Thoughts on Education under Great Changes

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Abstract: Education has entered a new era of transformation and development. Education should continually respond to the needs of social development and student growth. It should enable students to "anchor themselves in society, serve society, and guide social progress". We explore the "Unit" of education to attain harmony between individuals and society. Furthermore, we delve into the "Source" of education, seeking teaching content, methods, and models derived from productive labor and social practice. An examination of these aspects is essential for constructing a high-quality education system. The core of building a high-quality education system is tantamount to breaking through the constraints of learning time, space, participants, and course resources, while transcending the limitations of learning evaluation. This breakthrough is conducive to achieving educational equity and promoting the balanced development of high-quality education.

Keywords: Great Changes; Education Reform; Social Demand; "Unit" and "Source"

1. Introduction

The world today is undergoing a great change not witnessed in a century. These extraordinary developments have profoundly shaped the course and trajectory of historical progress. On a global scale, the development paths and models of different countries have encountered significant crises, be it at the ideological, institutional, or operational levels. Education has entered a modern era of change and development. The questions that arise are: How to face the transformation and development of education? How to adjust oneself to adapt to the requirements of change? How to excel in various educational endeavors? Thinking about the necessary logic and path behind educational reform might provide us with invaluable insights. [1] We need to draw lessons from Western educational experiences, tap into the educational vigor and wisdom of Chinese civilization, activate the concept of education with distinct Chinese characteristics, and address the challenges and crises inherent in education, which is a problem that the education sector must grapple with.

2. Discipline, School, and Teaching under Great Changes

2.1 Discipline

Owing to the demands of social development, schools have changed from "nothing" to "something". As we transition from this nascent stage, the content of learning gradually shifts from simple practical applications to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. Philosophy and sociology are gradually being integrated into the educational framework, further enhancing the scholastic discipline system. The primary objective of establishing or modifying disciplinary systems lies in their effectiveness in facilitating students' knowledge acquisition and holistic development. [2] While a well-defined disciplinary framework can streamline education, it also engenders vigorous debates regarding its internal and external boundaries. The root cause of this conflict can be traced to the profound changes underway. No individual, group, or professional domain structured according to specific needs can remain immune to societal upheaval. Everything is in a state of flux during these tumultuous times, marked by continuous collisions.

2.2 Schools

In the unprecedented upheaval in a century, where will the school go? Some scholars believe that schools will inevitably transition from "something" to "nothing". Regardless of the outcome, the lines between discipline,

schools, and society have blurred significantly. In response, extensive explorations have been undertaken, including "interdisciplinary" teaching, "bottomless" pedagogy, and the advancement of STEM (STEMA) education. With the sudden onset of the digital age, societal changes have accelerated, prompting us to move beyond debates about the future of schools and focus on addressing the profound transformations taking place in both educational institutions and society.

2.3 Education

From the perspective of educational objectives, it is imperative for education to eliminate all forms of "interference". Education must actively contribute to social development and human progress. Education should be deeply rooted in productive labor and social practice. It should aim to cultivate students who ess the capacity to "anchor themselves in society, serve society, and earn recognition from society". Education should empower students to carve out their space for survival and growth, striving for a harmonious coexistence between "individuals" and "society." Fundamental education should be integrated into the global landscape and the ongoing process of Chinese modernization. It should nurture individuals with a modern outlook, as the essence of modernization lies in the modernization of humanity. The true value of elementary education is the modernization of the people. [3]

3. The Basic Logic of Education

What constitutes the fundamental logic of education? What are its primary objectives? These questions have been contemplated, both historically and in contemporary times, on both domestic and international fronts. In recent years, amid constant "innovation," it has become more and more confusing. Under the tremendous social changes, it is necessary to re-understand the logic of education.

3.1 Education Maximizes Individual Potential

Education serves as the catalyst for nurturing students' personalities, enabling them to "anchor themselves in society, serve society, and guide social development." However, education cannot be "solely focused on meeting individual students' needs". Students

are an integral part of society, and education should make definite preparations for students to enter society. Students should not aimlessly enter society; they must have a goal and direction before entering society, and then they can clearly define their position in society. The rationality and adaptability of social positioning are the foundation of student development. In the midst of society's sweeping changes, students can only find their place when their unique needs are addressed. Education's role is to prepare them for this purpose. Today, the term "Involution" is often mentioned, but there are complex social factors contributing to it, and the disconnection between education and the labor market plays a role. This disconnection is evident in planning, where an excessive number of highly educated individuals are produced, leading to an oversaturation of educational qualifications. Additionally, in terms of curriculum content, graduates are ill-prepared to adapt to society. [4]

Zhou Guoping, a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and a renowned contemporary Chinese scholar, writer, and philosophy researcher, suggests that happiness is achieved when one discovers something they enjoy and transforms it into their profession. In order for students to achieve a reasonable and adaptable social positioning, they must receive an education. Education should be tailored to students' needs and maximize their personal potential, which is called "personalized education based on students" characteristics". Serving students' development is serving the development of society, not "everything for students". Students' needs and learning goals must be aligned with the needs of society. Only through this alignment can students gain a tolerable and adaptable social orientation. From the perspective of school education, teachers are not "God", students are not "God", and society is "God". Teachers "teach", and students "learn", all in service of societal needs.

3.2 Education is the Best Way to Meet Social Needs

Education drives the rapid advance of society, but it cannot "meet all the urgent needs of society". Students have their peculiar characters and diverse needs. The development

of students' characters must confront a diverse society, but social needs are dynamically evolving. A stable student personality must find harmony with dynamic societal demands. Talent education is instrumental in achieving this harmony. Education should be structured in response to society's ever-changing needs, ensuring continuous systematization and stratification to better align with societal progress.

We cannot simply aim to meet the expectations of parents and students, ignoring the absolute dominant position of society in running schools and education." Cultivating what kind of people" is the purpose and direction, "How to cultivate people" is the method and path, and "Cultivating whom" is the value orientation. [5] The crux is that individual development must be responsive to societal needs.

3.3 Education Achieves Coordination between Individuals and Society

The existence of humans is the foundation and premise of all cognition. It is concrete, realistic, and perceptible. However, human development is beyond reality, perception, and all kinds of given factors. When human beings pursue creation, ideals, and development, they can constantly renew their cognition, change their environment, and improve their goals. Ultimately, progress and growth can be achieved through dynamic development that surpasses the constraints of reality and strives for what should be. [6]

The essence of education lies in helping students enter society, establish themselves in society, serve society, and guide its advancement. The focal points of education are society, students, and teachers. Teaching content, teaching methods, and teaching management all rely on these. Educational content is the carrier, management is the guarantee, and method is the process. The straightforward logic of education is to attain the educational objective. But what is the goal of education? In the realm of education, Whole-person education should be diligently pursued. [7] From the perspective of educational goals, education is realized through the role of people. Education should achieve a high degree of coordination and unity between people and society, economy, and culture. Education should train students to

be the talents that society requires. In the past, the adage "both red and professional" was often employed. "Red" signified the need for students to continue a certain ideology, while "Professional" necessitated that students become builders of society.

4. Reflections on Education -- "Unit" and "Source"

4.1 Two Emphases of Educational Thinking

Education cannot meet all the immediate needs of every student, nor can it address every pressing societal demand. What should be the guiding principle for education? On the surface, it is tantamount to handle the relationships between "inside and outside of school", "inside and outside of class", "teachers and students", "school and parents", and "teaching and guidance". From a deeper perspective, the key to breaking the educational crisis under the Great Changes is tantamount to dealing with the relationship between "education and society" and "education and students". We have an obligation to re-examine the value of education. Only by clarifying the value of education can we promote a high degree of matching between education and social needs. This necessitates a reexamination of the content, methods, techniques, and models of education, ensuring that students can attain educational outcomes that harmonize with their distinctive characteristics.

In our pursuit of educational quality, considerable resources have been invested in understanding "qualities," revealing that "qualities" manifest in various forms. The expression of "qualities" refers to multiple directions, levels, and contents. We can envision education and society as two distinct "units", with the content, methods, methods, and models of teaching serving as the "source" of teaching.

4.2 The "Unit" of Education

Traditional Chinese philosophy embodies monism, yet every unitary entity is composed of "Yin" and "Yang". Education pursues a kind of harmony between people and society. Society pursues harmony between reality and development. As the Tao begets One, One begets Two, Two begets Three, and Three begets all things. Education should pursue a

unique "Tao", "Tao" is the "One" of education. The "Supply" and "Demand" of education constitute the "One", "Supply" and "Demand" are also the "Two" of schooling. "Two" seeking stable educational Methods and Models, the "Methods" and "Models" are the "Three" of education.

The core of "One" in education is to build harmony between people and society, making them a complete whole, rather than two "independent persons". Education enables people to have a suitable and reasonable "positioning" in society, achieving "the best use of things and the best use of people". In the process of harmonious coexistence and coordinated development between individuals and society, between "unit" of "unit", collisions are inevitable. However, these collisions do not result in fragmentation but rather coordination and integration. The key to coordination and integration lies in the organic integration of learners" considering outcomes with societal development patterns. This is the "Supply" and "Demand" contained in education, it is "Two" of education. In order to coordinate the relationship between "Supply" and "Demand" in education, it is necessary in order to adopt a judicious educational and teaching model, namely the "Three" of education. The "Three" of education is clearly defined in educational policies, it is the combination of education with social life and production practice. Only by combining education with communal life and production practices can education effectively meet the needs of both individuals and societal development.

4.3 The "Source" of discipline development

Education cannot meet all the urgent needs of every student, nor can it meet all the urgent needs of various fields of society. What should education teach, and how should it be taught? Disciplines embody a logic rooted in rationalism and knowledge production. Under the dual impetus of knowledge production and societal demand, an "interdisciplinary" model has emerged.[8]

As society advances, it becomes impossible for an individual to acquire all or most of their knowledge and skills within their limited lifetime. Consequently, they can only selectively acquire a small portion of knowledge. If the scope, depth, and breadth of learning are not controlled, it could lead to an increase in the academic burden. In the current era of inclusive education reform, various approaches such as "interdisciplinary learning," "borderless learning," and "project-based learning" have been introduced. However, if the total amount of teaching remains unchanged, the depth and breadth of learning are unaffected, and the learning objectives remain unaltered, the academic burden cannot be alleviated. We must consider educational reform from two perspectives. First, we need to further distill the "core literacy" of subjects. Second, we must refine the teaching content. By carefully selecting and organizing teaching content, we can achieve a form of selective learning. Through educational reform, we should integrate instructional content derived from productive labor and social practice into the classroom.

4.4 The Key Factors to Enhance "the Quality of Education"

Doctors often begin a diagnosis by asking, "What's wrong with you? What are your symptoms?" Then, they strive to identify the root cause and determine the appropriate course of action. Similarly, education faces a similar set of questions: "What is the current situation? What is the reason? What should be done?" Firstly, we need to clarify what is" Quality". Has education deviated from the requirements of "Quality"? Only once we understand this can we explore methods to "improve quality". The means, methods, methods, and models of education are like "medical equipment". If the cause is improper, then "medical devices" have no value. What are the issues with education? We become aware of the current situation and problems in education. We can't find where the Tao is. With more and more teaching modes, the effect is getting worse and worse." The teaching model" has become more and more detailed, but it can be applied.

Therefore, solving the "root cause" of educational issues seems to lie not in simply "extending the school system," which is essentially a "dead end." Exploring the "Unit" and "Source" of education aims to unravel this conundrum. We explore the "Unit" of education in order to attain harmony between man and society. We explore the "Source" of education in order to find teaching content

from productive labor and social practice. Only by clarifying the "Unit" and "Source" of education can we enhance "the quality of education". The purpose of running a school is to meet society, not for people, not for disciplines, not for the school, but for the entire society. Education is required of society, not for experts, parents, or students, but to meet the needs of the entire society. The key to enhancing the quality of education is tantamount to attaching importance to the social value of education. Education must be deeply embedded in productive labor and social practice. Society is the linchpin for the quality of education.

5. Building "the High-Quality of Education" System

The core of building a high-quality education system is tantamount to breaking. Broaden learning time, space, participants, curriculum resources, and learning evaluation. This expansion helps to achieve educational equity and promotes the balanced development of high-quality education.

Quality is no longer a minimal score; quality is the effectiveness of learning outcomes. If learning cannot be proved to be sufficient, usable, and useful, then there are problems with the teaching evaluation system. The key to building a high-quality education system is to build a target system, evaluation system, and teaching system. The objective system and evaluation system are established through the "Unit", while the teaching system is develpoed through the "Source". The key to creating a new high-quality education system is the collective value of "Unit" and "Source". We must insist on the combination of education and social practice. The ultimate objective is to enhance the quality of individuals, with a focus on nurturing students' innovative spirit and practical abilities, aiming to cultivate well-rounded socialists and successors who embody ideals, morality, culture, discipline, and who are morally, intellectually, physically, and aesthetically developed. [9] The era of profound changes requires huge changes in education. The era of significant change requires rudimentary education to keep pace with The Times. In order for Basic education to effectively confront the era of great changes, it is necessary to timely reshape the scholastic concept system, educational practice system, and educational governance system. We aim to unleash the potential for development in every student, promote all-around development, and inculcate the national spirit. We strive to offer the finest contemporary education and the most outstanding educational services. Our objective is to create high-quality basic education services that are embraced by the people, involving comprehensive engagement and dedicated efforts to advance the modernization of Chinese education. [10] The era of critical change has arrived. Education must face the momentous changes head-on. Education should explore the needs of society in the midst of major changes, build a harmonious relationship between education and society, and reflect the social value of education.

6. Conclusions

Profound changes are underway, and education must confront these meaningful transformations. Education should delve into the societal needs amidst these monumental shifts, respond to the demands of society, foster a harmonious relationship between education and society, and exemplify the social value of education. Education should unlock the potential of students amid these significant changes, guide their path towards progress, foster a harmonous bond between education and students, and embody the humanistic essence of education.

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