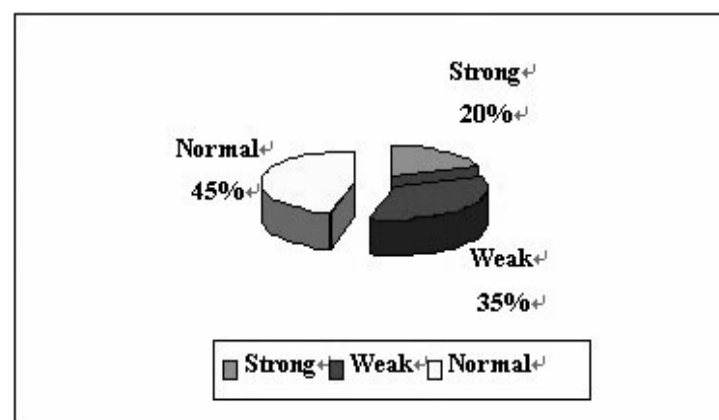


Figure 6. Student performance of engineering programmes

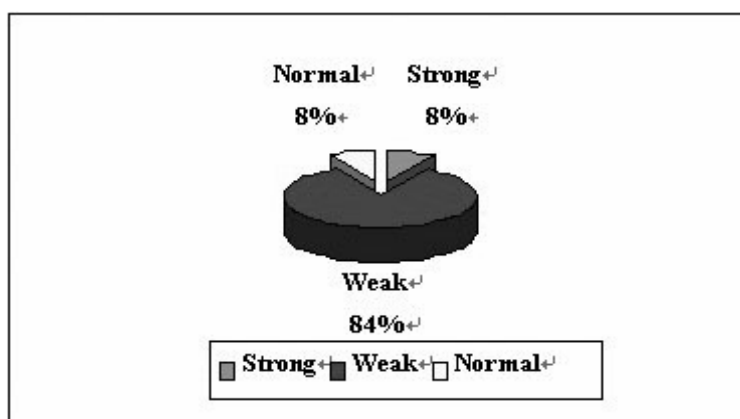


Figure 7. Supporting processes of engineering programme



Research on the Costs of Running Compulsory Education Standards: Comparison of Compulsory Education Internationally

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Abstract

Compulsory education is the fundamental education for citizens and is the source of state power, which radically determines thought level, political awareness, cultural sense and production ability of the entire nation. Therefore, to popularize compulsory education is the root of a country. This paper explains the meanings of compulsory education, compares domestic compulsory education with those abroad, reviews and illustrates the past and present conditions of China's compulsory education, and puts forward development direction of China's compulsory education.

Keywords: Compulsory education, International comparison, Present condition, Perspective

Compulsory education is the product of the development of modern industrial production and modern social life. The practices of other countries in popularizing compulsory education teach us that compulsory education is the education of the entire human beings and the education of social citizens. The aim of education is to facilitate each social citizen with basic, systematical and comprehensive scientific and cultural knowledge. Compulsory education does not aim at cultivating talents but at cultivating human being. Compulsory education is to help each human being to have good personalities and healthy bodies, to master the knowledge, skills and methods to continue study, to take on excellent psychological makings and scientific life attitudes, and to become qualified citizens who abide by laws and could distinguish right from wrong.

1. The concept of compulsory education

Compulsory education is also called imposed education, free education or popularizing compulsory education. Compulsory education is, according to the state laws and regulations, widespread, compulsory and free school education during limited years, within limited extent, on children at the right age. It is fundamental education that the society and families should guarantee, is indispensable to modern production and modern life, and is the mark of modern civilization. Compulsory education is an important component of citizen education and has remarkable characteristics, namely, compulsory and popularized.

2. Comparison of domestic compulsory education with those abroad

Compulsory education was adopted due to the establishment of new countries, is considered important as the driving power of a country's development, and has been developed with the rising and declining of nationalism. In this way, compulsory education is combined with countries' aims, which helps to develop compulsory education. Particularly, after the second world war, with the penetrating of democracy cosmopolitan, human right starts to gain importance in the field of education. It has been widely admitted that to be educated is the right of human beings, which totally differs from the previous right-obligation relationship, that is, receiving education is the obligation of citizens and offering education is the right of the country. Of course, compulsory education concept changes with it. Receiving compulsory education is the lowest right of citizens and further guaranteeing compulsory education becomes the obligation of the country. The developments of compulsory educations in different countries vary with each other due to the difference in social and cultural background.

2.1 Compulsory education in five high-income countries, namely, the US, Soviet Russia, the UK, France and Japan

After the second world war, the US adopted 12-year compulsory education. The resources of education funds of the US are diversified. In addition to government funds and tuition, social donation and the incomes from schools' service to

the society also account for a large portion. Soviet Russia conducted 10-year compulsory education, where poor students enjoyed totally or partly free text books. The UK established 11-year compulsory education. In 1967, the UK announced that the “age-11 examination” was cancelled, children of various classes could directly enter comprehensive schools from elementary schools and enjoy free tuition. In 1959, France issued *Education Report Order*, stating that France would execute 10-year compulsory education, tuition was exempted, poor students were exempted from book expenses, all students enjoyed transportation and lunch subsidy. After the second world war, the compulsory education of Japan regulated that all citizens aged from six to fifteen must receive 9-year compulsory education (6-year elementary school and 3-year junior high school), tuition and book expenses were free and part of the lunch fees were free too. In the education investment distribution structure, all the five countries follow the rule of “guaranteeing the common, develop the important and guaranteeing the investment on popularizing compulsory education”. Because of different economic development levels of the five countries and different significance attached to compulsory education, the investment amount and apportionment on compulsory education of the five countries differ from each other.

2.2 Compulsory education in countries of mid-high incomes-Brazil and Mexico

Brazil executes 8-year compulsory education. Its education administrative system is divided into three levels: federal level, state level and municipal level. Brazil established fundamental education maintaining and development and teaching promotion funds so as to encourage education co-workers to participate in the activities and to resolve problems in education finance. Mexico carries out 10-year compulsory education, including one year of pre-school education where students do not need to pay tuition and text book fees. Its funds mainly come from the Ministry of Education. Each year the government will give two hundred million Piaster (equivalent to RMB one hundred and fifty million) to community education. The two countries are mid-high income countries in Latin America with the biggest population. Therefore, they are of representation. After 1960s, because the two countries have been attaching significance to compulsory education investment, the development status of popularizing compulsory education is rather good.

2.3 Compulsory education in countries of mid-low incomes- Egypt and Nigeria

Egypt carries out 9-year compulsory education. Students are exempted from tuition and text book fees. Nigeria executes 6-year compulsory education. In countries of mid-low incomes, the proportion of funds invested in compulsory education shows downtrend. Between 1965 and 1985, the proportion of funds invested by the government on compulsory decreased 3 percent at average. In particular, the proportion of funds invested in preliminary education decreases greatly, 7% at average. Such trend will affect the sound development of compulsory education.

2.4 Compulsory education in countries of low incomes-India and Pakistan

The free compulsory education in India is 8 years. Its education administrative system is composed of federal, state, county or autonomy city (town), district or village levels. India adopts the administrative system where central government and state have different and separate powers. Pakistan also executes 8-year compulsory education. Countries of low incomes are under huge tasks in compulsory education. They are short of funds to be invested in compulsory education and their benefits from compulsory education are low, which is mainly showed in that the ratio of compulsory education students discontinuing their studies is high and the ratio between teachers and students is low. Such phenomenon is common in countries of low incomes and shall arouse attention.

2.5 China's compulsory education – transition from mid-low income country to middle income country

China's compulsory education is, according to the regulations of *P.R.C. Compulsory Education Law*, citizen education that children and teenagers of the right age must receive and state, society, schools and families must provide. Compulsory education could be divided into preliminary compulsory education and preliminary middle compulsory education. As regulated by *P.R.C. Compulsory Education Law*, the compulsory education of China is 9 years. At present, the length of schooling of compulsory education mainly includes “six-three system” (six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school) and “five-four system” (five years of elementary school and four years of junior high school). Also, there are some places where 8-year compulsory education is executed, that is five years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. However, these areas are transiting to 9-year compulsory education. Children and teenagers of the right ages, after finishing the 9-year or 8-year compulsory education study, will achieve a degree of junior high school graduation. The state exempts students receiving compulsory education from the tuition.

In 169 countries where data are available, the mean year of compulsory education is 7 to 8 years. African countries have 6-year compulsory education and north America, Europe and Soviet Union 10-year. There are more countries whose compulsory education extends to the first stage (junior high school) of the second level education than those whose compulsory education only includes the first level education. The *World Education Report* of 1998 indicates that among 171 countries whose data are available, the mean length of compulsory education is 8-year, the mean length of compulsory education in Africa reaches 7.2-year, and the man length of compulsory education developed countries in north America and Europe is 10 to 12 years. The length of compulsory education is compulsorily regulated by the

legislation or policies of the state and is a mark of the development level of compulsory education of a country. Generally speaking, the length of compulsory education in developed countries is longer than those in developing countries. The five to eight year compulsory education is mainly carried out by developing countries. The length of compulsory education of developed countries is 9 to 12 years. The longer the compulsory education of a country is, the higher the popularization degree and development level of the education is. The input of compulsory education is determined by how much the state financial investment in education accounts for the national citizen incomes or GNP. Comparatively speaking, the GNP of developed countries is higher than that of developing countries. Therefore, the investment in compulsory education of developed countries is certainly higher than that in developing countries.

3. Retrospect, current station and prospect of China's compulsory education

Compulsory education is education thought which appeared at the end of Qing Dynasty. Its basic opinion is that all citizens should receive compulsory and common preliminary education. Bourgeois reform class, at an earlier time, held that we should imitate European and Japanese capitalism countries to set up schools all over China and to execute compulsory education. Kang Youwei proposed that, "all towns shall set up elementary schools and all citizens at the age of higher than 7 shall receive education on literature, history, mathematics, geography, physics, and music. After 8 years, students could graduate. The parents of those who refuse to enter school shall be punished." Liang Qichao also held that the elementary education shall be compulsory education. Such opinion was accepted by the advanced knowledge field and education field of that time and therefore was widely spread. Afterwards, "Guimou system" regulates that the length of compulsory education is 5 years. After the Xinhai revolution, "Renziguichou system" regulates that four years of elementary school is compulsory education. In January 1956, the *12-year Education Planning Outline* published by the Ministry of Education promises to popularize compulsory education, which says that "the compulsory education will be basically popularized across the entire country within 7 years". In September the same year, in the political report made by Liu Shaoqi in the eighth conference of Communist Party of China, it changes "the compulsory education will be basically popularized" into the compulsory education will be popularized. However, the duration is changed from 7 years to 12 years. It is first fixed in the form of law in *P.R.C. Constitution* passed in 1982 in the fifth national conference that China will popularize preliminary compulsory education. In 1986, the *P.R.C. Compulsory Education Law* was promulgated, which is considered as a milestone in the reform and development of China's fundamental education.

It is 20 years from *P.R.C. Compulsory Education Law* was promulgated in 1986 to the amendment made to *P.R.C. Compulsory Education Law*. During the 20 years, the popularization of compulsory education in China achieves remarkable achievements. China realized historical improvement. In 2005, the population covering rate in areas where the 9 year compulsory education is popularized reaches more than 95%. During the Eleventh Five Year Plan, China popularized 9 year compulsory education. Since the spring term of 2006, the central government has been emphasizing the support for the system of guaranteeing the execution of countryside compulsory education in the west. The same significance is attached to the poor areas in the east. Countryside students are exempted from the miscellaneous fees at the stage of compulsory education. Students from poor families will enjoy free text books and subsidy for living and accommodation. The guarantee level of the public funds in countryside elementary and junior high schools is increased. The system for guaranteeing the salaries of teachers in elementary and junior high schools shall be consolidated and perfected. This reform fully incorporates countryside compulsory education into the guarantee scale of public finance, relieves the education burden of farmers, and further promotes the popularization of 9 year compulsory education. In 2007, China continues exempting children from low-guarantee families and especially-poor families who formerly enjoy "two-exemption and one-subsidy", orphans and disabled children who are studying public schools from text book fees and further carries out the policy of offering living expense subsidy to boarders from financially difficult families who are receiving compulsory education in the countryside. Countryside students who are receiving compulsory education will be provided with free text books. The basic individual student public fund standard in middle and western provinces for elementary and junior high students at the stage of compulsory education shall be increased. The benchmark ration will be fixed so as to warrant that the teaching funds in elementary and junior high schools will be increased annually.

In the two national conferences of 2005, some representatives suggested that 12 year compulsory education shall be the new aim of education. The author thinks that it is of great meanings to execute 12 year compulsory education. As is well known, the senior high education lays between the compulsory education and the college education, which is not the statutory compulsory education or the higher education that the state supports. Therefore, senior high education becomes a weak point in the national education chain. On the other hand, due to the insufficiency in the investment in senior high education, the miscellaneous fees in senior higher educations of many schools are pretty high, which makes poor students stop their studies because they are not able to afford the fees. It is certain that if the 12 year compulsory education is executed, the afore mentioned problems will be resolved. Of course, some one worries that it is hard for undeveloped areas to burden it. Therefore, we shall take steps to execute the 12 year compulsory education. The state shall, at least, encourage areas with developed economy to realize 12 year compulsory education earlier. The extension

of the length of popularization education is determined by the development of modern production's from low to high level at regular pace. The popularization of fundamental education in other countries is also executed step by step and from low to high level. Without the popularization of the 9 year compulsory education, the 12 year compulsory education could only be the castle in the air. With the development of economy and the improvement of people's living standard, the length of compulsory education will certainly gradually be extended.

Education is the hope of a people, the future of a country and the representation of comprehensive national power. Now, the popularization of 9 year compulsory education has been basically realized. To put forward 12 year compulsory education at proper time shall be the direction that we are striving for. Actually, the time comes. First of all, the economic development has provided solid material base for China to execute 12 year compulsory education. Secondly, the successful execution of family planning policy and the change of people's bearing concept make the growth of population under effective control, which remarkable decreases the economic burden in executing 12 year compulsory education. The meaning to execute 12 year compulsory education for those rich families might not be that important. However, for those poor families, the meaning is great. To execute 12 year compulsory education is also of realistic meaning for promoting the improvement of national education level.

The state does not rule that all areas shall execute 9 year compulsory education because the state, at that time, took into consideration of the specific national power. Therefore, to execute 12 year compulsory education shall also start from the reality, take into accounts the different economic development level and financial status of different areas, and develop gradually. No matter it is 9 year compulsory education or 12 year, it is both determined by the economic development level and financial status of our country. Therefore, it is important to do research on compulsory education standard running costs based on the real and specific condition of China.

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Note

this paper is the first one in the subject *Research on the Costs of Running Compulsory Education Standards* (subject No. 1071149-3-00)



The Practices of Critical Pedagogy and the Preliminary Analysis of Its Application in Chinese Education

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Abstract

There are many different strands to critical pedagogy: the libertarian, the radical, and the liberationist. This essay will focus on the radical perspective critical pedagogy which is represented by Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. At first, the definition and aims of critical pedagogy is illustrated. Next, the essay argues about how to illustrate the practices of critical pedagogy, including the practice of "conscientization", "dialogue" and "praxis". Finally, some resistance to critical pedagogy in teaching practice in China is discussed in this essay. The purpose of this essay is to make an introduction of critical pedagogy and analyze the possibility of critical teaching in Chinese education.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy, Conscientization, Dialogue, Praxis

1. Introduction

Freire (1973) claims that "narration" is the fundamental character of the teacher-student relationship in traditional education (Freire, 1973, p45). The teachers' task is to fill the students with the contents of their narration. Narration leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated contents. From this character, Freire (1973) developed a "banking" concept of traditional education. In the banking concept of education, "the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 1973, p45). The teacher makes deposits of information and knowledge which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. The teacher deposit as much as he can during a course, and students demonstrate how much they have gained by achieving high grades on the examination.

In the banking concept of education, "the central bank of knowledge from which instructors draw deposits is a metaphor for official knowledge: standard syllabi, accepted textbooks, canonical knowledge in a discipline, scientific truths, etc." (Boyce, 1996, p9). In banking education, central bank knowledge is presented as neutral and is not usually critiqued or presented as historically embedded in a particular social, political, or economic context. However, the materials for the knowledge are usually selected by the people who have the power to set standards. That is to say that the knowledge which the students are learning is controlled by the powerful people and the knowledge may not be the truth. Freire (1987) contends that education is a political act (Freire & Shor, 1987). Therefore, many theorists (Gramsci, Freire, Giroux and McLaren) developed a new pedagogy-critical pedagogy which "empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices" (McLaren, 1989, p160). Unlike the traditional pedagogy, Critical pedagogy applies a critical perspective to the practice of teaching.

2. The definition and aims of critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has its roots in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, which greatly influenced Paulo Freire, the most widely recognized and influential theorist and educator of critical pedagogy. Giroux (1994) said that Freire's name has become synonymous with the very concept and practice of critical pedagogy for decades (Giroux, 1994). For Freire, critical pedagogy focuses on the development of critical consciousness, which enables learners to recognize connections

between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded. And then the learners can make transformations of individuals and society through “dialogue” and praxis.

[Critical] pedagogy . . . signals how questions of audience, voice, power, and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classrooms and communities. . . . Pedagogy in the critical sense illuminates the relationship among knowledge, authority, and power. (Giroux, 1994: 30)

According to McLaren (1989), critical pedagogy is the process through which students learn to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world and the possibility for transforming the way we live (McLaren, 1989).

"Unlike traditional perspectives of education that claim to be neutral and apolitical, critical pedagogy views all education theory as intimately linked to ideologies shaped by power, politics, history and culture. Given this view, schooling functions as a terrain of ongoing struggle over what will be accepted as legitimate knowledge and culture" (Darder 1991, p. 77).

Kellner (2000) claims that Critical pedagogy considers how education can provide individuals with the tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and thus to deploy education in a process of progressive social change (Kellner, 2000).

According to definitions mentioned by the above theorists, critical pedagogy concerns much about the issue of power in the teaching and learning context. It focuses on how and in whose interests knowledge is produced and passed on. Critical pedagogy refers to educational theory and teaching and learning practices that are designed to raise learners' critical consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. Then the learners can form their own way to learn the new knowledge.

According to Giroux (2003), “Critical pedagogy attempts to:

- (1) Create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplines and creating interdisciplinary knowledge.
- (2) Raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power in schools and is concerned about how to provide a way of reading history as part of a larger project of reclaiming power and identity, particularly as these are shaped around the categories of race, gender, class, and ethnicity.
- (3) Reject the distinction between high and popular culture so as to make curriculum knowledge responsive to the everyday knowledge that constitutes peoples' lived histories differently.
- (4) Illuminate the primacy of the ethical in defining the language that teachers and others use to produce particular cultural practices." (Giroux, 2003, <http://www.perfectfit.org/CT/giroux2.html>)

3. The practices of critical pedagogy

According to Freire, education is not neutral. Freire (1972) describes education as domesticating or liberating. The aim of critical pedagogy is to discover and implement liberating alternatives in social interaction and transformation via the conscientization (critical consciousness) process. There are mainly two critical teaching practices in developing critical consciousness: dialogue and problem-posing.

For Freire, the process of transformation requires praxis and dialogue. Freire proposed a praxis approach to education which combined action and reflection together. He also gave “dialogue” a deep meaning as to its original meaning. Conscientization, problem-posing, praxis and dialogue are central to Freire’s theory of critical pedagogy.

3.1 Conscientization

The focus of critical pedagogy is the development of critical consciousness. Freire claims that his sense of literacy leads to critical consciousness (conscientization) which foment and buttresses movements for social justice. Schipani (1984) makes a brief explanation of the meaning of conscientization. “conscientization was briefly indicated as the process in which people achieve a deepening awareness, both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality” (Schipani, 1984, p10). Leistyna, et al (1996) contends that praxis refers to “the relationship between theoretical understanding and critique of society... and action that seeks to transform individuals and their environments” (Leistyna, et al, 1996, p199).

Freire underscore five characteristics of conscientization which are concluded by Schipani (1994): (1) It is first of all an act of knowing and search for knowledge.

- (2) It is a dialectic conscience- world, taking place within history, via the praxis in which transformation occurs.
- (3) It implies the active practice of transformation of reality.
- (4) It presupposes a previous ideological option towards radical social change.

(5) It includes the task of organizing the practice of transformation.

Elias (1994) sustains that "critical to understanding Freire's conception of conscientization is his theory of the various levels of consciousness" (Elias, 1994, p125). Freire (1973) identified three levels of consciousness: semi-intransitive consciousness, semi-transitive consciousness, and critical consciousness as he developed the practice of "conscientization".

(1) Semi-intransitive consciousness

At this level, one does not imagine changing life; they see life as what it is. That things might change seems to be the result of magic or miracles. For example, one person wins the lottery or realizes his wishes unexpectedly.

(2) Semi-transitive consciousness (or naive consciousness)

At this level, people can learn and change things. They hold a world view in which cause and effect operate in fragmented ways. Usually the semi-transitive person goes about changing one thing at a time.

(3) Critical consciousness (or critically transitive consciousness)

At this level, people can recognize the connections between individual problems and the social context within which they are embedded. Boyce (1996) makes a brief description of the four qualities of critical consciousness: power awareness, critical literacy, permanent desocialization, and self-education/organization.

3.2 Problem-posing

In traditional education which Freire's (1970) describes as banking education, teachers make deposits of information and knowledge into the empty accounts of students. The students are not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. Students do not practice any act of cognition. In a word, the teacher is just the person who passes the knowledge and students are persons who receive the knowledge.

In banking education, central bank knowledge is presented as neutral and universal. With a banking approach, knowledge is not usually critiqued or presented as historically embedded in a particular social, political, or economic context.

In contrast with a banking education, Freire proposed a problem-posing education. The students in problem-posing education are critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher rather than docile listeners. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge is superseded by true knowledge (Freire, 1972). The educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. Boyce (1996) claims that Problem-posing offers all subject matter as historical products to be questioned rather than as central bank wisdom to be accepted.

The responsibility of the problem-posing teacher is to diversify subject matter and to develop critical understanding of personal experience, conditions in society, and existing knowledge at the basis of student's thought and speech. In this democratic pedagogy, the teacher is not filling empty minds with authority knowledge but is posing knowledge in any form as a problem for mutual inquiry.

Problem-posing education does not suggest that students have nothing to learn from established knowledge or that fundamental knowledge must be reconstructed by each group of learners. In problem-posing education, instructors and students concern themselves with how texts and syllabi are organized, with the underlying assumptions of a course or discipline, and questioning the sources and perspectives included or excluded from the domain of the course. "Problem-posing contextualizes knowledge and is based on instructor and learner posed questions as catalysts for learning" (Boyce, 1996, p10).

3.3 Dialogue

According to Freire (1996), dialogue does not represent a somewhat false path that one people attempts to elaborate on and realize in the sense of involving the ingenuity of the other. It should be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. "Dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing" (Leistyna, et al, 1996, p202). Dialogue should be viewed as a process of learning and knowing rather than a conversation that mechanically focuses on the individual's lived experience.

For Freire, dialogue in education is the practice of freedom. It is communication that can awaken consciousness and prepares people for collective action. Naming one's experience and placing that voiced experience in context is the essence of dialogue

In one's teaching practice, developing critical consciousness begins with the opening dialogue of a class. Dialogic practice moves generally from an instructor-identified beginning point. It is the instructor's task to bring learners to the edge of their knowledge and to consider with them ways to continue learning.

However, a practice of dialogue limits teacher-talk and encourages learners' voices. Dialogue works against learner

passivity and silence and attempts to develop critical consciousness by engaging learners in dissocializing discovery and linking experience with text. Dialogue should develop through numerous, subsequent rounds of working with questions raised by the learners and the instructor as a theme is explored.

The classroom is envisioned as a site where new knowledge, grounded in the experiences of students and teachers alike, is produced through meaningful dialogue. In the class learners begin to express their experience and understanding of a theme.

Regarding to the use of dialogue and generative themes to develop critical consciousness, Shor (1992) develops topical and academic themes as additional approaches to dialogue. A generative theme is one that emerges from the lives of learners as they engage a course of study. It presents a point of entry for learning that has meaning and relevance to a particular group of learners at a particular time.

Another approach to dialogue is the use of a topical theme presented by the instructor. When presenting a topical theme, the instructor frames the opening dialogue, engages learners, uses texts and readings with various points of view, and facilitates writing and speaking tasks as learners work with the theme as a frame for the course.

Academic themes provide a third approach to dialogue. Instructor will pose academic questions one after one. Learners are encouraged to use their knowledge and to seek additional knowledge addressing the questions. The role of the instructor is to frame questions, to facilitate dialogue, to introduce resources that will push learners to consider additional perspectives, and to make a synthesis of the students' learning.

3.4 Praxis

Darder (1991) sustain that praxis is at the heart of a critical pedagogy (Darder, 1991). According to Freire (1973), praxis is a complex activity involving a cycle theory, application, evaluation, reflection, and then back to theory. Schipani (1984) claims that praxis approach can be understood as the dialectic relationship of critically reflective action and critical reflection that is informed by practice.

In brief, praxis is to combine theory and practice together. According to Gibson (1994), Practice is the beginning and end of the knowledge cycle which moves from initial perception to abstraction to action and reflection. For instance, theoretical anti-racism is impossible in the absence of anti-racist practice. "Although theory is informed by practice; its real value lies in its ability to provide the reflexivity needed to interpret the concrete experience" (Giroux, 1983, p99). According to Darder (1991), theory which is cut off from practice may become simple verbalism. Practice which is separated from theory may become blind activism. "Authentic praxis can only occur where there exists a dialectical union between theory and practice" (Darder, 1991, p84). So the relationship between theory and practice should be viewed in the dialectical way.

Praxis is an iterative, reflective approach to taking action. Praxis places individuals in organizational and social contexts and draws attention to the iterative processes of consciousness, practice, and reflective practice in their experience. Macedo (1996) said that the sharing of experiences must always be understood within a social praxis that entails both reflection and political action. (Leistyna, et al, 1996, p203). Then an individual engaged in praxis must be well prepared to participate in collective actions.

Praxis links liberatory education with social transformation. The aim of praxis is to bring social transformation. Freire insists that men distinguish themselves from animals through their action of creating the realm of culture and history. That is men are beings of praxis who have the consciousness of transforming and creating.

Applied to teaching critically, praxis involves moving between a critical perspective, one's teaching practices, evaluative reflection on the liberating and/or dominating aspects of the teaching, and back again to a critical and liberatory perspective. Actually, Freire is a significant educator who seeks to the approach of combining theory and practice together. Peter McLaren says, "Freire's work has been cited by educators throughout the world and constitutes an important contribution to critical pedagogy not simply because of its theoretical refinement, but because of Freire's success at putting theory into practice."

4. The resistance to critical pedagogy

Traditional education has such a great influence on Chinese education. The "banking education" is being carried out nearly in every school. Therefore, it is a very hard task to conduct critical pedagogy in Chinese schools.

4.1 The difficulties to set up critical consciousness

The chief difficulty of developing critical consciousness is that it counters the acceleration with which learners live and the learners resist to an active and engaged approach to learning (Shor & Freire, 1987). The learners have difficulty in slowing down to deeply consider a complex theme or problem. Beyond having difficulty doing so, they resist changing the familiar pace at which they move and experience.

In china, it is common for students to expect that teachers explain things, demonstrate relevance, make persuasive

arguments, provide solutions to problems, and present complex ideas in a simple way. Their expectations are shaped by years of experience. Even the teachers are use to the traditional teaching approaches. They are unwilling to change the teaching method to a critical way. If the teacher is committed to developing critical consciousness, he can not receive completely positive course evaluations either from the students or leaders.

Boyce (1996) uses a metaphor of waking and sleeping to illustrate the difficulty of developing critical consciousness. Remaining asleep is comfortable. Developing critical consciousness involves waking up in fundamental ways. The work of waking up and becoming actively engaged in one's life and learning in meaningful ways needs great efforts.

4.2 The difficulties to carry out the practices of dialogue and problem-posing approach

According to Shor & Freire (1987), the approaches and practices presented in this essay are not welcomed by learners (Shor & Freire, 1987). In China, passivity in learners has been fostered in the education industry for a long time. Students are familiar to the receptive and compliant approach to learning, such as information gathering and organizing. Some students resist practices that require engagement, listening to classmates, developing a reasoned critique of knowledge and of external experts, and identifying meaningful action. Most of the Chinese students don't like asking questions because sometimes they feel shy, sometimes they think it is impolite to the teacher and sometimes they think it is an activity of showing off.

In China, teachers are familiar to their role as an expert. They find that the approach of dialogue and problem-posing challenges their familiar role as an expert. They said that the critical teaching approaches give away too much of an instructor's power. Teachers think that they have priority to their students on knowledge. They like pushing knowledge on their students without any doubt about that. Sometimes they feel embarrassment when they can not answer the students' questions. So they do not liking the problem-posing approach in teaching.

There are also other factors influencing the using of critical teaching approaches. There are too many students in every school, it seems impossible to implement critical teaching approaches due to the time reason and there are just a small number of critical educators compared with the number of students. Education examination system is also a resistance to critical pedagogy. The students need to pass an examination to study on a higher level. Usually there is only one answer to each question. The students have written down what the teacher taught in class, otherwise, they would fail the examination. So the examination system does not allow students to show different ideas to the teacher's knowledge. Therefore, critical teaching is a great challenge in China.

5. Conclusion

Critical pedagogy has been developing for many decades and has got more and more attention from educators. According to Freire (1972), critical pedagogy focuses on the development of critical consciousness, and then the learners can make transformations of individuals and society through "dialogue" and praxis. Conscientization, problem-posing, praxis and dialogue are central to Freire's theory of critical pedagogy. Conscientization refers to the process in which people achieve critical consciousness. Praxis refers the combination theory and practice. Dialogue should be viewed as a process of learning and knowing in which communication is conducted. Critical pedagogy has great advantage to education. more and more educators in China have begun to learn about critical theories in education. However, there is still a great resistance to it in China because of the deep root of traditional education and the current situation of Chinese education. There is still a long way to go for carrying out critical pedagogy.

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The Value of SLA Main Theories on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching in Vocational Colleges

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Abstract

Along with the development of linguistic science, the second language acquisition (SLA) has become an independent subject. Its theory is widely accepted and applied to the foreign language-teaching field. The mark theory, the mother tongue transfer theory, language input theory, cultural introject theory and so on have important enlightenment and the value to the foreign language teaching and the study in vocational colleges and can promote the solution of the present problems.

Keywords: SLA theory, English teaching in Vocational College, Context simulation, Value

1. Introduction

Before 1920's, basically, the SLA theory serves the foreign language teaching. From 1980's, with the consummation of it, it is developed into an independent discipline. How the foreign language teacher guides the student to learn the foreign language in particular as their foreign language base is comparatively low? Teachers pay more attention to such kind of questions. This article starts from the explanation of the native language and the second language, makes the brief elaboration to the theory and attempts to elaborate its value to the foreign language learning and teaching in vocational colleges.

2. The Native Language and the Second Language

The first language refers to the mother tongue, namely, native language, but it is not always like this, an American born in China, his mother tongue is English, but the first language is a Chinese. The second language is the other language, which is different from the mother tongue. It is usually acquired in the corresponding language surroundings. The mother tongue, the first language, the second language usually are obtained in the certain language environment, therefore, we call it "acquisition". The foreign language study as it is not in the corresponding language environment, we call it "the foreign language study". There isn't the linguistic environment, there isn't real acquisition. The theory is suitable to the foreign language teaching in some degrees.

3. The SLA Main Theories and Its Value in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

3.1 Mark Theory

Frubetzhoj in Prague School first proposed it in 1930's. Latter, it is applied by Jacobson, the representative of this school, to the phonemics study. Jacobson used it in the glossary study and indicated "the unmarked word easier exquisite than the marked word. Similarly, as in the language acquisition" Chomsky has developed the mark theory, and utilized it in the transformational grammar. Simultaneously, he has pointed out that the core grammar is unmarked, but the peripheral grammar is marked. Namely, the mark theory divides the language features into two kinds: The unmarked and the marked. In the process of foreign language learning, the language learner keeps the basic cognition rule---from easy to difficult.

The author held that unmarked language phenomenon is relatively easy; it is also relatively easy to obtain in the language learning process. For instance, the past form and past participle of the regular verbs are much easier to remember than those of the irregular verbs. According to the mark theory, we may determine the foreign language learning order, the arrangement of the textbook content and the content order for what the teacher taught. In the process of foreign language learning and teaching, we should enlarge the stimulating of the marked language phenomenon, namely enlarges the input of the marked language material module. At the same time, we also borrows the word "mark" to make the special "mark" for the marked content in ours thought and in our memory. We should carry on special mark in our actual training and note taking.

3.2 Mother Tongue Transfer Theory

Lado (1957) believed that, the mother tongue transfer is that the language learner unconsciously utilizes the mother tongue (knowledge) in the second language learning process. Selinker (1983) defined the Positive transfer and the Negative transfer: If two language structures are similar, then the mother tongue transfer will be the Positive transfer; Otherwise, the Negative transfer. Ellis also pointed out it is much more obvious in the early period of the second language acquisition for the mother tongue. If you can not understand the background of foreign language culture, Possibly the negative transfer for the native tongue will be made to cause the failure of communication.. If you said to a foreigner "Did you have your lunch?" He possibly thought you must ask him to have lunch.. Moreover, the Chinese likes modest. But it is not such for English and American. If our modest migrates to study English, it maybe makes awkward situations. Otherwise, if this kind modest migrates to study Japanese, it is useful.

The author believed, in the process to the second language learning, it is more similar to the native language, much easier to study. For instance, the direct translation from Chinese into English I study English. At the same time, the simple sentence is easy to learn, the compound sentence includes the multiple clauses, especially in professional foreign language, is much more difficult to grasp. Moreover, in the process to the foreign language teaching and learning, we must grasp the similarities between the mother tongue and the foreign language, use the positive transfer functions to make the learner to learn the foreign language quickly and correctly. Simultaneously we must highlight the differences and the contrasts of the two languages, reduce the negative transfer of the mother tongue, understand the difference in the contrast, grasp the characteristics of the foreign language at various levels from the differences. For example, when we study the English passive voice, we must emphasize the English passive structure "subject - predicate -object" has the approximate corresponding relation with Chinese structure " object – predicate-subject". But in the process of Japanese study, we must emphasize Japanese sentence structure "subject - object -predicate" has some relation with Chinese order "subject -predicate-object". It also need point out the non- language factors have the language consciousness, the thinking mode, the age, the mother tongue level, the environment and so on, so we must raise learners' language consciousness, the foreign language thought, improve the level of mother tongue, create the good language learning environment. When we are teaching foreign language, our explanation should be with the multimedia live video, the establishment linguistic environmental simulation or real-background translation to increase the positive transfer and reduce the negative transfer, make the student think in foreign language, make good use of the simulation and real place surroundings.

3.3 Language Input Theory

Krashen, Long, and Chomsky etc. once have made some elaboration about the theory. American linguist Stephen D. Krashen proposed the monitoring theory, which is "the most comprehensive, most accepted theory." (Rod Ellis, 1986). Started from 1975, he has made thoroughly carefully research to the second language acquisition, formed the input theory with the foundation of the five suppositions, namely, The Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis; The Natural Order Hypothesis; The Monitor Hypothesis; The Input Hypothesis; The Affective Filter Hypothesis.

3.3.1 The Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis

This is the starting point of Krashen's theory; it is the most basic hypothesis. Krashen explains the concept of " study" as " acquisition " and "learning ". "Acquisition " is the language learning process with "subconscious, unofficial, natural, and even appropriate to gleaning styles ". "Learning " refers to " learning the language rule consciously officially, explicitly ". Before Krashen, people generally thought only the child has the natural absorption language ability, after " critical period ", people can only depend upon on initiative study, to grasp the second language. But Krashen's theory actually proposed that, adults depend upon two ways for the developing competence in a second language: First, likes the child learning mother tongue, the acquisition with subconscious, natural, unconscious absorption of the language and the language rule similarly obtained unconsciously to shape "language feeling", we call it "Language acquisition/natural learning". Second, learning the language regular process consciously, we call it " Language learning ", the adult still has the competence of natural absorption language. Krashen holds people who want to grasp the second language mainly depend on the acquisition.

But the author believes that the adult who grasps the second language must use the two ways to develop it simultaneously, pay attention to the " Language learning ", as well as exert the function of " Language acquisition "to promote language communicative abilities. To the vocational foreign language teaching, first, is to learn the language knowledge consciously; second, is to acquire the language communicative competence unconsciously. The classroom instruction mainly manifests for learning the language rule and form consciously, but learning the language rule is extremely limited to the development of the language communicative competence, its main function is only in monitoring and the revising the language. The fluent expression of the language learner primarily lies in the language grasped unconsciously in the natural scene. Therefore, the classroom foreign language teaching should stress the language rule study, as well as carry on the communicative activities mutually to let the language learner accept the input unconsciously, and gradually get the language system in brain, achieve the goal of grasping the language skillfully.

The teacher may use the real scene or the real social language simulation scene in the foreign language teaching classroom in the vocational foreign language teaching to make the abstract language concrete and visualized. To explain, practice foreign language in the concrete scene can promote the studying, understanding, the memory and the utilization ability of foreign language. Moreover, the establishment "the social foreign language corner" --- this language scene can also increase practice opportunity of the foreign language and the help foreign language learner gradually establishes the direct relation for the foreign language and the objective social language scene, bring them up to think with the foreign language to achieve the goal to utilize the language in the real communicative situations.

3.3.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis

When Krashen summarizes the American second language teaching experience, he discovered that, No matter what the first language (mother tongue) is, no matter what difference of their cultural context is, the general order of which they grasp foreign language grammar as the second language is approximately same, that is to say, some grammar structures acquire comparatively early, some grammar structure acquire later. Krashen obtains this kind of natural order when he analyzes the experimental acquisition of the second language. Krashen also believes that, the mother tongue is not the interference of all at the second language acquisition.

At the author's point of view, that, our foreign language study and the teaching must be acted in an orderly way, must be according to the certain objective order and rule, so suitably utilizes Chinese can accelerate the foreign language acquisition. Nearly all of our foreign language learning is acquired inclines environment, if we regard Chinese as the barrier for learning foreign language, and not allow the teacher to use Chinese in their teaching activity, It will inevitably affect the foreign language the study. Especially to the teaching of vocational college, as the student's foreign language level is relative low, so reasonably, suitably utilizes Chinese can help the student to be better, quickly understand the foreign language, and accelerate the acquisition of the foreign language.

3.3.3 The Monitor Hypothesis

It is believed that as Krashen proposed, the human's cerebrum has two independent languages systems --- conscious monitoring system and subconscious system. In the process of language study, once the monitoring system has affected its function, it will have the edition and control function to make the language user to pay attention to the use of the language form but not the language content expression. The author assure that, in the process of foreign language study and teaching, it is not suitable to be anxiously or excessively to corrects the students' wrongdoings, but should start its language monitoring system, to make use of the function of the two kind of monitoring systems, and emphasized the student "subconscious monitoring", lets the student pay attention to concentrate on the actual activity in the classroom and naturally practice self- error correction.

3.3.4 The Input Hypothesis

According to Krashen's input hypothesis, the language acquisition is made through receiving massive understandable information; teacher's main energy should put in providing the best language input for the students to accelerate the language acquisition. Krashen has enumerated the four essential conditions of the best language input: (1) understandable; (2) interesting, close correlative; (3) not to use the grammar as the outline; (4) massive. Regarding the Comprehensible Input, Krashen thought it should be included: The overall language difficulty should not surpass the learners' learning capability (to be able to understand by the learner), but contains slightly higher language structure than that of the learners' existing language ability. " Its pattern is "i+1", "i" stands for the learners' existing level, +1 stands for the new language ingredient and the language form which the language information contains." Long also believes that, no matter is the mother tongue or the foreign language learning, the successful learners always obtains the understandable language input. Mr. HuZhuanglin believed as well, the learners' contacted language level should maintain the certain disparity with the existing level of the learners'. ---- The majority of contents may be understood, but still some have challenge to them (Hu Zhuanglin: P291). Chomsky emphasizes this essential factor of "the rich environmental stimulation "is "the rich language input" in the foreign language teaching practice.

The author believed that, in the process of foreign language study, "the rich moderate language input which may be understandable" is extremely important. It is because only the language inputs turns into the language absorption, the language learner can really grasp the foreign language. Therefore we should enlarge the input amount and the difficulty appropriately on the base of the language learner's existing foreign language proficiency to achieved ideal condition of " understandable language input", but we must pay attention to the language input way should be changeable. As above mentioned, this is also in the language teaching and in the study process, we must use many kinds of input patterns to make the language input as the language absorption to enhance teaching and the learning effect. In the process of foreign language teaching practice in the vocational college, we must pay more attention to the quality and quantity of language input for classroom teaching and learning. The classroom teaching and learning quality and quantity directly relate to the efficiency of the vocational college foreign language teaching and learning. The student's learning capability is also under the constant training, their self-study ability also need strengthen constantly. This requests the

teacher to make full use of the classroom, the teaching place, under the guidance and the help of teacher's to enhance student's foreign language ability continually. Moreover, the student's foreign language foundation is generally lower, and requests the teacher to be able to grasp the quality and quantity of the classroom language input well. In the classroom teaching and learning, the teacher should pay attention to the clear pronunciation, language input speed and use more common words or less uncommon words; much standard language, less slang; more simple sentence, less the complex sentence, provide the moderate reading material for the students. Maintain "i+1" level is the ideal input level.

3.3.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

It is Dulay and Burt who propose the theory in 1977 in relation to the supposition of the different emotion with the non-mother tongue acquisition, and it aims to explain the emotion factor influences foreign language study. They define it as "one kind of intrinsic processing system, it prevents language learner's the language absorption through the emotion factor subconsciously ". Krashen has developed this theory, and thought it as " one kind of psychological barrier which prevents language learner to completely digest the comprehensive input obtained in the language learning ". It believed that, the existing massive suitable inputs environment is certainly not to be equal to that the student can learn the target language well, the second language acquisition is also influenced by the emotion factor. The language input must be filtered through the emotion filter, and then it has the possibility to turn the language" absorption" (in-take). Krashen divides the emotion factor into three kinds: (1) motivity: The students with big motivity acquire much more; (2) self-confidence: The strong self-confidences person acquire s many; (3) anxious degree: The low anxious degree is advantageous to the second language acquisition. Because the ability of the adult emotion filters is stronger than that of the child, therefore the input effect is lower than the child. American psychologist Rogers thought that, "The successful teaching relies on the kind of sincere understanding and the trust relations between teachers and students, relies on the kind of harmonious security classroom atmosphere."

The author suggested that, the foreign language study and the teaching must pour into the power to enhance the self-confidence, create a kind of low degree emotion filter environment to remove the psychological barrier, reduces the emotion filter degree, as the input premise and the input effect guarantee. Therefore, we should make the correct use of the classroom appraisal terminology and manifest the thought delaminating teaching, attach importance to the students' emotion factors, reduces the emotion filter degrees. The emotion filter is an important factor, which affects the foreign language study. The low emotion filter foreign language learner can study well, while the high emotion filter learners study is not very well. To improve student's classroom participation enthusiasm, to lower reduces the students' emotion filter of foreign language learning, the teachers' classroom appraise terminology are the most important. Teachers should inspire the students much more, help them to establish self-confidence. It is also important to guide the student to maintain the learning interest, create ease, friendly and comfortable learning environment for the student, to guarantee lower emotion filters in the study. Besides much more uses of the commendation classroom appraisal terminology for the students, as the vocational college students' English proficiency differences are bigger, the classroom appraisal terminology also manifest the lamination teaching thought. Regarding the students with learning difficulties, teachers should not criticize at will in the classroom, but give them much more affirmation, much more encouragement appraisal, even if they make a bit progress, teachers should promptly praise them, encourage them to strengthen their learning confidence.

3.4 Cultural Introject Theory

Schumann (1978) was the earliest person who proposed the theory. He pointed out; the language learner 's extent of target language culture introject determines the language acquisition degree. Brown (1980) defines it as "the language learner's adaptation to new culture process". They believed that, the social distance among the language learner's native language and the target language and the psychological distance determine the culture introject level, thus determine the language acquisition. The social distance includes: Target language speaker with the second languages acquisition person, whether they treat each other equally, whether they hope the second languages acquisition person to be assimilated, whether they hoped to share society facilities, the second languages acquisition community's size as well as attaching strength size, whether the culture is in consistent with the target language culture, whether they hold the affirmation manner to each other, the time of the second languages acquisition person hope to study in target language region factors. The mental distance includes the factors such as language shock, cultural shock, motive, and self-awareness. Schumann also believed that, social distance factor's function is much bigger. The aim to study language lies in the use of language, the use of language cannot part from the linguistic environment (including locutionary context and situation and cultural context), but the culture also is an important constituent of linguistic environment, therefore the culture has similarly the vital significance to the language study. For example, to the beginner, we must give them to input the language with common style, along with the improving of language learning level, the language style input should be diversified to train the learner's language consciousness, to make them use the corresponding language style in different situations to obtain the language appropriateness (for details see Xu Haiming 1998). For instance, the Chinese studies English, as a result of Chinese culture influence, when we are greeting somebody, we commonly use salutation sentences as "Have you had your meal? ", "where are you going?" etc., but the English native

speaker usually says with not actual content greetings, like "Good morning", "It is a nice day" and so on. Therefore, if you want to grasp their language, you must first understand their culture. Certainly, the learner's attitude, the first language role, the age, the emotion individual difference and so on are also important factors, which affect the language learning.

The author believed that, the target language culture amalgamation would greatly promote the language acquisition person's study; it is an extremely important link to train the language learners "language consciousness". Therefore, adding corresponding foreign literacy class or the cross cultural communication class is of great help to the foreign language study, simultaneously in the foreign language teaching practice, it is also necessary to interlude culture input and it is also essential to the foreign language to grasp the foreign language thinking mode.

4. Conclusion

We made plain explanation on the main theories of SLA and proposed the value to the vocational college foreign language teaching and learning. It is necessary to point out that each kind of theory and its value is certainly not isolated, some are mutually affect and supplement each other. We must use these theories dialectically. The relative theories of SLA provide us ponder and research direction to enhance the teaching efficiency for the vocational college foreign language teachers, especially to improve the quality and quantity of the classroom teaching and learning. The above theories also broke through the classroom instruction category and promoted the socialization for language teaching and learning. The current vocational college foreign language teaching idea and the educational model also wait for the further discussion and the research.

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Parents' Perceptions of Their Child's Computer Use at Home As A Result of Technology Use in the School

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Abstract

This article focuses on the three-year findings of a parent survey designed to gauge their student's technology interest while receiving instruction from student teachers in a federal educational technology grant. A major objective of the grant was to engage pre-service teachers in a computer technology training program designed to equip them with skills for use in the classroom, beginning with their internship semester. As part of the 21st Century Classroom, each pre-service teacher created an educational website.

The survey and cover letter were provided to parents in both English and Spanish.

The findings of this project indicate that by enhancing the skills of pre-service teachers to use advanced technology in the classroom, the children taught by these interning students, increased their interest in school and their use of technology at home.

Keywords: Intern, Pre-service teacher, Educational technology, Educational website, Parents

1. Introduction

A major objective of the Educational Technology Grant was to engage pre-service teachers in a computer technology training program designed to equip them with skills for use in the classroom, beginning with their internship semester.

Pre-service teachers worked in a state-of-the-art lab where they were instructed how to: 1) create learning environments where advanced technology is used to teach content standards; 2) use a variety of classroom management techniques necessary for successful technology integration; 3) create technology connected lessons that include new designs for learning and enhanced pedagogy; 4) analyze student achievement/assessment data to make decisions for structuring technology connected lessons; and 5) create an educational website, accessible at home, to enhance classroom learning.

As part of the 21st Century Classroom, each pre-service teacher created an educational website. Each site contained two technology-connected lesson plans, online activities developed by the pre-service teacher, or linked to the wealth of sites in cyberspace, teacher resources, student resources, student work samples, parent resources, and information about themselves, such as their resume and philosophy of education.

Pre-service teachers began working in the lab the semester before their actual student teaching experience. They continued the technology training until the end of the student teaching semester. As the interning students began to use their websites in the classroom, they made changes based on students' needs. Additionally, pre-service teachers were able to share with their cooperating teachers educational websites rich in resources and activities.

Not only were cooperating teachers enriched by the pre-service teachers' technology sharing, but the students and their parents profited as well. The power of sharing the website with parents created a link between home and school. From their homes, students could access educational Internet sites to practice skills and test their knowledge. Parents could see what their children were doing in school, check homework, and read about upcoming events.

Qualitative and quantitative assessment data were gathered through a variety of means from K-6 pre-service teachers, university professors, cooperating teachers, K-6 students, parents of K-6 students, and outside evaluators. This article focuses on the parent survey designed to gauge their student's technology interest while receiving instruction from the student teacher.

2. Research

This article reports the three-year findings of the parent survey. A cover letter and survey were provided to the university supervisor to distribute to pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers gave the cover letter and survey to each student who was then told to return the parent survey the very next day. The university supervisor collected the returned surveys from the pre-service teachers and passed them along to the grant evaluators. The cover letter and survey, printed in both English and Spanish, follow.

To: Parents

Date: March 30, 2006

Since the beginning of January, your child's student teacher has been using technology to enhance classroom instruction. We are trying to determine if the additional use of technology in the classroom has made a difference in your child's use of technology at home.

We are asking that you answer the survey that is attached and return it to your child's teacher. We are only identifying the name of the student teacher. **YOUR CHILD'S NAME IS NOT REQUIRED ON THE SURVEY.**

The information contained in the surveys will be used to report the use of technology in your home. The names of the school and the students *WILL NOT* appear in the report.

Thank you for your support in answering this survey.

3. Parent Survey

Directions: Please circle the choice that best answers the question.

- (1) My child, since January, seems (more, the same, or less) interested in school.
- (2) My child, since January, talks (more, the same, or less) about computers?
- (3) Does your child have access to a computer at home? Yes No (note 1, note 2)
- (4) Since January, have you purchased or upgraded your home computer? Yes No
- (5) My child, since January, uses the computer at home (more, the same, or less).
- (6) Since January, as a parent, I have spent (more, the same, or less) time on the computer with my child.
- (7) Since January, my child has spent (more, the same, or less) time on the computer with friends and/or siblings.
- (8) Does your child have access to the internet at home? Yes No (note 3)

(9) My child, since January, uses the internet at home (more, the same, or less).

(10) Did you look at your child's student teachers website? Yes No If yes, do you have any comments about the website?

4. Additional comments

Thank you! Please return the survey.

Para: Padres de Familia/Representante legal

Fecha: 31 de Marzo, 2004

Desde el principio del mes de enero, el asistente de professor de su hijo/a ha estado ocupando la tecnologia para ayudar a dar la clase. Estamos tratando de determinar si el uso adicional de tecnologia en el aula ha causado un cambio en el uso de tecnologia de su hijo/a en el hogar.

Le pedimos que por favor conteste el siguiente cuestionario y lo regrese al professor de su hijo/a. Solo estamos pidiendo el nombre del asistente. NO ES NECESARIO INCLUIR EL NOMBRE DE SU HIJO.

La informacion proporcionada en el cuestionario sera utilizada para analizar y luego reporter el uso de la tecnologia en su hogar. Los nombres de la escuela y los estudiantes NO aparecieran en el reporte.

Le agradecemos de antemano su apoyo al contestar el cuestionario.

Cuestionario de Padre de Familia / Representante Legal

Nombre del profesor de "Pre-Service": _____ Fecha: _____

Nombre del profesor: _____

Escuela: _____ Grado/Curso: _____

Por favor circule la respuesta de las siguientes preguntas y regrese el cuestionario al profesor. Gracias.

(1) Desde enero del 2004, mi hijo/a parece estar
mas igual de menos interesado en la escuela.

(2) Desde enero del 2004, mi hijo/a habla
mas igual menos acerca de computadoras.

(3) Tiene su hijo acceso a una computadora en casa?
SI NO

NOTA: Si respondió "SI" a la pregunta 3, por favor continúe respondiendo el resto de las preguntas.

Si respondió "NO", ha terminado el cuestionario. Gracias por su tiempo. No olvide por favor regresarlo al profesor de su hijo. (note 4)

(4) Desde enero 2004, ha comprado o actualizado una computadora en su hogar?
SI NO

(5) Desde enero 2004, su hijo ocupa la computadora en casa
mas igual menos

(6) Desde enero 2004, como padre, he dedicado
mas igual menos tiempo en la computadora con mi hijo/a.

(7) Desde enero 2004, mi hijo ha dedicado
mas igual menos tiempo en la computadora con sus amigos y/o hermanos

(8) Tiene su hijo acceso a Internet en el hogar?
SI NO

NOTA: Si contesto "SI" a la pregunta ocho, continúe respondiendo el resto de las preguntas. Si contesto "NO", ha terminado el cuestionario. Gracias por su tiempo. No olvide por favor regresarlo al profesor de su hijo.

(9) Desde enero 2004, mi hijo usa
mas igual menos el Internet en casa.

(10) Ha visto la pagina en Internet del profesor de "preservice" de si hijo?
SI NO

Si si la ha visto, tiene usted algún comentario acerca de ella?

5. Comentarios adicionales

Gracias! No olvide por favor regresar este cuestionario.

In April, 2004, 45 pre-service teachers distributed parent survey forms to the 842 students in their intern classrooms to take home to their parents. The forms were in English and Spanish. Only 10 pre-service teachers submitted completed parent survey forms to their university supervisors in 2004. A total of 88 completed forms, a mere 10% return, were brought back to the intern classrooms by the students. Six of the 88 returned forms were from Spanish speaking parents. Table One below summarizes the year one total responses to the parent survey questions.

Question (1) asked parents to indicate whether, since January, their child seemed "more" or "less" interested in school. As the table shows, 42 (48%) said "more" and 46 (52%) said the "same."

Question (2) asked parents to indicate whether their child talks "more" or "less" about computers since January. Of the 83 respondents, 30 (36%) said "more" and 53(64%) said "same."

Question (3) asked parents to state whether their child had access to computers at home. Of the 87 respondents, 66(76%) said "yes" and 21 (24%) said "no."

After question 3, a note on the survey form stated that if the answer to question 3 was "yes," the respondent should continue answering the rest of the questions. If the respondent answered "no," the survey form was completed. Questions (4) through 10 were to be answered based on the child's use of the computer at home.

Question (4) asked whether, since January, parents had purchased or upgraded a home computer. As the table shows, 21(31%) answered "yes" and 46(69%) answered "no."

Question (5) asked if since January the parents' child used the computer "more," the "same," or "less." Eighteen (27%) indicated "more," 41(61%) indicated "same," and 8 (12%) said "less."

Question (6) asked if since January the parent had spent "more," the "same," or "less" time on the computer with the child. Of the 66 respondents, 19(29%) said "more," 37(56%) said "same," and 10(15%) said "less."

Question (7) asked parents to consider whether since January their child had spent "more," the "same," or "less" time on the computer with friends and/or siblings. Of the 66 respondents, 23(35%) said "more," 37(56%) indicated "same," and 6(9%) claimed "less."

Question (8) asked whether the parents' child had access to the Internet at home. Of the 66 respondents, 49(74%) said "yes" and 17(26%) stated "no."

Question (9) asked the parents if their child used the Internet at home "more," the "same," or "less" since January. Of the 45 respondents 17(38%) indicated "more," 26(58%) indicated "same," and 2(6%) claimed "less."

Question (10) asked parents whether they had examined their child's pre-service teacher's website. Just 3(6%) said "yes," while 46(94%) indicated "no."

Only two comments were written by parents on the 88 returned survey forms. Both comments stated that the parents had wished they had known of the existence of their child's pre-service teacher's website so they could have reviewed it.

In April, 2005, 38 pre-service teachers distributed parent survey forms to the 760 students in their intern classrooms to take home to their parents. The forms were in English and Spanish. Only 17 pre-service teachers submitted completed parent survey forms to their university supervisors. A total of 156 completed forms, a 20.5% return, were brought back to the intern classrooms by the students. The return is double that from year one. Table Two below summarizes the parents' survey responses.

Question (1) asked parents to indicate whether, since January, their child seemed "more" or "less" interested in school. Year one/two year was 48/58% said "more" and 52/58% said the "same." An increase of 10% of the students reported "more" interest.

Question (2) asked parents to indicate whether, since January, their child talks "more" or "less" about computers. Year one/two year was 36/43% said "more" and 64/53% said "same."

Question (3) asked parents to report whether or not their child had access to computers at home. Year one/two year was 76/66%) said "yes" and 24/34%) said "no." There is a decrease of 10% of students who have access to home computers.

After question (3), a note on the survey form stated that if the answer to question 3 was "yes," the respondent should continue answering the rest of the questions. If the respondent answered "no," the survey form was completed. Questions (4) through 10 were to be answered based on the child's use of the computer at home.

Question (4) asked whether, since January, parents had purchased or upgraded a home computer recently. Year one/two year was 31/34% answered "yes" and 69/66% answered "no."

Question (5) asked whether, since January, the parents' child used the computer "more," the "same," or "less." Year one/two year was 27/51% indicated "more," 61/39% indicated "same," and 8 (12%) said "less." There is an increase of 12% of more students who use the computer at home.

Question (6) asked whether, since January, the parents had spent "more," the "same," or "less" time on the computer with the child. Year one/two year was 29/22% said "more," 56/62% said "same," and 15/16% said "less."

Question (7) asked parents to consider whether, since January, their child had spent "more," the "same," or "less" time on the computer with friends and/or siblings. Year one/two year 35/33% said "more," 56/55% indicated "same," and 9/12% claimed "less."

Question (8) asked whether the parents' child had access to the Internet at home. Year one/two year was 74/83% said "yes" and 26/17% stated "no."

Question (9) asked whether, since January, the child use the Internet at home "more," the "same," or "less." Year one/two year was 38/52% indicated "more," 58/43% indicated "same," and 65% claimed "less." There is a 14% increase in the number of students who used the Internet at home.

Question (10) asked parents if they had examined their child's pre-service teacher's website. In year one just 3(6%) said "yes," and 46 (94%) indicated "no"; whereas, in year two 38% said "yes" and 63% said "no."

There were no comments written by parents on the returned 2004-2005 survey forms.

In year 2, there were enough survey returns (eight in year one and 32 in year 2) to examine survey responses of Spanish speaking parents. Table Three and Table Four report responses of English speaking respondents and Spanish speaking respondents for year two (2005) of the study.

In March, 2006, 58 pre-service teachers were provided parent survey forms to give to the 842 students in their intern classrooms to take home to their parents. The forms were in English and Spanish. A total of 187 completed forms, a 22% return, were brought back to the intern classrooms by the students. Seventy five of the 187 returned forms were from Spanish speaking parents. Table Five, Table Six, and Table Seven summarize the responses to the parent survey questions for year three (2006).

Comments from parents during the three-year study ranged from ten parents who wrote a comment that they did not know about the pre-service teacher website to one parent reporting that the child would rather read than use computer. Three parents commented that their children liked the pre-service teacher. One parent wrote that although Internet access is available at home, the child is not allowed to use it. One parent saw the website but was disappointed that the pre-service teacher never posted student work as promised. Another parent stated her child had been using the computer and educational software since the age of three and is very closely supervised when using Internet.

6. Findings

A summary of the 2004-2006 parent survey responses follow.

Total Respondents

In terms of total respondents for year one (2004), year two (2005) and year three (2006), the highest percentages for each question on the survey, reveal the following.

- (1) More interest in school: higher in 2005
- (2) More talk about computers: higher in 2006
- (3) Computer access at home: steady decline from 2004-2006
- (4) Purchase computer or upgrade since January: increased gradually each year
- (5) Child use computer at home: more in 2005
- (6) Parents spent time with child on computer: more in 2004, but basically about the same
- (7) Child on computer with friends and siblings: more in 2004, but basically about the same
- (8) Access to Internet: higher in 2005
- (9) Uses Internet at home: much higher in 2005
- (10) Parents look at child's website: higher in 2005

English Responses vs. Spanish Responses between 2005 and 2006

- (1) Interest: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish same in 2005 and 2006
- (2) Talk: English about the same between 2005 and 2006

- Spanish was higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (3) Access: English higher in 2006
Spanish about the same in 2005 and 2006
- (4) Purchase: English about the same
Spanish was higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (5) Child Use: English more in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish made a big jump in 2006
- (6) Parent/Child: English stayed about the same
Spanish showed a little gain
- (7) Friends/Siblings: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (8) Access to Internet: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish stayed about the same
- (9) Uses Internet: English higher in 2005 than in 2006
Spanish higher in 2006 than in 2005
- (10) Parents look at website: English (missing 2005 %)
Spanish said none in 2005 but 13% in 2006

Overall, gains were shown by Spanish families in seven out of 10 survey categories as compared with English families during the 2005-2006 time frame.

- Spanish speaking children talked more about computers at home than English speaking children
- More Spanish families purchased or upgraded home computers than English speaking families did.
- Many more Spanish speaking children used home computers in 2006 than they did in 2005. Fewer English speaking students used computers at home in 2006 than in 2005.
- Number 6 on the survey asks parents about time they spend on the computer with their children. English speaking children's parents indicated no real gain. Spanish speaking parents showed a slight gain.
- English speaking children spent more time on the computer with friends and siblings in 2005 than in 2006. Spanish speaking children spent more time on the computer with friends and siblings in 2006 than in 2005.
- English speaking students used the Internet at home more in 2005 than in 2006. Spanish speaking children used the computer at home more in 2006 than in 2005.
- No Spanish speaking parents looked at their child's website in 2005; whereas, 13% of the Spanish speaking parents looked at the website in 2006.

Overall gains were shown by English speaking families in three out of the ten survey questions.

- Interest in computers was higher among English speaking children in 2005 than in 2006; whereas, interest among Spanish speaking children remained about the same between 2005 and 2006.
- Access to computers at home was higher for English speaking children in 2006 than in 2005; whereas, Spanish speaking children's access remained about the same between 2005 and 2006.
- Access to the Internet jumped for English speaking children in 2006; whereas, access to the Internet at home remained about the same for Spanish speaking children between 2005 and 2006.

7. Conclusions

Analysis of the 2004-2006 parent survey responses reveals the following results of the Educational Technology Grant with participating pre-service teachers: K-6 students, who were taught by the pre-service teachers, enhanced their interest and use of technology. According to parental survey responses, both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking K-6 students increased their interest in school as well as interest and access to computer use. Parents spent more time on the computer with their children. Children spent more time on the computer with siblings and friends. Some parents purchased or updated their computer equipment, and some added Internet access during the period of the study.

The findings of this project indicate that by enhancing the skills of pre-service teachers to use advanced technology in the classroom, the children taught by these interning students, increased their interest in school and their use of technology at home.

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Notes

NOTE 1. If you answered yes to question 3 continue answering the rest of the questions. If you answered No, you have completed the survey. Thank you. Please return the survey.

NOTE 2. Questions 4 through 10 are to be answered based on your child's use of a computer at home.

NOTE 3. If you answered yes to question 8 continue answering the rest of the questions. If you answered No, you have completed the survey. Thank you. Please return the survey.

NOTA 4. Las preguntas 4 –10 deben ser contestadas basadas en el uso de la computadora en el hogar de su hijo/a.

Table 1. Year One (2004) Total Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	88	42 (48)	46 (52)	0 (00)
2	83	30 (36)	53 (64)	0 (00)
3	87	Yes 66 (76)	No 21 (24)	
4	67	Yes 21 (31)	No 46 (69)	
5	67	18 (27)	41 (61)	08 (12)
6	66	19 (29)	37 (56)	10 (15)
7	66	23 (35)	37 (56)	06 (09)
8	66	Yes 49 (74)	No 17 (26)	
9	45	17 (38)	26 (58)	02 (06)
10	49	Yes 03 (06)	No 46 (94)	

Table 2. Year 2 (2005) Total Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	114	66 (58)	43 (38)	05 (04)
2	113	49 (43)	60 (53)	04 (04)
3	116	Yes 76 (66)	No 40 (34)	
4	76	Yes 26 (34)	No 50 (66)	
5	75	38 (51)	29 (39)	08 (10)
6	76	17 (22)	47 (62)	12 (16)
7	74	24 (33)	41 (55)	09 (12)
8	76	Yes 63 (83)	No 13 (17)	
9	63	33 (52)	27 (43)	03 (05)
10	63	Yes 24 (38)	No 39 (62)	

Table 3. Year 2 (2005) English Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	80	43 (53)	36 (44)	03 (03)
2	82	29 (36)	52 (63)	01 (01)
3	82	Yes 65 (79)	No 17 (21)	
4	65	Yes 19 (29)	No 46 (71)	
5	64	36 (56)	23 (36)	05 (08)
6	65	15 (23)	41 (63)	09 (14)
7	63	20 (32)	37 (59)	06 (09)
8	65	Yes 58 (89)	No 07 (11)	
9	60	31 (52)	25 (42)	02 (06)
10	58	Yes 24 (41)	No 34 (59)	

Table 4. Year 2 (2005) Spanish Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	32	23 (72)	07 (23)	02 (05)
2	31	20 (65)	08 (26)	03 (09)
3	34	Yes 11 (32)	No 23 (68)	
4	11	Yes 07	No 04	
5	11	02 (18)	06 (54)	03 (28)
6	11	02 (18)	06 (54)	03 (28)
7	11	04 (36)	04 (36)	03 (28)
8	11	Yes 05 (45)	No 06 (55)	
9	05	02 (40)	02 (40)	01 (20)
10	05	Yes 00 (00)	No 05 (100)	

Table 5. Year 3 (2006) Total Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	187	97 (52)	85 (45)	05 (03)
2	198	94 (47)	94 (47)	10 (06)
3	185	Yes 109 (59)	No 76 (41)	
4	118	Yes 41 (35)	No 76 (65)	
5	113	42 (37)	64 (57)	07 (06)
6	112	24 (21)	75 (67)	13 (12)
7	106	33 (31)	62 (58)	11 (11)
8	108	Yes 87 (81)	No 21 (19)	
9	87	31 (36)	51 (59)	05 (05)
10	86	Yes 21 (24)	No 65 (76)	

Table 6. Year 3 (2006) English Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	112	43 (39)	64 (57)	05 (04)
2	112	35 (31)	71 (64)	06 (05)
3	109	Yes 88 (81)	No 21 (29)	
4	94	Yes 23 (24)	No 71 (76)	
5	91	32 (35)	55 (61)	04 (04)
6	90	18 (20)	65 (72)	07 (08)
7	87	25 (29)	54 (62)	08 (09)
8	90	Yes 79 (88)	No 11 (12)	
9	79	27 (34)	48 (61)	04 (05)
10	78	Yes 20 (26)	No 58 (74)	

Table 7. Year 3 (2006) Spanish Speaking Respondents

Question Number	Number of Respondents	More (#/%)	Same (#/%)	Less (#/%)
1	75	54 (72)	21 (28)	00 (00)
2	86	59 (69)	23 (27)	04 (04)
3	76	Yes 21 (28)	No 55 (72)	
4	23	Yes 18 (78)	No 05 (22)	
5	22	10 (45)	09 (41)	03 (04)
6	22	06 (27)	10 (46)	06 (27)
7	19	08 (43)	08 (43)	03 (14)
8	18	Yes 08 (44)	No 10 (56)	
9	8	04 (50)	03 (38)	01 (12)
10	8	Yes 01 (13)	No 07 (87)	



Study on the Higher Vocational and Professional Specialty Ability Module of “Construction Management”

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Abstract

The higher vocational and professional specialty of “construction management” of China begun late, and the talent training mode of various colleges are different, especially the analysis to the specialty ability modules on the higher vocational and professional layer is not mature. In this article, combining with the practice of Nanjing Institute of Industry Technology, we analyze and study the specialty ability module of “construction management”.

Keywords: Construction management, Specialty, Ability, Module

The higher vocational and professional specialty of “construction management” is the trans-subject and strongly practical specialty which can foster the composite super management talents who possess basic knowledge of engineering management, engineering economics and construction technology, grasp the theory, method and measure of modern engineering management science, and can engage project decision and overall process management in the domain of foreign and domestic construction. Combining with ten years’ practices of construction and higher educational teaching, aiming at the characters of this specialty, we take the market as the orientation, take the professional technology ability as the core, perfect the theoretical teaching, and establish the specialty ability module cultivation system with the combination of theory and practice.

1. The system design of higher vocational and professional specialty ability module of “construction management”

The “ability standard” is the important character of higher vocational talents, and it generally includes basic abilities such as language and information, specialty ability of various specialties, and development abilities such as human communication and innovation. The cultivation aim of the construction management specialty faces enterprises such as construction enterprise, project supervision enterprise, engineering office, and realty development and management enterprise. Aiming at the graduates’ structure demands of knowledge and ability in this specialty, the professional ability of the construction management can be divided into three ability modules including the specialty base ability module, the professional technology ability module, and the integrated application ability module, which progressively compose the ability module system (seen in Figure 1) of the construction management specialty. This ability module system can embody the consistency of necessary skill trainings from vocational posts, make students develop from the base ability to the professional ability and to the integrated ability in proper sequence, and ensure that the practical training is continual and the period proportion is higher.

2. The theoretical teaching mode of higher vocational and professional specialty ability module of “construction management”

It must take the “ability and quality cultivation” as the core to establish the course platform for the specialty of construction management, and the specialty cultivation aim must be confirmed by the actual demands of modern social construction, and the operation specification must be divided and the knowledge ability structure must be confirmed according to the cultivation aim, and the course teaching system must be established according to the demands of knowledge ability structure. When establishing the course teaching system, we first should cultivate students’ qualities and innovational abilities, find the balance between modern scientific technology and traditional teaching contents, persist in the integrated optimization of the course system, and deal with the relationship between the oneness of the

specialty cultivation requirement issued by the country with the diversity of school characters in various colleges, and we also should confirm the status, function and concrete content of every course in the teaching plan, embody the primary and secondary relation, administrative levels relation, interior relation and mutual cooperation among courses, and realize integrated optimization on higher level. Based on above aspects, four course teaching modules are formed.

2.1 The course teaching module of humanistic quality and base

These courses are mainly courses about cultural attainment and human accomplishment, and they are bases for students to study knowledge, implement thinking and basic skill training and cultivate ability. This module can establish base for students to enhance basic qualities and study human courses. The establishment of these courses mainly serves for the cultivation of successive specialty base ability and professional ability, and the establishment must be limited in a few quantities, and be extractive and practical according with the principle of “necessary and enough”. These courses mainly include necessary political theory, culture, physical training, and English, computer application base, engineering math and other courses.

2.2 The course teaching module of professional base ability

These courses are the professional basic courses for the specialty of construction management, and they cultivate basic theory and basic knowledge of the technology of construction for students, establish necessary specialty base knowledge to study construction management and construction working procedure and technology. They are necessary basic theory lessons to grasp vocational post skills, and they include management principle, construction cartography, building architecture, construction measurement, construction materials, construction mechanics, earth mechanics, ground sill base and other courses.

2.3 The course teaching module of professional skills

This module is the very important teaching module of this specialty, and the past lesson establishment is unilateral, the teaching materials are refreshed slowly, the contents of the course is relatively lagged, which is disjointed with new knowledge, new standards, new policies and new standards exerted in the construction market, and seriously restrict the cultivation of talent management ability for the specialty of construction management and can not fulfill the requirements of construction market to the talents of construction management. Therefore, when we establish the course platform of construction management, we must timely adjust and update the teaching plan and contents, and take the cultivation of management talents who can “understand design, construction and management” on the production layer as our aim to set up corresponding courses of construction management. These courses are necessary basic skill courses of the vocational posts, and the establishment of the course mainly embodies the vocational requirements and specialty characters, and they include construction economics, construction technology and equipment, construction project management, the introduction of construction supervision, the construction bid and contract management, general construction budget, the introduction of architecture structure and other courses.

2.4 The course teaching module to develop student ability

The establishment of these courses is to embody the relation between the characters of the development direction for this specialty with neighbor subjects, deepen the theoretic base education for the students, train scientific methods and skills and develop students’ views and knowledge. On the other hand, it is to enhance students’ human quality, fulfill individual interests and favors for students to develop and perfect their individualities. The establishment of these courses tries to develop students’ knowledge and vocational directions. These courses mainly include economics, architecture CAD, construction quality inspection and safety, architecture laws, management psychics, realty investment, realty development and management and other courses.

3. The practical teaching mode of higher vocational and professional “construction management” specialty ability module

The post occupation ability of the construction management specialty is composed by many integrated application abilities, and every item of integrated application ability is composed by many professional technical abilities, and every item of professional technical ability is composed by many professional base abilities. Therefore, the specialty of construction management should establish spiral and ascending practical teaching system.

3.1 The progressive practical training mode is adopted to train the specialty basic ability to the specialty technical ability

The specialty base courses are the base of specialty base ability, for example, the architecture cartography and architecture measurement practices are completed on the base of the architecture cartography course and the construction measurement course. The training of professional technology ability is the key to cultivate students’ technical application abilities. After students learn the specialty base course and the specialty technical course, they will progressively compile design, budget, bid, contract negotiation, construction aim and other practical training aims into the practical training mission book based on the whole process of construction, then they accomplish the content of

practical training according to the requirements of the practical training mission book. When students finish the studies of “construction cartography”, “building architecture”, “construction mechanics”, “construction structure”, they will accomplish the designs of the construction shop drawing and the structure shop drawing, and gradually complete the construction budget, bid document edit, contract negotiation, construction organization and design and various professional technical practical trainings. Through our teaching practices, students generally reflect that they have comprehensive cognitions to the construction proceedings of the whole construction process, and we have got obvious effects to enhance their integrated consciousnesses for the construction project.

3.2 The practical training mode of “project method” is adopted to train the integrated application ability

The teaching practice by means of “project method” is a sort of teaching method that it takes the concrete construction project as the objective to practice teaching for students, and the teacher first decompose the project, drive students’ studies by actual tasks, and let students implement following practice, simulation operation, analysis and discussion, and cooperation to complete concrete work tasks surrounding their own projects, and finally evaluate whether students achieve the teaching aim of practice training according to their actual accomplishment situations. This sort of teaching method turns teacher-oriented to student-oriented, and turns book-oriented to “project”-oriented, and turns classroom-oriented to actual experience-oriented. In the process of practice, we take students as the orientation, and teacher is not on the leading status in the teaching practice, and teachers become guides, directors and supervisors in the process that students study, and students’ principal characters and innovational spirits have been fully exerted, which makes students effectively achieve the meaning establishment of knowledge what they learn. In the comprehensive practical training of construction management, students play roles such as constructors, quality inspectors and supervisors, and they can obtain comprehensive practice trainings in many aspects such as construction craftwork, construction materials, equipments and employee organization and arrangement, the control of construction schedule and the construction supervision in parts of project such as the base, columniation and girder, wall, floor, door and window and house surface of the construction project.

3.3 The graduate design adopts the practical training mode of “post practice” to train the post vocational ability

In the process of professional technical practice training, former independent centralized practical trainings are progressively linked up from contents according to the construction procedure of the construction project. We arrange students’ graduate designs in this specialty in the practical training base and quasi-employment enterprises, and let them work and complete graduate design at the same time by means of “post practice”. The contents of “post practice” are instructed by enterprise instructor and college instructor, and students accomplish construction organization design, project budget, bid document, supervision layout, construction technical difficulty analysis and innovation and other actual operation tasks in various domains of construction such as construction enterprise, construction supervision enterprise, cost office, realty development enterprise, and complete their own graduate designs based on that. The institute has first established the network platform of “post practice”, and graduate instructor can guide students’ graduate designs on this platform. In the concrete implementation, the instructors in and out the institute guide and supervise students’ practices together to ensure the quality of “post practice”. Because the practical training is implemented under real work environment, so students’ post vocational skills are enhanced, and they can quickly adapt the work posts after graduation.

4. Guarantee measures for the theoretical and practical teaching for the specialty ability module

4.1 Updating teaching methods

In the teaching process, we adopt many sorts of teaching methods except for traditional classroom teaching mode, and we more advocate multimedia teaching, construction locale teaching, task drive teaching, case discussion teaching and many modes, and especially for construction locale teaching, we put forward specific requirements. For example, many courses such as “architecture material”, “building architecture”, “and architecture structure” and “architecture construction” are taught at the construction locale, which can make students more directly and more profoundly study construction materials, construction formations, structure and construction craftworks, achieves the high uniform of learning and practice.

4.2 The establishments of actual training base in and out college

The college practical base of the construction management specialty mainly includes architecture measurement practical training lab, earth mechanics lab, construction cost practical training lab and project management practical training lab, and these labs all equip many software of budget, bid, architecture plot and realty development, and many book materials about architecture standard, criterion, engineering drawing, engineering amount cost table, and all these aspects have formed perfect practical training conditions for the construction management.

The establishment of practical base out the institute mainly depends on construction enterprise, supervisory enterprise, cost consultant enterprise, project management enterprise and realty development enterprise in this industry, which make production, study and research organically combine. In this way, two sorts of study and practical training

environments in the institute and the enterprise are formed, and the reasonable theoretical teaching and practical teaching arrangements make students better grasp knowledge, understand the society, grasp professional skills and comprehensive application abilities.

4.3 Industrial experts participate in the specialty establishment and teaching reform

The institute established the professional guide committee composed by industrial experts and teachers with superior title in the institute, and once professional proseminar is convoked every year, and they will enter into the specialty construction and teaching reform, constitute the talent cultivation plan, teaching plan and outline for the specialty of construction management. The institute also retains experts out the institute as part-time professor of the institute, and these professors will report for teachers and students periodically to make teachers and students timely grasp new knowledge trends of this industry, at the same time, they are also the instructors of “post practice” and graduate design.

4.4 Establishing “Double-Teachers” teacher group

The construction of teacher group is the key problem which is connected with the current and long-term development of the institute, and teachers’ knowledge structure, specialty ability and occupational spirit are important conditions to realize the cultivation aim. The higher vocational education takes the cultivation of superior application talents of production, service and management as the main objective, so it requests the institute have a passel of “double-teachers” teachers with higher theoretical level and strong practice abilities. Except for the requirement of education level, the teachers engaging the higher vocational education must possess practical work experiences on production, construction, management and service. 70% of specialty teachers in the specialty of construction management have education levels of graduate student, and they possess titles above engineer and instructor, and have occupational qualifications such as registered construction engineer, registered cost engineer and certified supervisory engineer at the same time. The institute is establishing the national demonstration higher vocational institute, so the establishment of “double-teachers” with higher levels is more important.

5. Conclusions

The research and practice of the basic ability module, the specialty ability module and the integrated ability module for the higher vocational and professional specialty of “construction management” can make for enhancing the teaching quality and the level of teachers in this specialty, more inspire students’ study interests in this specialty, and accordingly exert important functions to update traditional teaching concept, teaching measures and methods.

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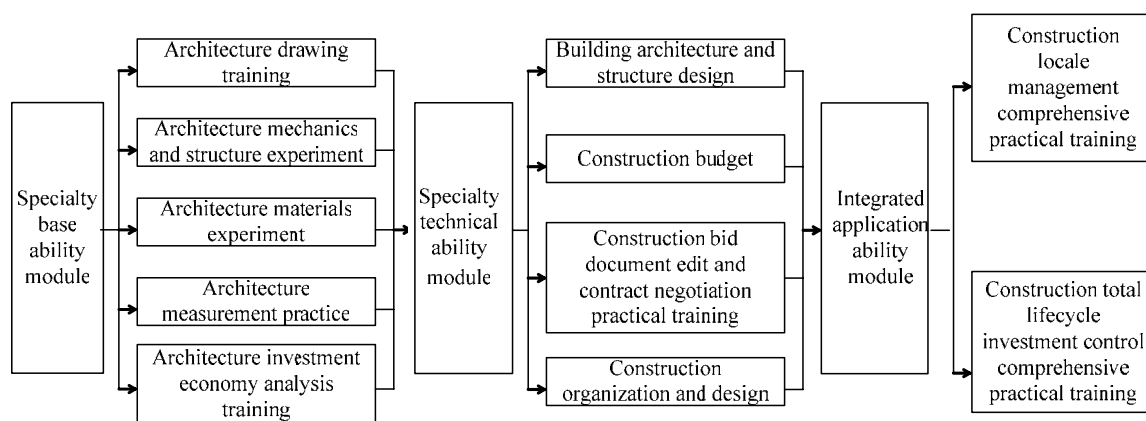


Figure 1. The Ability Module System Structure for the Construction Management Specialty



Reform and Development of Educational Administration System in China

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Abstract

The paper mainly introduces the development of the educational administration agency in China, including the evolution of the educational administration agency, the Course of instituting legal system of education in China, the missions of the now Minister of Education, questions emerged in the development of the educational administration system, and measures taken to reform the educational administration system. By the description of the development of the educational administration system from Oct. 1949 to 1998, the questions of the educational administration system are pointed out and measures taken to resolve those questions are brought forward, as follow: to reconstruct the educational administration functions, to provide the opportunity for the citizens to participate in educational management, and to improve the legal system for education needs to strengthen the supervision and evaluation of education.

Keywords: China, Development, Educational administration system, Reform

1. Introduction

The educational administration system in China is layered, including administrative organization from the center to the local. Though the work has mainly divided into two groups between the organization in the center and ones in the local, yet the administrative levels are clearly demarcated. In one side, the administrative organizations in the local follow the leadership of the local government, and in the other, they are led and guided in vocation by the superior administrative organization. Accordingly, the educational administration system exists in China that is representative bureaucratic structures.

The course of the reform and the status of the education administration system will be clarified in the paper.

2. Methodology

2.1 Systems analysis

System is a whole composed of many elements that have specific functions and relate one another. System theory is a whole cognition about external system and the essence of it that forms in people's social practice. Therefore, system analysis analyze the questions based the standpoint of system.

The educational administration system in China and the surroundings of educational administration are complex and mutative. Hence system analysis should be the basic method in analyze the educational administration and its system.

2.2 Institutional analysis

In the public administration, there are the institutions proclaimed in writing and the underlying ones that restrict the reform and development of education.

Institution plays an important role in the modern society though the crucial influence on people's values and behavior. At the same time, that provides a tool to analyze the questions about educational administration. In the paper, institutional analysis will be used to construe the elements of the system and relations between them.

3. Development and reform of educational administration agency

3.1 Evolution of the educational administration agency

The central educational administration agency is the national educational administration organization. Since 1998, the central educational administration agency is Ministry of Education. And the predecessor of that is the State Education

Commission which was built in 1985. The evolution history of central educational administration agency from 1949 to 1998 could be seen in the below dissertation.

In Nov. 1949, the Minister of Education subject to the Central People's Government was founded which was guided by the Culture and Education Committee. In Nov. 1952, the Minister of Education of the Central People's Government was divided into Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education aiming to bring up masses of persons with ability. That is the first period when the Minister of Education of the Central People's Government existed from Oct. 1949 to Sep. 1954.

After the First Session of the First National People's Congress in Sep. 1954, Minister of Education of the Central People Government was instead of Minister of Education of the People's Republic of China. And that, the Minister of Higher Education and the Minister of Education united to be the new Minister of Education in the Fifth Session of the First National People's Congress (NPC) in Feb 1958. However, the 124th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has decided to divide the Minister of Education into Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education by Jul. 1964, which aimed to strengthen the leading of higher education and liberal education. However, two years later, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) informed on Jul. 23 1966 that the Minister of Higher Education and the Minister of Education could unite into the Minister of Education. From Sep. 1954 to Jun. 1970, that is the second period when the Minister of Education as the national educational administration agency managed and led the development of countrywide education.

In Jun. 1970, the Central Committee of the CPC approved the plan of the State Council's institutional reform, deciding to repeal the Minister of Education and found the Science and Education Group of the State Council to simplify the administrative structure.

Until the First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress in Jan. 1975, in virtue of proposal of the Central Committee of the CPC, the Session decided to set up the Minister of Education again. In 1982, the State Council began the institutional reform and authorized the missions and functions of the Minister of Education. In the period, the main mission of the Minister of Education is that guiding and managing the countrywide education, training constructors and successors with all round development of morality, intelligence and physique for the socialist cause. In addition, there were nine aspects of the functions of the Minister of Education. Hereinbefore, that is the third period when the Minister of Education existed from Jan. 1975 to Jun. 1985.

In Jun. 1985, 11th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress decided to found the National Education Commission to reinforce the leading of education. After the National Education Commission founded, the Minister of Education has been repealed. Up to the present, the Education Commission as one of the parts that compose the government in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing Municipality exists, though other provinces have replaced the Education Commission by the Office of Education after the fourth State Council's institutional reform in 1998.

In Mar. 1998, the First Session of the Ninth NPC considered and passed the plan of the State Council institutional reform. Henceforward, the National Education Commission changed the name to be the Minister of Education. From Mar. 1998, the Minister of Education began the fourth period as the central educational administration agency.

3.2 Course of instituting legal system of education in China

Though a new educational administration agency has founded in 1949, yet until Mar. 1995 the Third Session of the Ninth NPC passes the Education Law of the People's Republic of China which became effective on Sep. 1 1995, the legal system of education began to come into being.

This law codifies many of the pervious policies and decrees, especially the Decision of the Reform of the Education System by the Central Committee of CPC on May 27 1985. So far it has been the guiding document of reform for all the levels of education. Its main points are outlined below:

- (1) The fundamental aim of the reform of education system is improving the national diathesis, and insuring that the education system shall supply a sufficient number of highly qualified personnel
- (2) To transfer the obligation to develop basic education to the local government and implement a 9-year compulsory education policy step by step.
- (3) To regulate the structure of the secondary education and expand the system of technical and vocational education.
- (4) To reform the plan of recruiting and the system of assign graduate in the colleges and universities, and grant the colleges and universities more decision-making power.
- (5) To strengthen educational leadership, and establish a State Education Commission which has larger status than the previous Ministry of Education.

After the promulgation of the Decision of the Reform of the Education System, the Compulsory Education Law of the

People's Republic of China was passed in the Fourth Session of the Sixth NPC on Apr.12 1986. Subsequently, the Vocational Education Law of the People's Republic of China was adopted at the 19th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Eighth NPC on May 15 1996, and the 4th Session of the Ninth NPC Standing Committee passed the Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China on Aug.29 1998. In the same year, the new Minister of Education came into existence, which replaced the State Education Commission. Thus, the education system began to have an increasingly profound influence on the development of education in the present China.

3.3 Questions emerged in the development of the educational administration system

Every reform of the educational administration system adjusts with the need of the development of education at a certain extent. However, there are many limitations emerged in the course of the reform and the development.

The educational administration system should be a comparative steady framework. At least, it shouldn't be transformed one form into another and later transformed "another" into "one form" back and forth, e.g. in 1952, the Minister of Higher Education was separated from the Minister of Education, and it combined with the latter to be a new Minister of Education in 1958. However, the Minister of Education was divided into two parts that included the Minister of Higher Education and the Minister of Education again. Yet two divided parts united into the Minister of Education once again. The random in setup could destroy the seriousness of the system. Otherwise, the appellation of the educational administration agency changed constantly from 1985 to 1998, though there was no obvious transformation in its mission and function. When the central educational administration agency took place some changes, the local could react to it oppositely in time, especially on the surface, e.g. in 1985, accompanying with that the National Education Commission founded, all the Office of Education in local changed into the Education Commission. However, most of them were replaced with the Office of Education again due to the change occurred in the central education administration agency.

The National Education Commission set up in 1985, a comprehensive sector charged with manage the countrywide education of the State Council, acclimatized itself to the development of the education and the demand of the educational system reform. Whereas the State Council institutional reform began in 1998 and many departments of it were repealed, most of the colleges and universities subject to those departments were transferred to the local and under the subjection of the local government. At the same time, the new Minister of Education founded, the power of which has lessened difficult to correspond with other departments or commission and plan as a whole. Based on the objectivity and the tendency of the educational development, the educational administration agency should transform the functions, decentralize the power and enlarge the decision-making power of the schools further.

3.4 Measures taken to reform the educational administration system

3.4.1 Reconstruction of the educational administration functions.

Be similar to the reform of the administration system, the reform of the educational administration system should also focus on the reconstruction of the educational administration functions.

The educational role of the government is in relation to the community, schools and the individuals. That is the objective requirement of the educational development and the national capacity, which determines that the function of government in educational administration is limited. Therefore, the national all-inclusive education model and a single situation of controlling schools in the past should be remodeled. At present, government's functions of educational administration should be limited legally, and to promote the macro management function of educational administration, providing educational opportunities, balancing the educational needs and improving the educational efficiency. The educational administration agency should covert the role of provider to the role of guarantee for the quality of education, and gives the educational institutions more autonomy. The reposition of the government's function of the educational administration and the transformation of its way don't mean the government decentralize the power and undermine the function of it constantly. By contraries, in some respects, e.g. government's macro management, the government's power should also be strengthened. In other words, government should be powerful and forceful in this purview.

In addition, an effective macro adjustment system for higher education is to be established. A macro management system that is adaptive to educational system reform must be built up to improve and strengthen the macro management in the field of education. Through interventions such as overall planning, policies and strategies, information guidance, inspection, evaluation and funding, an effective macro adjustment mechanism is to be established to prevent the unbalance of educational system. The authority in education provision of the local governments and the educational institutions will be expanded gradually.

3.4.2 To provide the opportunity for the citizens to participate in educational management

For a long time, government made a monopoly of the educational management. Information asymmetry exists between government and the individuals being educated, and the citizens are usually in the passive position. Therefore, the citizens' right of participation in management of education should be expanded to have more space of autonomy.

Synchronously, to enhance the forces of the citizens to restrict the government's power of the educational administration is indispensable. This means the citizens could participate in the management of education. According to the character of quasi-public product, in fact the citizens purchase the educational public goods provided by government or other institutions after paying taxes or fee. They are entitled to require the quality of the educational products to meet their needs.

3.4.3 To improve the legal system for education needs to strengthen the supervision and evaluation of education.

The promulgation and implementation of Law on Compulsory Education, Law on Vocational Education, Law on Higher Education and Law on Education provide a solid foundation for administrating education in accordance with laws. During the past years, a developed legal system framework for educational development has been established to provide legal foundation for the educational management and administration. In order to ensure the effective implementation of educational policies and the stable improvement of educational quality and efficiency, more supervision on primary and secondary education is required to establish a better supervision system. For higher education and secondary vocational education, an evaluation system with educational quality and efficiency as the priority will be gradually built up.

4. Conclusion

At present, an education system with government as the major investor and social partners as co-investors has been set up in China, and local government is playing a key role in compulsory education, while central government and provincial government are dominant in higher education. In vocational and adult education, social partners including industrial organizations, businesses and public institutions are playing a more and more important role.

Though the Chinese educational administration system still needs to be consummated, yet the developments in China's educational administration system have had an increasingly profound influence on the education and even each aspect of the society. And the reform and development of the educational administration system would have an effect upon other systems, just as many of them have influenced the present system of educational administration.

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