

Optimizing Educational Resource Allocation and Promoting the Balanced Development of English Education between Urban and Rural Areas——Take Xi'an as an Example

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Abstract — The balanced allocation of educational resources in the urban and rural areas has great affect on the balanced development of English education in these areas. With questionnaire and interview, the author learns and analyzes the gap and disequilibrium between the allocation of English educational resources in urban and rural areas. Then some related suggestions and strategies are put forward so as to promote the balanced development of English education in urban and rural areas and to realize the utmost goal of English education.

Key Words- *urban and rural areas; English education; allocation of resources; equilibrium*

I Introduction

The goal of balanced development of education lies in the balance between demands and supplies of education, with balanced allocation of educational resources acting as its basis and premise. ^[1] Actually the allocation of educational resources between urban and rural areas are the concepts and principles of fairly equal allocation and sharing of educational resources between social members of urban and rural communities. It demands that students in rural areas should have equal statues and

accesses to educational resources to those in urban areas when comes to education.^[2] Among them, balanced educational resources allocation of English, the main subject, plays an important part in the overall allocation of resources. It mainly includes English teacher resources, financial resources and hardware facilities required in teaching, etc. The optimized allocation of resources in English teaching is vital to efficiency achieved in English education.

II Allocation of Educational Resources in Urban and Rural Areas

With questionnaire and interview, the author has done some researches on allocation of English educational resources in urban and rural areas in Xi'an. Results show that there still exists disequilibrium in English educational resource allocation between them. The imbalance mainly lies in the following three aspects: allocation of teaching facilities, allocation of teaching faculty and allocation of teaching resources.

1. Allocation of Teaching Facilities

According to the survey, urban schools cover much smaller areas than rural schools while its hardware facilities required in teaching are far better than those in rural ones. Besides, urban middle school and high school own more

multimedia classrooms and computers, with no equipment of multimedia classrooms and language labs in some rural schools especially schools in distant areas.

What's more, rural middle schools can only reach 0.21 million in fixed assets while urban ones 71.94 million, nearly 300 times of rural middle schools. Even the fixed assets of high school in urban areas are several times of those in rural areas.

Studies also show that average construction areas and average number of books that can be reserved in rural schools are larger than those in urban schools. However, rural schools are inferior to urban schools in building structures and qualities.

2. Allocation of English Teaching Faculty

English teachers graduated as English majors account for 94.12% in urban schools, far greater than 59.09% of rural schools. Rural schools are in urgent need of English majored teachers, especially in elementary schools and middle schools in remote rural areas. Without professional English teachers, teachers of other subjects have no choice but to take English teaching as an additional post.

When comes to age distribution, young teachers tend to take up the majority in urban schools while rural schools is the other way around. In addition, urban schools are equipped with as many as 5 foreign English teachers and about 50 English teachers are offered training opportunities overseas. However, rural schools have no foreign teachers, let alone training opportunities in English-speaking countries.

Obvious differences also emerge in the forms of training of teachers between urban schools and rural schools. 91.14% urban school English teachers mainly attend seminars on teaching materials and methodology organized by teaching and research department of all levels.

In rural schools, the participation rate of English teachers in this form of seminar is only 70.83%. Apart from that, there are other forms of training for rural English teachers. 77.78% teachers also take part in school-based training, 31.94% have training courses during summer and winter vacation, 19.44% take in-service training program and 18.06% will be gathered in their schools to have face-to-face training courses lectured by experts and outstanding teachers from other schools. It's surprisingly unbelievable that there are still 6.94% rural English teachers that haven't taken part in any form of training.

The survey also shows that teachers in urban schools are better at thesis writing than rural teachers. 65.82% of the urban teachers and 62.5% rural teachers write thesis occasionally. Meanwhile, 1.27% urban teachers and 16.67% rural teachers don't write research papers on education. On the one hand, activities of scientific researches and teaching researches in rural schools are insufficient. On the other hand, their scientific research level is not high.

Urban teachers also differentiate themselves from rural teachers in their request of self-improvement. 50% rural teachers have higher demand for the knowledge of English linguistics while only 5.06% urban teachers have such demand. Besides, their requirements for training of scientific research methods also differ. 25% rural teachers think it necessary to have such training while only 8% urban teachers starve for it. This phenomenon shows that scientific research ability of rural teachers is rather poor and it needs to be trained and improved.

According to the survey, heavy workload serves as one of the things they have in common. 93.67% urban teachers and 87.5% rural teachers think they are burdened with such great

workload that they hardly have time and energy to improve themselves.

3. Allocation of Teaching Resources

The allocation of books and reference materials also present differences between urban and rural schools. 5.06% urban teachers find it almost impossible to be equipped with relevant teaching materials in school library while 33.33% rural teachers are faced with this problem as well. 22.22% rural teachers surveyed even reveal that there is no library in their school.

III Suggestions on Optimizing Balanced Educational Resource Allocation between Urban and Rural Areas

It's unfair for students, teachers and even schools to have imbalanced allocation of English educational resources. The development of rural schools will be subject to lack of high quality educational resources in various aspects, which will force excellent teachers and students in rural areas to flow to urban schools of high quality resources. If effective measures are not taken to prevent this phenomenon, disequilibrium in the allocation of educational resources between urban and rural areas will be even worse. To some extent, gratuitous waste of educational resources tends to be caused.

1. Optimizing Allocation of Teaching Conditions between Urban and Rural Areas

Being the basis of the development of school, teaching conditions is the guarantee of smooth and sound teaching. It also serves as the foundation to realize the goal of cultivation in English education.

First of all, government and education administrative departments at all levels need to adjust their thoughts and ideas. Not only should they change the urban-centered value orientation but also they have to change the

policy of giving privilege to urban schools and well-known schools in allocation of educational resources. Instead they should strengthen efforts to improve the allocation of teaching resources in rural and remote schools and provide necessary school funding and other financial supports according to their actual demands.

Secondly, information infrastructure construction and education informatization level in rural schools should be improved. Government and education administrative departments should offer training to strengthen teachers' ability of applying information technology in teaching. Further applications of information technology in teaching English in rural schools need to be promoted widely so that rural teachers and students can also have convenient and efficient accesses to share high quality digital educational resources.

Thirdly, constructions of broadband network, digital educational resources and learning network should be gradually promoted. Digital educational resource allocation can be optimized by equipping remote rural primary and secondary schools with receiving and playing devices for educational use.

In addition, rural primary and secondary schools should be provided with modernized teaching tools like language labs, multimedia classrooms, necessary English teaching instruments and other equipment. Excellent English books suitable to students' physical and psychological development is also a necessity.

With excellent teaching facilities and teaching conditions in rural schools, high quality English teachers will be attracted to teach there. At the same time, high quality students will prefer to remain, without flowing to urban schools.

2. Optimizing Allocation of Teaching Resources between Urban and Rural Areas

Teaching resources, on the one hand, can enrich

learners' perceptual experience and provide perceptual materials for them in the process of learning and teaching, which contributes to the acceleration of learning process on the whole. On the other hand, it's helpful to mobilize learners' enthusiasm and initiatives in learning English, creating an active and lively classroom atmosphere. Being central link of teaching and learning process, teaching resources are the indispensable and direct conditions that guarantee smooth implement of teaching activities.

To implement high quality equilibrium configuration of allocation in English teaching resources between urban and rural areas, we should, first of all, allow leading schools with high quality teaching resources to play their full roles in radiating influences on others. An Urban and Rural Education Commonwealth is strongly suggested being set up under the principles of sharing common interests and honor, driving rural areas by urban ones and obtaining win-win situation between urban and rural areas. What's more, counterpart support activities among schools should be developed to make contributions to the expansion of optimized allocation of high quality teaching resources. In addition, by sharing PPT courseware through the network and collectively preparing for lessons, English teachers from both urban and rural areas are able to have the opportunity to learn and exchange teaching modes, and then further studies on their teaching ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, activities such as encouraging teachers in urban areas and rural areas to form pairs in exchange for books and reference materials can also be implemented to make full use of teaching resources, thus optimizing allocation between urban and rural areas.

3. Optimizing Allocation of Teaching Faculty between Urban and Rural Areas

Without high quality teaching faculty, no district or school can produce first-class education even if they are equipped with top-ranking teaching facilities.^[3] The goal of promoting balanced development of English education between urban and rural can be realized by optimizing the allocation of urban and rural English teaching faculty, strengthening the construction of English teaching faculty in rural schools, adhering to principles of attracting, cultivating and motivating English teachers. All these factors work together to make the contribute to improving quality of teaching faculty.

1) Make a reasonable integration of teacher resources, improve policies of teacher mobility, and implement the goal of sharing high quality teacher resources. Excellent urban English teachers should be encouraged to teach in rural schools with highly competitive salaries and subsidies. Encouragement and support also need to be given to outstanding English teachers who work in rural schools so that they are comfortable working there. Additionally, rural schools should be given priority to meet their needs of high quality English teachers. Only when urban and rural areas, especially high quality urban schools and low performing rural schools form bi-direction flowing can balanced allocation of teaching faculty between urban and rural areas be promoted.^[5]

2) Formulate preferential policies to encourage outstanding graduates to take teaching posts in rural primary and secondary schools. Governments at all levels should strengthen the enforcement of Specially Contracted Teachers and Volunteer Teaching and continue to transfer highly-educated university graduates that are equipped with new knowledge structures and teaching ideas. Financial compensation and

favorable conditions in other aspects are also supposed to be given to them as a reward.

3) Strengthen training for in-service English teachers in rural primary and secondary schools and improve the quality of rural English teachers. Carrying out training to cultivate teachers is the basic way to improve quality and ability of teachers, which plays an important role in promoting equilibrium in teaching resources.^{[6][7]}

4) Implement relevant policies to guide the balanced development of allocation in teacher faculty between urban and rural schools. Professional guidance and support from excellent urban schools to weak rural schools is also indispensable for equilibrium in education. So we can draw lessons from foreign countries by setting up Priority Development Area of Education.^[8]

IV Conclusion

Although there exists significant disequilibrium of allocation in English educational resources between urban and rural areas, it's still a pleasure to see our English teachers' attitudes of aggressiveness and requirements for self-improvement from the survey. In order to change this unfair situation in current English education, it's hoped that our government and education administrative departments at all levels can take effective measures to optimize the allocation of English educational resources between urban and rural areas to ensure that even learners in rural schools can get accesses to high quality English educational resources. Only if teaching qualities in rural primary and secondary are actually improved can we keep rural children there and ease the pressure of urban schools. As a result, our utmost goal of harmonious and balanced development between urban and rural English education can be

achieved.

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