

On Causes and Enlightenment of Preschool Education Curriculum Model Reforms in Contemporary and Modern China

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Abstract: The development and changes of Chinese preschool education curriculum model mainly happen in two important periods with the boundary line of the founding of new China, and each of these two periods can be subdivided meticulously into two parts. The first period can be said to be a process of transplantation & imitation and nationalization & exploration of preschool education model before the founding of new China, and evolution from imitation to localization is achieved; while the second period refers to a stage of gradual exploration of education system with Chinese characteristics under the influence of Soviet education and ultra-left trend of thought after the founding of new China, and is a process of qualitative change from reference to self-innovation. Thus, research on preschool education curriculum model shall be based on reflection of the development history of Chinese preschool education curriculum model, analyze causes of reforms, summarize enlightenment of historical reforms on current curriculum model reforms, and thus promote better development of contemporary preschool education.

In brief, curriculum model refers that teachers display curriculum content and teaching plans by relatively typical and simple teaching methods in practical teaching, and its core values are that it could adapt to educational conditions of the era and then generate specific curriculum structure and educational function. With gradual concern on preschool education in Chinese education circle, deepening research on preschool education curriculum, and especially the popularity of kindergarten-based curriculum and development needs of preschool education marketization since the reform and opening up, the public has increasingly high requirements for scientific and featured preschool curriculum, and curriculum model also becomes increasingly important in preschool education research community. However, China's existing preschool education circle is relatively weak in research on exploration and establishment of curriculum model, and cannot truly provide corresponding theoretical support for contemporary curriculum model reform practice. So, this paper reflects on the development history of Chinese preschool education curriculum model, and explores causes of preschool education curriculum model reforms in contemporary and modern China and enlightenment of such reforms on current preschool teaching model reforms.

1. The history of preschool education curriculum model reforms in contemporary and modern China

Since the issuance and practice of Guimao Education System as China's first national education system in 1904, Chinese preschool education has undergone prolonged development and achieved significant results gradually through multiple reforms. Reforms of preschool education curriculum model will be specifically analyzed as follows.

(I) From imitation to localization

1. Transplantation of Japanese preschool education curriculum model

At the initial development stage of Chinese preschool education, exploration of curriculum model was carried out on the basis of imitating Japanese Equipment and Procedures of Kindergartens and Nurseries, and Japanese teaching was included into content of preschool education and Japanese teachers were actively employed to guide students. At that time, the main content of preschool education curriculum included games, songs, dialogues and hands-on activities, and the specific teaching content was generally selected from the "Four Books and Five Classics" or Commandments for Women and Chinese Instructions for Women. Teachers changed content in classic books that was suitable for teaching of children to be easy to read and understand in teaching

practice, and explained stories with understandable words and pictures, and thus realized children's enlightenment education. In the Republic of China, exploration of Chinese preschool education curriculum model was no longer confined to imitation from Japan, but began to learn from the Europe and U.S. gradually and thus received certain influence from European and American preschool education.

2. Experimental exploration of a national and scientific preschool education curriculum model

The May 4th Movement also generated a great influence on Chinese exploration of education model. Experimental exploration of national and scientific preschool education generally began with the return of a large number of education scholars from the U.S. to China. These scholars were no longer satisfied with curriculum model of education transplantation and reference according to development status of Chinese preschool education at that time, and developed three standards for preschool teaching curriculum design, which promoted the progress of scientific curriculum model exploration. Later on, educationist Chen Heqin, under the guidance of dominant educational thought "the subject of adaptation to national conditions", put forward teaching concepts of "curriculum center system", "living education" and "five fingers' activities" for curriculum organization of preschool education, generating profound influence on exploration of curriculum model by later generations. Preschool education curriculum of this period of time was no longer confined to explanation of classics, but began formally to introduce music, social common sense, tranquillization and meal etc to teaching practice, integrate teaching content of each discipline, and combine preliminarily comprehensive education with a variety of other education on the basis of stressing the influence of environmental education on children, which was a great progress in exploration of curriculum model.

(II) From reference to independent innovation

1. Learning of exploration experience of the former Soviet Union in preschool education curriculum model

After the founding of new China, Chinese education research department absorbed original educational experience, applied the Soviet education model, and put forward the educational aim of constructing new democracy. Preschool education also underwent corresponding reform under this aim, and was divided into three stages namely top class, middle class and bottom class with the help of Soviet experts while taking original curriculum content such as learning characters through pictures, games and handcraft etc in order to carry out hierarchical teaching according to developmental situation of children, and took departmental teaching as basic teaching model again, resulting in important influence on the overall Chinese education.

2. Exploration of a preschool education curriculum model system with Chinese socialist characteristics

Since the reform and opening up, the development of Chinese preschool education had entered a new historical period. Since China's Ministry of Education formally issued relevant documents and formulated clear provisions on preschool education in 1981, it carried out multiple reforms and exploration of preschool education, promoted the depth and breadth of research on children's education significantly, put forward diversified curriculum model containing integrated curriculum, game curriculum and cooperation curriculum etc gradually, changed research focus of children's education from local to general, basically formed overall grasp of preschool education curriculum structure and system, broke limitation of traditional educational concepts in terms of curriculum understanding of the public, and broke traditional teaching scope such as "assignment" and "classes" etc. In the 21st century, the country issued Guidelines for Kindergarten Education and Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6 with clear provisions on concept, method and curriculum design etc of children's teaching, so that preschool education curriculum model gradually got rid of original reference and exploration, realized double independent innovation of theory and practice, and thus promoted the improvement of preschool educational level to a certain degree.

2. Causes of preschool education curriculum model reforms in contemporary and modern China

(I) Change of curriculum teaching concept is the premise of curriculum model reform

From a theoretical perspective, preschool education curriculum model contains a variety of thoughts and concepts such as view on children's development, view on children's education, curriculum view and values etc, change of which has important influence on curriculum model reforms. According to historical development of Chinese preschool education curriculum model reforms, although each reform occurred under common effects of multiple factors, it couldn't be denied that change of curriculum concept was the most essential influencing factor, in other words, update of curriculum concept determined deep reform and change of curriculum model to a certain degree. For instance, the criticizing of traditional view on children's development and spread of children-centered curriculum concept in the period of May 4th Movement were premise of experimental exploration of a national and scientific curriculum model and determined this curriculum model reform. Throughout the reform history of Chinese preschool education curriculum model, such reform is actually a process of constant fighting, integration and selection of old and new curriculum concepts in fierce conflicts.

(II) Change of the times is the external motivation of preschool education curriculum model reforms

The development history of Chinese preschool education curriculum model reform shows that change practice of each curriculum model is generated under the influence of change of the times. American educationalist Stacie Goffin has once discussed about this clearly, and believes that the acceptance or refusal of curriculum model by the times is generally determined by its fitness with major social issues of the times. Here, the social background generally contains three major aspects namely social productivity, political and economic system, and cultural development condition. Social issues in composition content of different historical period and background are substantially different, so do curriculum model reforms. For example, in top-down reforms, curriculum model reforms face change of social nature so that social political and economic system would play an external leading promoting role in change of curriculum model, while the mainstream national ideology has greater influence on curriculum model than academic development and thus plays a decisive role in construction of curriculum model.

(III) Cultural traditions are potential motivation of reforms

Cultural inheritance refers to cultural traits with influence on later generations gradually formed through long-term historical accumulation of customs, habits and literary connotation etc of a nation or country. Generally, cultural traditions would generate relatively stable nature at the beginning of formation and would have an influence on innovation of educational concept or teaching model. Thus, although Chinese preschool education has undergone several reforms from the period before the founding of China to current society, the influence of cultural traditions may be seen indistinctly in each reform. Besides, such cultural traditions generate influence through potential values and behavior decisions and thus have potential and implicit promotion and restriction that cannot be directly perceived of curriculum model reforms, but such influence will not be weakened because of its potential nature and affects curriculum reforms generally through cultural infiltration. Therefore, cultural traditions are potential motivation of curriculum model reforms in a sense.

3. Enlightenment on current Chinese preschool education curriculum model reforms

(I) Sense of historical responsibility in developing the country through science and education and strengthening the country through talents is the spiritual motivation of curriculum model reforms

Chinese preschool education curriculum model reforms were affected by the turbulent society before the founding of new China, and a lot of sacrifice dedication and sense of social responsibility of "everybody was responsible for the rise and fall of the country" was input into exploration of curriculum model. As a result, talents trained under the influence of such curriculum model were generally creative and had a strong sense of social responsibility and historical mission. So, to train

talents with strong social consciousness and implement strategies of developing the country through science and education and strengthening the country through talents in today's society with increasingly fierce international competition, China shall attach importance to sense of historical mission and social responsibility of these two talent training strategies, so that the education circle in current China could get rid of blundering psychology of education research under the influence of market economy, explore preschool education curriculum model with scientifically rigorous attitude and dedicated spirit of sacrifice and thus promote reform of preschool education curriculum model practically.

(II) A scientific preschool education curriculum concept is the theoretical basis of curriculum model reforms

Traditional preschool education curriculum model reforms were carried out under the influence of relatively scientific curriculum concept, and had made a huge success in that historical period. So, reform of today's curriculum model shall take scientific curriculum concept as the theoretical foundation, and shall guide and correct its specific direction. At current stage, Chinese preschool education research department is increasingly concerned about the scientific nature of preschool education curriculum concept and explores curriculum theories deeply. Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6 issued by the Ministry of Education in 2012 elaborates in detail teaching content and principles of preschool education curriculum, and points out that preschool education shall promote overall development of children's body and mind and avoid being "primary", which is a relatively scientific preschool education curriculum concept in this new era. Such guidelines play an important theoretical guiding role in current reforms of preschool education curriculum model and promote curriculum model reforms to a new development stage.

(III) Localization of foreign advanced educational experience is an inevitable path of curriculum model reforms

As discussed above, traditional Chinese preschool education curriculum model was affected by foreign preschool education model, and localized foreign advanced educational concepts based on absorption and reference according to development of the times and social demands, in order to truly provide theoretical support and experience reference for curriculum model reform at that time. So, current reforms of preschool education curriculum model shall also localize foreign advanced educational experience to provide corresponding guarantee for curriculum model reform practice. Meanwhile, education experts find through continuous exploration that foreign advanced educational experience can be localized from the following two aspects: firstly, reflect scientifically and comprehensively on foreign advanced curriculum concepts and models while introducing, mainly including reflection on the social background and basic theoretical spirit, and avoid simple imitation; and secondly, based on in-depth learning of foreign successful concepts and models, start from practical problems, and explore through experimental research to make these concepts and models truly rooted in Chinese culture and thus provide theoretical and practical basis for China's current exploration of preschool education curriculum model.

4. Conclusions

"Advantages and disadvantages can be seen based on history." Research on history is not simply about summarization and discussion, but to provide certain reference for current social development on the basis of summarizing historical experience and lessons. With an example of historical changes of preschool education curriculum model, its historical development process is studied in order to have scientific and accurate positioning of current preschool education curriculum model, have new thoughts on preschool education reforms in current society while sorting value orientation and influencing factors of traditional reforms, promote preschool education curriculum model to achieve diversified, scientific and featured development, and gradually improve the overall level of Chinese preschool education.

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