

# The Dilemma and Countermeasures of the Implementation of Integrated Practical Activity Course

CUI Shuangyi

Beijing Road Primary School in Jiaozhou, Qingdao, China

Integrated Practical Activity Course is an open and compulsory course for students to participate in comprehensive practical activities. There are mainly the following problems. Firstly, teachers lack relevant curriculum knowledge and lack professional guidance. Secondly, curriculum resources are scarce and development efforts are insufficient. Thirdly, there is a lack of evaluation criteria and an imperfect management mechanism. Based on this, we try to comprehensively train teachers in curriculum capabilities, and actively explore organizational forms.

*Keywords:* integrated practical activity course, dilemma, countermeasure

## Introduction

In September 2017, the Ministry of Education in China officially promulgated the Curriculum Guidelines for Integrated Practical Activities in Primary and Secondary Schools, which stipulates that “comprehensive practical activities are set up from primary school to high school and made compulsory courses”. The integrated practical activity curriculum is a characteristic curriculum in primary and secondary education. However, in recent years, the integrated practical activities course has not achieved significant results. Based on this, this paper analyzes the value and dilemma of the implementation of integrated practical activity courses, and studies the ways and methods of implementing integrated practical activity courses based on teaching practice.

## The Dilemma of Integrated Practical Activity Course

Integrated Practical Activity Course is not a simple outdoor activity method at the subject level, but an independent course at the curriculum level. In the implementation process, Integrated Practical Activity Course mainly has the following problems.

Firstly, teachers lack relevant curriculum knowledge and lack professional guidance. The curriculum content of comprehensive practical activities covers the three major fields of nature, society, and self, and each school does not have the teaching materials and specific contents uniformly compiled by the state for guidance. Teachers need to have the appropriate curriculum knowledge to guide students to choose various activity topics that are not limited by subject knowledge and are of interest to students. Due to the influence of the traditional subject education system, teachers' teaching knowledge, thinking mode, and teaching behavior are limited by their own professional knowledge, and teachers often have such embarrassment when guiding students to carry out comprehensive practical activities: Chinese teachers attend class and emphasize reading, discussion, accumulation, and expression; when a mathematics teacher takes a class, he emphasizes logical reasoning and

thinking training; when the natural teacher goes to class, he does experiments and writes reports, and the subject has a strong taste, which makes it difficult to reflect the value of comprehensive practical activities. Although some teachers have participated in the national, provincial, and municipal backbone teacher training, which has improved their professional quality and ability, most of the teachers still do not have a good understanding of the nature, characteristics, and value of the comprehensive practical activity curriculum, and lack proper curriculum knowledge.

The characteristics of comprehensive practice activities determine the diversity of organizational forms, activity methods, and theme types of activities. During the same teaching period, students in a class can choose different activity themes for learning and exploration in individuals and groups, which requires classroom teachers to guide students on different topics selected during the same time period. Regardless of whether the topics chosen by students are the same, students will encounter various problems such as knowledge, methods, and interpersonal communication in activities, and need timely guidance from teachers. In reality, most of the teachers who undertake comprehensive practical activities undertake the teaching of other subjects, and schools usually assign a teacher to teach a class of comprehensive practical activities, which has the problem of insufficient time and energy for teachers in the guidance process, and the result is that most students blindly choose topics, take forms, make appearances, and rush things in the activity experience and exploration. Therefore, cultivating teachers' professional knowledge, improving teachers' curriculum guidance ability, and forming a teaching mode based on teachers' team-based guidance are the primary issues that need to be solved urgently to achieve the normal implementation and effective implementation of this course.

Secondly, curriculum resources are scarce and development efforts are insufficient. The implementation of the integrated practical activity curriculum requires the availability of relevant curriculum resources on campus. Curriculum resources are the basis for curriculum development and implementation, and the development of curriculum resources directly affects the normal implementation and effective implementation of courses. As a practical, autonomous, open, and generative course, comprehensive practical activities can only be carried out and developed normally with rich course resources. According to the research survey, most schools do not have a comprehensive practical activity research base and no professional research team, and the implementation of the comprehensive practical activity curriculum is seriously insufficient in terms of human, material, and financial resources, and the school faces the dilemma of lack of curriculum resources. Specifically, the vast number of rural schools in China generally lack sufficient equipment resources, and have not established corresponding curriculum practice sites, which is difficult to meet the resource and venue requirements of students to carry out comprehensive practical activities. According to a survey, "The most important difficulty that teachers encounter in guiding students to carry out integrated practical activities is the lack of resources" (Feng & Wang, 2009, p. 19). Rural schools face the dual dilemma of lack of on-campus equipment and off-campus bases, which has led many rural schools to sigh when faced with integrated practical activity courses.

There are three main reasons for the lack of resources for the school curriculum. First, because this course is not a subject of the students' entrance examination, school leaders and teachers do not pay enough attention to it; second, the conditions required for the development of curriculum resources are insufficient, and the school cannot guarantee both the teaching team and the relevant funds needed; third, the support of the society is weak, resulting in the inability to effectively use many resources in reality, such as higher fees charged by relevant bases and venues, and non-cooperation of interview subjects, etc., which cause the overall effect of the development of curriculum resources for comprehensive practical activities to be poor.

Thirdly, there is a lack of evaluation criteria and an imperfect management mechanism. Since most of the comprehensive practical activity courses in the school are developed and implemented by the school according to the actual situation of the school, it has strong school characteristics, and its implementation cannot be measured by a unified and standardized framework. Exams are a double-edged sword. In the past, we thought that exams were too restrictive and too many rules smoothed out the edges of people's personalities. Therefore, we have given Integrated Practical Activity Course a "courtesy": It's not bound by the exam. Our original intention was to remove the shackles of the exam and make Integrated Practical Activity Course more free. However, in an environment like our country where "further education" is used as the baton, it's not good to enjoy such "courtesy". The necessity of comprehensive practical activities has not been greatly challenged because it has not been shackled by examinations and has not established sound evaluation standards. Because it cannot be reflected in the middle school entrance examination and the college entrance examination, many teachers think that doing well and doing bad things are the same thing, and doing or not doing the same. As a result, "it's important to say, secondary to doing, and not to be busy" has also become a true portrayal of the status of the comprehensive practical activity course. Without external evaluation pressure, the development and implementation of integrated practical activity courses can only rely on the conscious consent of teachers and schools.

In addition, to effectively manage and evaluate the various practical activities carried out by the school, a scientific and perfect supervision and management mechanism is required. The education management department should effectively supervise and manage a series of issues such as whether each school effectively implements the curriculum plan for comprehensive practical activities, whether it can ensure the corresponding number of class hours, whether it has cultivated and arranged full-time teachers, and whether all students are truly involved in various theme activities, so as to ensure the normalization and effectiveness of curriculum implementation. In practice, schools generally face the phenomenon of stylization and complexity of management and evaluation, resulting in the lack of enthusiasm of school teachers to guide and study comprehensive practice activities, and students also lose interest in comprehensive practice activities. The lack of evaluation system and imperfect management mechanism are also major difficulties faced by most schools, resulting in the lack of due effectiveness in the implementation of comprehensive practical activities.

### **The Countermeasures of Integrated Practical Activity Course**

We need to comprehensively train teachers in curriculum capacity and actively explore the teaching organization of integrated practical activity courses. As a new course, the new concepts and methods contained in integrated practical activities will encounter various new problems in the process of implementation. Therefore, front-line teachers should be organized to conduct systematic training, so that front-line teachers can thoroughly understand the "new" embodied in the course, change some old concepts as soon as possible, constantly improve their course knowledge, and enhance their professional guidance. At the same time, a large number of teaching and research activities can be carried out, timely analysis and research of problems arising in the process of practice, and methods and countermeasures to be proposed. Teachers can also collaborate to actively explore ways to organize integrated practical activity courses. For example, project-based teaching, as an innovative practical teaching activity, refers to "the process in which teachers lead students to participate in one or more projects, and transfer teaching activities and professional knowledge throughout the implementation of the project" (Tan & Long, 2015, p. 177). The project-based teaching method has a strong matching with Integrated Practical

Activity Course, and teachers can apply the project-based teaching method to the implementation of Integrated Practical Activity Course and actively explore various forms of course teaching methods. Its specific operation links include: selecting a theme, formulating a plan, implementing a plan, self-evaluation, and summary sharing. At the end of the project learning, we need to organize students to hold an achievement exhibition, share the learning gains, make a complete record of the whole process of project learning, including text, pictures, and all materials related to the project learning, and put forward the learning objectives of the next stage of comprehensive practical activities.

We need to harness the power of multisectoral collaboration to jointly develop curriculum resources. We can establish a comprehensive practical activity course resource library. The content of Integrated Practical Activity Course is not designed in advance by the curriculum development department and can be used by teachers and students, but should be discovered, selected, and refined from student life and social practice. The implementation of integrated practical activity courses has a strong dependence on the development of curriculum resources. However, because our teachers have long been accustomed to passively accepting ready-made teaching materials provided by the curriculum development department, they not only do not have the accumulation of curriculum resources, but also lack the necessary preparation in concepts and abilities, and it's difficult to meet the needs of curriculum resource development. In order to solve this problem, we can try the development strategy of "multi-party linkage participation" to fully mobilize the forces of teachers, students, parents, society, and other aspects to participate in the development of curriculum resources. We can subdivide curriculum resources into two series: on-campus resources and off-campus resources. School resources include teacher resources, student resources, school cultural resources, subject teaching material resources, etc.; off-campus resources include socio-economic resources, historical and cultural resources, community human resources, community natural resources, family resources, etc. Then we need to announce the goals and requirements of curriculum resource development to teachers, students, parents, and society, so that developers can selectively develop curriculum resources based on their own interests and abilities. The school can organize the resources and materials collected by the personnel to form a comprehensive practical activity curriculum resource library for the refinement and design of activity topics. We should establish curriculum topics for integrated practical activities. The comprehensive practical activity curriculum resource library established by "multi-party linkage participation" can effectively solve the problem of insufficient curriculum resources, but the implementation of the curriculum also needs to form feasible and educational activity topics. To this end, a "project selection system" can be established on the basis of the development of curriculum resources, and a wide range of activity topics collection activities can be carried out for teachers, students, parents, and society.

We need to improve the institutionalized guarantee system and comprehensively guarantee the implementation of the curriculum. The long-term development of the integrated practical activity curriculum requires institutionalized guarantees from the school, teacher, and student levels. Schools should continuously improve the institutionalized guarantee system for the implementation of comprehensive practical activity courses: We can clearly set up comprehensive practical activity courses to become compulsory courses for students, arrange full-time teachers to conduct professional teaching, reward teachers with remarkable results in carrying out comprehensive practical activity courses, and use them as an important basis for teachers' professional title promotion and salary and welfare, and encourage teachers to seriously carry out the teaching of comprehensive practical activity courses from the level of the school system; at the same time, it has established close ties with off-campus practice bases, established long-term cooperation and exchange mechanisms, and

reasonably standardized the rights and responsibilities of schools and practice bases. Teachers should actively build a team of teachers of comprehensive practical activity courses, formulate corresponding teamwork systems, establish a school-based teaching and research system for comprehensive practical activity courses, regularly cooperate with cooperative activities, form an online training mechanism for comprehensive practical activity courses under the background of “Internet +”, improve the theoretical and systematic level of comprehensive practical activity courses, promote the in-depth development of comprehensive practical activity courses, and provide institutional guarantees for the implementation of comprehensive practical activity courses from the perspective of teacher system. Students should fully realize the importance of integrated practical activities courses to their own development, actively participate in the corresponding comprehensive practical projects, formulate corresponding learning tasks and rules and regulations under the guidance of teachers, and earnestly complete the goals and tasks of integrated practical activities. Through the joint efforts of school teachers and students, a series of institutionalized texts are formed for the development of comprehensive practical activities in schools. The institutionalized text clarifies the task arrangement of teachers and students, and provides comprehensive support and guarantee for the development of comprehensive practical activities in schools.

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