Connotation Characteristics and Implementation Routes of Integrated Construction of Junior and Senior High School Labor Education

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The integration of junior middle school labor education and senior high school labor education in the new era involves not only the transition between the two sections of middle school, but also the connection between compulsory education and non-compulsory education, which is the specific embodiment of the national spirit of “systematically strengthening labor education”. To realize the integration of labor education in junior and senior high schools in the new era, we can explore through the following five implementation routes: (1) focus on the cultivation of core literacy and build an integrated curriculum goal; (2) build integrated curriculum content around three types of labor education; (3) advocate the combination of “teaching, learning, doing and innovation” and create an integrated teaching mode; (4) attach importance to the development of labor projects and carry out integrated teaching activities; (5) optimize the course evaluation method and form an integrated evaluation mechanism.

Keywords: junior and senior high school, labor education, connotative characteristics

At present, there are obvious differences in the development status and level of labor education in all school segments in our country. As a whole, the implementation of labor education in primary school segments is better than in middle school and college segments. It is due to the uneven development of labor education in each school section, the different characteristics of education and teaching in each school section, and the separation between the development of labor education and other factors that cause the cohesion problem between the sections of labor education. Especially in the two stages of middle school, namely: middle school and high school, here is an obvious gap between the two stages of secondary school. The development of labor education in high school is not optimistic, which directly affects the overall implementation of labor education in middle school and the healthy development of labor education in college.

As we know, middle school and high school are two stages of gradual education. These two sections have significant continuity in all aspects of curriculum teaching, showing a progressive development trend. So, we

Acknowledgment: This paper is the result of “Research on the Integration of Labor Education in Junior and Senior High Schools in the New Era: The Case of Chongqing” (Project No. 2020-00-180), a key topic of the 2020 Thirteenth Five-Year Plan of Chongqing Municipal Education Science No. 2020-00-180.

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should also clearly understand the holistic and systematic nature of subject construction. The definition of “Integration Construction of Junior and Senior High School Labor Education” can be understood as follows: With the goal of cultivating morality and educating people, in accordance with the continuity, systematization, and integrity of teaching objectives, teaching requirements, and teaching values in the field of labor education, the content, methods, implementation, and evaluation of labor education in junior and senior middle schools are organically integrated, to form a consistent labor education system.

The integrated construction of labor education in junior and senior high schools conforms to the logic of education development and the nature of labor curriculum, which is based on the basic connotation of labor education and the law of students’ growth, embodies the idea of the national system to strengthen labor education in universities, primary, and secondary schools, and promotes the integration construction of labor education with the goal of cultivating morality and educating people. The starting point of the integrated construction of labor education is the construction of curriculum integration and the core of which is the development of students’ labor literacy.

**Focus on the Cultivation of Core Literacy and Build an Integrated Curriculum Goal**

There are two ways of understanding “core literacy of discipline”: One is the bottom-up way which represents the discipline-oriented understanding of education; the other one is the top-down understanding of “what kind of person to cultivate”. The proposal of core literacy represents the emergence of the new paradigm of “people-oriented” in the field of education, and its essence is the opposition to the traditional paradigm of “knowledge-based education” (Yang, Tang, & Li, 2019). Core literacy of a discipline is the reflection and decomposition of educational and teaching objectives, the concept of all-round development of human in a certain discipline. It not only reflects the general requirements of core literacy, shares key abilities and essential character system, but also clarifies the knowledge, skills, emotions, attitudes, and values of the discipline, which will help students achieve a successful life and adapt to their life-long development.

The core literacy of the labor curriculum should reflect the correlation with other disciplines, so as to achieve the comprehensive development of students by cultivating virtue, improving intelligence, strengthening body, and cultivating beauty. The core literacy to be cultivated in labor curriculum, namely, labor quality, refers to the correct values, essential qualities, and key abilities that students gradually form in the process of learning and labor practice to meet the needs of personal lifelong development and social development. It is the concentrated embodiment of the value of education in labor curriculum, including labor concept, labor ability, labor habits, and quality, and labor spirit (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2022). In addition to the systematic study of cultural knowledge, the implementation of labor education focuses on organizing students to participate in daily life, production, and service labor in a purposeful and planned way, so as to let students do practical work, receive exercise and temper their will, and cultivate students’ correct labor values and good labor quality. Labor education cannot be “labor without education”. The fundamental value of labor curriculum lies in nurturing people, and the teaching of subject knowledge and skills must be carried out orderly under the concept of nurturing people. We should fully realize that labor curriculum has significant comprehensive education value, highlighting labor concept and spirit, labor knowledge and ability, labor habits and quality, labor thinking and innovation.

Based on the guidance of the concept of core literacy, labor curriculum must, according to its own discipline connotation and nature, formulate curriculum objectives in line with the characteristics of the discipline under
the core literacy. It should not only highlight the four aspects of core literacy of labor curriculum, but also fully recognize: The training direction, requirement, and connotation of labor literacy of middle and high schools are the same. The integration of curriculum objectives has the priority in labor curriculum construction. All aspects of junior and senior high school labor curriculum are systematic, continuous, integrated, and intersectional, and the curriculum objectives are no exception. We should respect and recognize the internal connection and logical symbiosis of junior and senior high school labor courses, build integrated curriculum objectives, break through the whole context of discipline construction, promote the sustainable development of students’ labor literacy, explore the internal law of discipline development, and realize the comprehensive education function of disciplines.

**Build Integrated Curriculum Content Around Three Kinds of Labor Education**

Labor education mainly includes knowledge, skills, and values in daily life labor, production labor, and service labor (Ministry of Education, 2020). These three categories of labor basically cover all aspects of labor education. The labor curriculum in compulsory education section takes task clusters as the basic unit to construct content structure. Labor task clusters is a course content organization method that combines standardization, integrity, selectivity, and openness. It has the characteristics of clear goal, focused theme, clear structure, open content, and flexible organization. Its core is to organically summarize several labor tasks with unified project theme, similar activity content, and similar teaching function, thus forming a group of labor tasks.

There are nine task clusters in the junior secondary work curriculum. Daily life labor includes three task groups on organizing and storing, cooking and nutrition, and implementing and maintaining household utensils. Production work has four task groups as agricultural work, traditional crafts, industrial work, and experiencing and applying new technologies. Service work has task groups, including modern service work and public volunteering service work. In addition, the cleaning and hygiene task group in the primary section can be integrated with other task groups in the same section in other school years, and carried out in conjunction with daily extra-curricular work and family work requirements. In the junior secondary section, career planning education is carried out in conjunction with the relevant task groups.

In June 2020, the Ministry of Education released the latest curriculum plan for senior high schools and curriculum standards for Chinese and other subjects (2017 edition, 2020 revision). According to the new plan, regular high schools will open labor courses as compulsory curriculum with a total of six credits. Two credits establish for volunteer service, which is carried out in extracurricular time, and no less than 40 hours in three years. The remaining four credits of content are coordinated with the optional compulsory content of general technology and the content of the school-based curriculum (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2020). Although labor courses in high and middle schools are also carried out around daily life labor, production labor, and service labor, compared with labor courses in middle and middle schools, vocational experience, service labor, production labor, and career planning education are more emphasized, and students’ comprehensive ability to solve practical problems is emphasized too.

In the process of carrying out the teaching of junior and senior high school labor courses, it is necessary to embody the principle of the unity of systematism and independence in the aspects of teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching methods, teaching evaluation, and so on. It is not only necessary to carry out the overall arrangement and design of the whole course process, but also to ensure the relatively independent boundary between each task group. In order to achieve the curriculum objectives of the learning section, every task group
must be an important part of the overall teaching design. Each task group should show its unique connotation and value and must undertake certain curriculum tasks and educational functions.

In the selection and arrangement of the contents of junior and senior high school labor courses, the principle of diversification and optimization should be reflected. According to the principle of discipline concept and thinking characteristics, as well as the learning ability and psychological characteristics of different students, labor courses differ greatly from each other in terms of curriculum content, teaching methods, and learning requirements. The main task of junior high school labor curriculum is to learn production labor related technology, obtain preliminary career experience, form basic career planning consciousness, develop a serious and responsible hard-working labor quality and safety awareness, and enhance public service awareness and spirit of responsibility. It reflects the labor thinking mode from compulsory education to senior high school education, and achieves the improvement of students’ labor accomplishment and career enlightenment.

The main tasks corresponding to the labor courses in high school are to independently choose one to two production jobs, experience the complete practice process, choose service positions, experience the real job process, obtain real career experience, cultivate career interests, and enhance the consciousness and ability of career planning. Compared with the junior high school, the senior high school students pay more attention to the cultivation of labor thinking mode from school education to vocational and social education.

**Advocate the Combination of “Teaching, Learning, Doing and Innovation” and Create an Integrated Teaching Mode**

Labor education is a practical course closely related to family, society, and school. It emphasizes students’ use of hand and brain, physical and mental participation, scientific practice, innovation and creation. It comprehensively uses multidisciplinary knowledge to face the reality of life, solve real problems, promote people’s all-round development, realize technological innovation, and benefit human society.

The labor curriculum system is comprehensive, practical, open, and targeted. Its curriculum objectives and nature require a close combination of theory and practice. The teaching mode of “integration of teaching, doing and creation” comes from Tao Xingzhi’s life education thought. “Doing” has a very important position, which is not only the source of knowledge, but also the foundation of creation. It is only through hands-on practice and active thinking that knowledge can be acquired and inventions created. The teaching mode of “integration of teaching and innovation” can effectively improve the disjunction between theoretical teaching and practical training in traditional teaching, and provide the possibility for students to improve their comprehensive professional quality.

To develop labor education, we should make full use of educational resources and implement “teaching and innovation integration” teaching mode in multiple fields, multiple ways, at multiple levels of labor education activities to form a synergy of home, school, and community. Among them, the family should play a fundamental role and focus on the opportunities for labor practice in daily life, such as clothing, cooking, housing; the school should play a leading role and effectively assume the main responsibility for labor education; and the community should play a supporting role to make full use of resources from all sectors of society to provide the necessary support.

Under the teaching mode of “integration of teaching and creation”, teachers should comprehensively use a variety of teaching methods to improve the effectiveness of labor education, such as demonstration, discussion, inquiry, experiment, role play, visiting work place, and intern.
According to the unique nature of labor curriculum, teachers must let students “move” while acquiring knowledge, try to create real life and production situations for students, and widely carry out practical labor activities both inside and outside school. By adapting the students’ learning situation in junior and senior high school, teachers should fully mobilize students’ learning initiative and let students truly participate in community service, social practice, production labor, and vocational experience.

 Attach Importance to the Development of Labor Projects and Carry out Integrated Teaching Activities

Labor education has remarkable activity, and its subject nature combines both the characteristics of regular subjects in ordinary schools and some attributes of professional subjects in vocational schools. Therefore, in daily teaching, labor education should break through the teaching organization form and classroom teaching method of conventional subjects, integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and skills, and try to build an interdisciplinary project-type learning model to achieve students’ deep learning.

Project-based learning is a teaching method that students construct a new knowledge system by using existing knowledge in the process of project development and solve problems while completing the project. The foundation of project-based learning is the constructive theory, which emphasizes students in the real situation through exploration, cooperation, innovation, and other ways. Teachers and students who participated in project-based learning will use multidisciplinary knowledge to determine the project theme, formulate the project plan, clear the project division of labor, implement the project activities, display the project results, and evaluate the project effect. The goal of project-based learning should include not only subject knowledge, but also higher-level working and thinking modes.

In the process of labor education practice, teachers should actively create integrated practice activities dominated by project-based learning mode. To be specific, teachers should create teaching situations related to students’ actual life according to their physical and mental characteristics, knowledge structure, and cognitive laws, design driving questions that can mobilize students’ learning initiative so that students can actively participate in learning practice, and motivate students to give full play to their potential. In addition, teachers should set up a variety of learning supports for students, such as examples, questions, suggestions, guidelines, tables, charts, etc. Teachers should also encourage and guide students to complete a specific project task in the way of teamwork, so that students can cultivate their high-level thinking such as system analysis, judgment, creativity, decision-making, problem solving, and innovation on the basis of acquiring and refining knowledge.

There are two key points in project-based learning, which are the setting and experience of situations and the selection and application of methods. Students can deepen their understanding of labor and improve their labor literacy through cooperation. Teachers become guides, organizers, and helpers, while students are designers, practitioners, and creators, which changes the situation of passive acceptance of knowledge by students in traditional teaching. It not only allows students to deeply participate in the whole process, moving from “edge” to “center”, but also provides students with conditions for independent learning and to their learning initiative.

The development of labor practice projects should be selected and designed according to local conditions, the environment, and resources in the region. The main curriculum objective is to cultivate students’ labor literacy. The content of labor practice projects should be independently selected around labor task groups. Attention should be paid to combining the traditional form of labor with the new form of labor, combining labor education with other educational activities, and combining theoretical study with practical exercise.
Optimize Curriculum Evaluation Methods and Form an Integrated Evaluation Mechanism

According to the spirit of “Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and The State Council on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Universities, Primary and Secondary Schools in the New Era”:

Bring labor literacy into the comprehensive quality evaluation system of students...The evaluation result of labor literacy is taken as an important content to measure the overall development of students, as an important reference for the evaluation of excellence and graduation basis, as an important reference or basis for the admission of higher schools. (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China State Council, 2020)

It can be seen that the quality of labor education in the lower grade and school has an impact on the enrollment and learning of the higher school. The evaluation of senior high school labor curriculum is closely related to the evaluation of junior high school labor curriculum, and should also be linked in the process of planning and implementation.

As an important part of the construction of the labor curriculum system, how can we scientifically build an integrated evaluation mechanism in middle and high school?

First of all, we should uphold the integration of evaluation ideas, always take the achievement of students’ labor literacy as the main basis of evaluation, pay attention to the performance of students’ family labor, school labor, and social labor, and pay attention to the formation of students’ labor concept and spirit.

Secondly, we should adhere to the integration of the evaluation content, surround the activity goal, design the gauge scientifically according to the requirements of labor literacy, and form indicators at all levels to divide the curriculum level. In the design of indicators at all levels, the concept should be consistent, the main line should be connected, and the scientific order should reflect the systematic and growth of the subject.

Thirdly, we should advocate the integration of evaluation methods, organically combine quantitative evaluation with qualitative evaluation, record the thinking process, scheme design, practical operation, outcome works, learning experience, activity experience, exchange feedback and other materials in the process of student labor practice, and make full use of information technology means to make a good evaluation of big data application, intelligent management, normal implementation and overall description, holographic record of students’ labor practice process and understanding, and record and sort out labor task list, labor list, labor file bag, and other materials.

References


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