

Empirical Study of Inclusive Theory in Secondary Vocational Education

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Abstract

Based on the series papers on the inclusive theory in secondary vocational education, the paper starts with the clarification of the inclusive theory, and then moves on to suggest the brand new concepts of “all-round inclusive, all-round beneficial and all-round successful” for three different levels in secondary school education. Next, the paper analyses the target, strategy, choices, level definition, result evaluation as well as possible obstacles resolutions in the education. In conclusion, the paper suggests the brand new concept of “Inclusive Theory” which respects, tolerates and develops the study needs of every individual student.

Key words: Inclusive; Classroom teaching quality; Inclusive teaching; Secondary vocational school; Theoretical research

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INTRODUCTION

In 2005, Bao Kunjin published a paper called “The Analysis on Inclusive Education Theory Hypothesis and the Revelation of Vocational Education Reform” (2005). This paper brought forth certain reaction, and has also been transmitted widely among all kinds of websites in China. But to the regret, there is a lack of the reports and research papers on how to apply the concept of inclusive

education to vocational education, and few practice has been introduced to further the theory into secondary vocational education.

In 2009, Bao Kunjin held the interactive lecture on the application of inclusive education theory to the teaching and management of vocational education in Sichuan Agricultural University. The lecture did not only won the general resonance, but also caused some disputes. Some members, who attended the lecture, have less confidence on whether the inclusive theory can be effectively integrated into the secondary vocational education, and they also don't know how to operate it effectively.

In view of the above two points, based on the inclusive theory and the research on the secondary vocational teaching and management, the author has already taken some practices and made some achievements since 2009. In order to accelerate the inclusive theory into the secondary vocational schools better and to promote all-round optimization of the secondary vocational teaching and management, the author has finished the series summary articles of “Inclusive Theory into the Secondary” including the classroom teaching article, the classroom management article, and the general theory article.

This paper is mainly about how to apply the inclusive concept to upgrading the secondary class teaching quality in theory.

1. THE DEFINITION OF “INCLUSIVE” IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

There is no conclusion about the definition of the inclusive education. But the common recognition is the comprehensive definition from Huang Zhicheng: Inclusive education is a kind of continuous education process, namely to accept all students, to be against discrimination and exclusion, to promote positive participation, to pay attention to the cooperation, and to meet different

demands (2004). In the 1990s, UNESCO proposed and applied the conception of the inclusive education in special education, and pointed out that all children being in need of special education should be accepted and given the equal statuses and the equal education opportunities. Therefore, “Inclusive” can also be understood as “all-round inclusive”.

Nowadays, inclusive education is not the special education measures for disadvantaged groups, and it has already become one of the principles as realizing the national education quality for all countries. When the conception of the inclusive education from the special education is applied to the vocational education, there is a need to further the conception: it does not only mean “all-round inclusive”—making sure that all teenagers of school-age can receive the vocational education, but it also should be “all-round beneficial”—making sure all teenagers who are receiving vocational education can make great progresses, and even “making all students successful” (Lan, 2011), the motto from Finland, namely “all successes”. Thus, according to the different levels, the “inclusive” of vocational education should consist of three different levels of “all-round inclusive, all-round beneficial and all-round successful”.

2. THE DEFINITION OF CLASSROOM TEACHING

Classroom teaching is a commonly used method in modern teaching. It is a kind of teaching model, which is by means of teachers choosing teaching materials and appropriate teaching methods according to the teaching regulations, and imparting knowledge and skills to all the students of the same or similar age and knowledge degree. Its purpose is to realize the big scale and the intensity of transferring knowledge and information, and to improve the achievements of education through the centralization of teaching in certain time and place. As a kind of teaching model, the teachers need to make full use of it to promote effectively the communication of the knowledge and the information. In theory, when this teaching model operates well, it is able to take all students into consideration and make them get maximum growth, namely “all-round successful”. Therefore, the inclusive conception can be understood to be rooted in the classroom teaching.

Since the inclusive conception is essentially contained in the classroom teaching. Thus, the essence of vocational teaching is a kind of the teaching model that with all students included in the teaching, the teachers should try their best to make all students benefit from the teaching and be successful.

3. THE OBJECTIVE ORIENTATION OF CLASSROOM TEACHING

The teaching goal is that during the process of education, the requirements or the obtained results are expected by the educated after the educators have accomplished their work (such as one class, one unit of the book or one semester) (Yuan, 1999, p.70). And it is the direction of the teaching activities and the expected result as it can get. Meanwhile, it is also the starting point of all teaching activities as well as the final destination. For the orientation of the teaching goal, some elements should be taken into full consideration, such as the educated, the teaching content and the teaching conditions. In practice, according to the specific situation of the students and the nature of the teaching content, guided by the inclusive theory, there are two methods of orientating secondary class teaching goals.

The first: classified orientation. According to the differences of student groups and individual learning statuses, the expected objectives and the teaching contents are determined differently. Here are two kinds of operation methods:

(1) The classification of the expected objectives. Referring to the same knowledge the students are offered, there are different requirement degrees for different students. For example, according to the different levels of the related study basis, the teachers can classify the students into “the inferior, the medium, the superior”, and they are respectively required to “just know, apply, and be skilled”.

(2) The classification of the teaching contents. The same knowledge is subdivided into different levels of specific knowledge. The students of different levels are required to master the different specific knowledge. As to a new English article in vocational text, it can contain the words, the general meaning, the application of the sentence pattern, the various simple sentence and the complex. And for this, the teachers can set up different requirements from different levels of students. The students who have weak foundation of studying are required to just master words and the general meaning of the text, and other students with a good study foundation can be required to master some simple sentences and the application of those sentences, while the rest students with a better foundation should be good at the application of complex sentence from the text.

The second: the standardized directive method. All students must master certain knowledge. The method of the objective orientation in the secondary vocational education has something consistent with the traditional classroom teaching, but there is still something different. The same is to require that all students must reach certain standard; the difference is that almost all the teaching contents from traditional classroom education are standardized, while the teaching objectives of the inclusive education cannot be standardized without the premise: the standardized contents must be those basic

and relatively simple teaching content which all students can quickly grasp through effective teaching and their own efforts. For example, referring to the foundational courses of “the mechanical drawing” about the machinery and breakdown service, Xiao Chunhua determined the basic teaching objectives as: making sure all levels of student can master the skill of drawing as fast as possible, and be pleasant at the studying. Such practice is typical standardized guidance.

Overall, based on the inclusive theory, and considering the differences of students, the teachers need to take the classified orientation method to determine the teaching objectives, without the simple exclusion of the standardized directive method, that is to say, it must be concrete analysis of specific situations.

4. THE STRATEGY CHOICE OF CLASSROOM TEACHING

As are determined by the teaching objectives and according to the defined teaching task and the characteristics of students, the teaching strategy should be a efficient teaching scheme through the integration of the relevant teaching contents, teaching organization forms, teaching methods and techniques (Yuan, 1999, p.189). In inclusive theory, with the consideration of the teaching objectives which is classified according to the orientation and what is to train the skilled employees, the secondary vocational class strategy is adapted to the following suggestions, trying to make all students benefit from it:

First of all, for the content arrangement, it is suggested to adopt the strategy of “to solve problem as the main principle, to be structured as the complement”. The purpose of training the skilled employees determines that the teacher should mainly take the strategy of solving problems, and that is to say, the teacher should foster the students’ capability of processing the situation and solving the problem through the assignments. At the same time, in order to further the analysis and form the good thinking way of solving problem, there must be a reasonable knowledge structure. And then the choice of the teaching form is suggested to be the strategy of “group learning as the main principle, collective teaching as the auxiliary”. Group learning, no matter homogeneous group or heterogeneous group, can realize the classified teaching objectives; and as to collective teaching, it is suitable for solving those common problems from the students, especially some basic knowledge and a number of common challenges. Moreover, referring to the aspect of method selection, the suggestion is the integration of the explanation, the question, group discussion, the presentation and the role play, which can gain the active environment for the classroom and persistently draw students’ learning attention. Finally, speaking of the roles of teachers and students in the teaching practice, it is

proposed to combine the guidance of the teachers and the independence of the students, forming a strategy of “with the guidance of the teacher the students learning on their own”.

In short, in the inclusive theory, the classroom teaching strategy generally can be expressed as: with the main purpose of solving problems and improving the ability to deal with problems, and under the guidance of the teachers, the students can learn on their own in a form of group cooperation.

5. THE PROGRAM DESIGN OF CLASSROOM TEACHING

Teaching program is the order of carrying out teaching activities, and it can be varied. But referring to “the secondary class teaching program design with the inclusive conception”, it must take the teaching objectives orientation and the design requirements of teaching strategy into consideration.

For example, Xiao Chunhua proposes the eight-step teaching method in the teaching reform of “the mechanical drawing”, namely: teachers to question, students to think, teachers to explain, student to practice, students to be classified, students to practice again, students to report, teachers to summarize and to assign different work for different students. This method is quite popular with the students and experts, and is regarded as a beneficial exploration of the teaching program, with organizing the teaching content, realizing the teaching goals, and giving consideration to the strategies and methods of teaching.

6. THE EFFECT EVALUATION OF CLASSROOM TEACHING

The effect evaluation of classroom teaching is the subcategory of the teaching evaluation. According to certain education values and the specific teaching objectives, it is the process of evaluating the effect of classroom teaching through the exercisable means and collecting and processing students’ academic performance information.

The core of judging the value of the inclusive education is the education democracy, the education fairness and the education equality. Because the democracy and the justice is more a kind of subjective feeling. As to the inclusive theory in secondary vocational education, the subject of evaluating the effect of classroom teaching is inevitably the students themselves.

In the practice of inclusive theory in secondary vocational education, the effect evaluation of classroom teaching must redefine the definition of “success”. What is success? From the education psychological view, it is both a kind of objective thing, and also a subjective thing. The

individually obtained achievements, material rewards and social status from inside and outside the campus should be included in the evaluation. What's more, the self-growth, the self-satisfaction and the self-academic confidence are the subjective feelings of the growth.

Therefore, due to a lack of pressure of the entrance exam to college (or less pressure), the judgment on whether the students from secondary vocational schools is successful or not should be different from the objective orientation of the traditional exam-oriented education mode, and should take a subjective orientation of accepting oneself and looking for progress. This orientation, in practice, should be the active and positive assessment of students' individual and group performance which is more important than teachers' evaluation. And the formative assessment of students' learning progress is also more important than the summative assessment of standardized examination. Meanwhile, it must be "everyone involved, the evaluation from the results of the study", namely, the so-called phenotype developing strategy by some researchers.

7. POSSIBLE OBSTACLES AND COUNTERMEASURES

When the inclusive concept is widely used to improve the secondary vocational classroom teaching quality, it's possible to encounter a series of obstacles from teachers, students, the environment and so on. For instance: It is difficult to be patient enough to consider all students for the teachers. At the same time, many students have already had the heavy weariness of studying, and this situation cannot be changed easily. The evaluation standard of the teaching effect is still generally standardized as in the ordinary high school education.

Although these obstacles are unavoidable most of time, and some are even unexpected, there may usually be good results as long as we positively try to cope with these obstacles.

CONCLUSION

In short, with the guidance of the inclusive theory, we advocate the "inclusive teaching" spirit in secondary vocational class. The so-called inclusive teaching, under the guidance of the inclusive education theory, is a kind of new thought and new practice of teaching. It requires that the teachers not only put all students into the range of teaching and service practice, but also really make each individual of all students benefit from it, even be successful, and strengthen their sense of achievement. The spirit of inclusive education is: to respect, to tolerate and to develop the learning need of each individual student, that is, focusing on, satisfying and improving the reality or potential learning need of each individual student at the same time of constantly strengthening the sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

It's believed that with the guidance of the inclusive concept being applied to the secondary vocational education, every classroom teaching can get every student eventually "not being weary of studying" through the joint efforts of the teachers and students, even expecting that some students would become willing to learn and preferring to learn.

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