

# **Under the Implementation of Double Reduction Policy**

## ***Relationships Between Teachers and Parents***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Before the double reduction policy, parents tended to arrange after-school classes for a primary school student; yet, some of these institutions were not as good as they pronounced. Thus, parents were anxious when their children had not made any progress. On the other hand, as most parents at work could not go back home before students' time of after class from Monday to Friday, they had to arrange after-school classes for their children and paid more money for the after-school institutions. After the implementation of the double reduction policy, teachers need to help the students with their homework and solve the learning problems. It aims to help the students finish most of the work at school and no need to take it back home or ask the teachers in the institutions to help them. Therefore, a double reduction policy is of great necessity. This paper reviews practice from Quebec, a qualitative study by Carol, and evaluation in over two hundred New Zealand schools. The researcher also reflects on these practices and raises some suggestions on how to build a harmonious relationship between teachers and parents under the implementation of a double reduction policy. Through reviewing and summarizing the historical practice and the latest policy of China education policy, the researcher clarifies from these four perspectives: (1) The characteristics of primary school parents in China; (2) Law on parents instruction, curriculum reform, and publications of documents; (3) Design interactive homework assignments; (4) Teacher quality and competence.

**Keywords:** *Double Reduction Policy in China, Relationship between Teachers and Parents, Interactive Homework Assignments, Teacher Quality and Competence*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

China has implemented the double reduction policy since September 2021. The other country South Korea, which is adjacent to China, has implemented a double reduction policy since the 1970s. In the 1970s, under the background of calling on educational equity and burden reduction, the South Korean government regulated that public school teachers could not work as personal tutors and work for training institutions. From the 1980s to 2000, the South Korean government banned the training institutions strictly, however, for people from privilege, they could still hire a personal tutor for their children and pay high tuition for the tutoring. Yet, parents who were blue-collar workers were not able to pay for such high tuition. After 2000, more and more people called on the after-class institutions, and finally, in May 2000, the South Korean government decided to allow the running of training institutions.

Double reduction policy in China refers to a reduction in the quantity of homework and time required by school homework and a reduction in the burden of after-school training programs. When compared to the double reduction policy in South Korea, the Chinese government not only simply reduces after-school classes but also emphasizes the importance of education at school, to be specific, the quality of education at school.

## **2. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS IN CHINA**

Since September 2021, the double reduction policy has been implemented and has caused lots of differences between parents and teachers.

### ***2.1. Parents Check Homework by Themselves***

Under the double reduction policy, students can stay at school longer than before. For example, in some

schools in China, when the students could go back home at 3.30 pm, they were not allowed to stay at school any longer. However, now, children can stay at school and finish their homework. Meanwhile, teachers need to go to the classes and help students with their homework or answer their questions about the subjects. Generally, under the implementation of the double reduction policy, students can finish homework at school and parents do not need to urge their children to do homework when they go back home.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that there are still some parents who emphasize education very much and take their duty. They still check their children's homework after work every day and take it as a routine. This kind of parents sets a good example to their children, they present that how busy they are, education cannot be ignored. At the same time, the students are easily inspired by their parents and learn from their parents. As Cordry and Wilson argue, parents are the first teacher for their children [1]. Gratz, Nation, Schools, Kurth-Schai point out, the research presents that parents who have an educated background will be easier to prepare their children for school when they are compared to those parents who are lack of educated background [2]. We have to acknowledge that in fact, this kind of parents should be those who have an educated background, or we can say those who have the academic ability to assist their children. For example, traditional research has revealed that mothers who have high educational backgrounds easily succeed in providing "cognitive language skills" to their children [3].

## ***2.2. Parents Rely on After-school classes***

There is another kind of parents who emphasize the importance of education, but they are not able to help with their children's homework. To be specific, some parents may not have the ability to help with their children's English homework. However, for their children's bright future, they think it is not enough to learn at school. They arrange after-school classes for their children and even Very Important Person (VIP) classes. VIP classes mean one teacher only teaches one student and parents need to pay high tuition for the VIP teachers. For example, one hour may cost more than 500 yuan. Nevertheless, these parents are willing to pay for the high tuition. We endorse their agreement on the importance of education, at the same time, we cannot ignore that they may easily go to the extreme. On one hand, this kind of parents may gradually ignore the importance of teachers at school and over-rely on the teachers outside school. Next, these parents may think it is unnecessary to communicate with teachers at school anymore and they are indifferent to their children's learning process gradually. Parents consider that what they need to do is to pay the tuition. Yet, they ignore the

importance of teachers at school and ignore the importance of communicating with the teachers. Over time, the relationship between teachers and parents becomes more and more estranged. Worse, their children might also be influenced by them. When the children go back home, parents can spend time with their children. When the students find that their parents may not emphasize the importance of learning at school and rely on learning out of school, the children may also follow their parents. In other words, these children may have more negative classroom behaviors at school because they think they have extra teachers out of school to help with their homework. To some extent, this kind of parents and their children may easily go into a vicious spiral. Therefore, for this kind of parents, teachers should communicate with them regularly and avoid them going to the extreme that ignorance of the importance of education at school.

## ***2.3. Parents Take Less Duty on Education***

The third kind of parents thinks that education is teachers' duty, and it is sufficient for their children to learn at school. We can also see this kind of parents before the implementation of the double reduction policy. These parents do not emphasize the importance of education and they would rather play outside than check their children's homework. In their mind, teachers are the educators, and they should take responsibility for educating their children. Therefore, under the implementation of the double reduction policy, they think it is great to ask teachers to help their children finish homework. It seems to be more reasonable for them to find the excuse that they do not need to plan for their children and contact teachers. However, this kind of parents ignore their importance in education, and they misunderstand the double reduction policy. To be specific, firstly, this kind of parents ignore that they may be able to provide their perceptions and information to the educators at school in strengthening "academic and social programs" [4]. In other words, parents' involvement is meaningful, and it can help the teachers at school improve their teaching procedures or teaching ways. Hence, we can say parents' involvement is beneficial to the whole educational process. Secondly, these parents misunderstand the double reduction policy which does not mean that parents take no responsibility for their children on education. Educators should not only be the teachers at school or after school. Parents tend to be better educator when blood relationship is taken into consideration. Nothing can surpass this kind of intimacy. Without support or help from parents, we can imagine that their children may gradually fall behind. Without communication with teachers, the relationship between teachers and parents may not be as intimate as before.

### **3. BUILDING HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PARENTS**

From what was analyzed above, it is urgent to build a harmonious relationship between teachers and parents, to be specific, parents should support teachers' work and both parents and teachers should work together. In the following part, this paper summarizes some adoptable practices learned from Quebec, a qualitative study by Carol, and an external evaluation in over two hundred New Zealand schools. In other words, these practices from Chronosystem and Micro-system can be adapted to nowadays China educational policy, the double reduction policy.

#### ***3.1. Law on Parents Instruction, Curriculum Reform and Publications of Documents***

In Quebec, in 2002, "Law on Public Instruction Act 124 is connected with the educational project and the success plan" which aims to "expand the role of the governing board and of parents in relation to school" [5]. From the Quebec curriculum reform implemented in 2001 and documents such as "School I care! – Together for Student Success", we can see that the Ministry of Education also emphasizes the role of parents [6]. They even hope parents can communicate with them "by letters or other contributions" [7].

Therefore, corresponding laws and systematic and supporting reforms in the educational curriculum can be carried out. In addition, publications of documents guiding parents are also significant. Documents guiding parents can explicitly instruct parents and avoid their confusion. Hence, under the implementation of the double reduction policy in China, the government can also enact laws on parents' instruction, implement curriculum reform and publish documents guiding parents. Under this circumstance, parents know their duty and understand what they should do. It is conducive to building a harmonious relationship between parents and teachers. Suppose that if parents misunderstand that all the duty belongs to the teachers and teachers should do everything for their children, once the teachers cannot do as the parents want, parents might think the teacher has serious dereliction of duty.

#### ***3.2. Design Interactive Homework Assignments***

A qualitative study that "engaged elementary teachers and parents" by Carol suggests that teachers could "design interactive homework assignments to overcome the obstacle" that "homework is often a source of stress for both parents and educators" and "improve communication between parents and teachers" [8]. In her study, teachers sent a newsletter to parents which contained important events and children's names

[8]. Furthermore, parents could get valuable resources from teachers such as "bookmarks with reading strategies and guides for literacy terms", which aim to help parents support students' literacy learning [8]. The findings of Carol's study show that in this way, more parents were willing to engage in their children's study [8].

Therefore, in China, I would argue that teachers can also design interactive homework assignments, especially under the implementation of the double reduction policy. Teachers can discuss with their colleagues and think about how to assign the homework. Many teachers also decide their homework for students based on their curriculum design. For example, an English teacher can assign picture books reading which is related to the topic learned at school as homework assignments. After supper, parents can read picture books with their children and enjoy the reading time together. To some extent, parents support schools assigning learning activities that need them to cooperate with their children. Epstein points out that most parents hope the schools could "do more to involve parents in learning activities at home" that are beneficial to their child [9]. According to Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical and Activity Theory, he suggests that child mediates interaction with the world through text. Here, to be specific, students are as subject, picture books are as mediating artefact and knowledge, or other acquirements are as the object.

#### ***3.3. Teacher Quality and Competence***

The Education Review Office (ERO) conducted an external evaluation in over two hundred New Zealand schools and it found that "partnerships were developed and extended in a climate of openness and trust and supported by appropriate communication strategies" [10]. There are two definitions of communication strategies that are always contrasted. In terms of interactional definition, Tarone states that the main purpose of communication strategies is to negotiate meaning [11]. In terms of psycholinguistic definition, Færch and Kasper suggest that communication strategies give the user an experience of finding the communicative problems and pursuing the solution ways [12].

In the following part, this paper will illustrate communication in depth. For a teacher, communication is basic and important competence. A teacher needs to communicate with parents properly and plan for the students. Generally, communication can also divide into one-way communication and two-way communication.

One-way communication is often taken as a traditional way which is helped to report on "student progress, school business, or changes to policy and curriculum" [13]. Two-way communication can help

teachers understand the background and learning needs of the students, and teachers also have the chance to check with parents and set the goal [13].

To be specific, in terms of one-way communication, it can be “School-to-home notebooks” and “Report cards” [14]. Specifically, school-to-home notebooks mean that teachers write down the student’s behaviors at school on the notebooks and give some suggestions. When parents receive the notebook, they can have a detailed understanding of their children’s behaviors at school.

In terms of two-way communication, it can be “phone call home” and “parent-teacher conference” [14]. “Phone call home” means that the teachers communicate with parents through the phone [14]. Here, the phone is a carrier that connects teachers with parents closely. It is common to see “parent-teacher conference” too [14]. It is a traditional and easy way for teachers to communicate with parents. Parents go to the schools and they discuss some topics with the teachers. However, as Epstein claims that many parents nearly receive “no communications from the school” and few of them get involved [9]. Therefore, teachers must develop communication strategies and increase communication times with parents. When the parents get a full understanding of their children’s learning process, they can supplement the materials at home by themselves. In addition, they can cooperate with teachers better.

Although some of the teachers still lack communication strategies, it is possible to see that some parents do not want to communicate with the teachers. For example, in a parent-teacher conference, teachers never praise the students and always complain about how bad the students are. Gradually, the parents may lose confidence and are not willing to attend the parent-teacher conference. In other words, the relationship between teachers and parents breaks down. Good communication strategies play an important role in developing and maintaining relationships. “Effective communication needs to be personalized and regular” [13]. To be specific, firstly, teachers should analyze the characteristics of each student and give suggestions to the parents accordingly. Secondly, teachers should communicate with the parents regularly. Regular communications can help parents understand teachers’ perceptions and meanwhile, parents can also discuss with teachers in time. If a student misbehaved at school, in this way, parents could take action and assist the teachers in correcting the child’s bad behaviors at school.

Under the implementation of the double reduce policy, teachers themselves, should develop their communication strategies, meanwhile, parents should plan with teachers about their children’s care and learning progress actively [15]. When teachers can communicate with parents properly and parents are

active in communicating with teachers, it is more possible to see a harmonious relationship between teachers and parents.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This paper illustrates the current situations of primary school parents in China: parents who emphasize the importance of education and take their duty as before, parents who emphasize the importance of education and arrange after-school classes for their children, and parents who find excuses for themselves and take no duty on education.

This paper also reviews the practice in Quebec, a qualitative study by Carol, and an evaluation in over two hundred New Zealand schools. From these three-practice mentioned above, we can see corresponding laws, curriculum reform, and documents guiding parents can be the guarantees that help the implementation of the double reduction policy. Design interactive homework assignments can benefit both teachers and parents when they consider homework as stress. We should note that the double reduction policy calls on reducing the quantity of homework. Also, it aims to emphasize the importance of homework quality. Mechanical repetition such as copying the new words ten times makes no sense. Teachers should arrange the teaching procedures appropriately and assign the homework significantly. For example, teachers can design interactive homework assignments. In addition, teachers should also pay attention to the communication strategies and develop their communicative competence. When these three points can be achieved, it will be conducive to building a harmonious relationship between teachers and parents.

At the same time, under the implementation of the double reduction policy, it is needed for parents to take their responsibilities. The double reduction policy does not mean parents need to do nothing or have no duty. The implementation of the double reduction policy can reduce the burden or anxiety on both parents and children to some extent. Yet, the double reduction policy does not mean the reduction of parents’ responsibilities to their children. Parents should cooperate with teachers and take the initiative to communicate with teachers. Parents who stand for family and teachers who stand for schools should work together and build a harmonious relationship. Only under these circumstances, students are more likely to gain more achievements and enjoy the learning process.

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