

# Exploration on the Curriculum Evaluation System of Higher Education in China

Zhong Wang

Shaanxi Radio and Television University, Shaanxi, China

WangZhong713@126.com

**Keywords:** Higher Education; Curriculum System; Evaluation

**Abstract:** In China, the reform of curriculum evaluation system is the core issue of the reform of higher education. The curriculum evaluation system should focus on students' development needs. Besides, instead of sticking flat, we should create a more multifarious curriculum system for students.

## 1. Introduction

At the Fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, it was put forward that to follow the trends of educational development, we should base ourselves on the reality and learn from excellent educational achievements from abroad. To build a world-class educational power with Chinese characteristic, education should be given priority to play a fundamental role in realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation.

Moral education is the fundamental task of the socialist education with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

Developing our own education is an innovative idea of Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of CPC, which is also the general approach to build an educational power [1].

Nowadays, educators and managers should closely connect the purpose of school development with the goal of development of our country and our higher education should serve the development of our country and the need of society. It's the greatest obligation of our higher education to cultivate backbones who can take up the responsibility for the great rejuvenation for the state.

Xi put forward a series of new ideas, such as educating by virtue, how to give priority to education and make people satisfied, which answered the question of "how to educate, who to educate, and educate for whom".

And a new round of technological revolution has intensified the technological competition among countries. The race is heating up in new fields such as artificial intelligence, new materials, new energy, quantum information technology, biological and genetic engineering, etc. Only to seize the opportunity can we win the initiative in the race [2].

To reach the goal of education, higher education system should take its responsibility, carefully reexamining the problems of the traditional evaluation system and developing a new one to gain a better effectiveness and deeper purpose in our teaching process and fully promote students' potential.

## 2. Suggestions

### 2.1. The Curriculum Evaluation System Reform Is the Core Issue of the Higher Education Reform

There are various ways to evaluate the curriculum system in Chinese universities. It can be either quantitative or qualitative. Examination is only one of the ways, which can't represent the whole evaluation system.

The reform of curriculum evaluation system is the core issue of the reform of higher education. The curriculum evaluation system should focus on students' development needs. Besides, instead of

sticking flat, we should create a more multifarious curriculum system for students. Generally, the curriculum system in Chinese universities consists of three parts: The most important part is specialized courses, which account for 40% ~ 50% of all. These courses are set both specific and interdisciplinary, as well as for vocational train, in order to train our students to meet the requirement of some professional occupations such as business man and engineers. Besides, there are elective courses accounting for 25% and general education courses accounting for about 30 percent [3].

## **2.2. We Should Pay More Attention to Improve Students' Ability to Study, Not Only to Impart Knowledge.**

Teachers should pay more attention to the assessment of students' ability, and should not control everything like junior and senior high school teachers. Teachers should fully emphasize the simplest parts and give some guidance for the extended parts. Students can review by themselves after class, and ask teachers if they can't understand, so that they won't feel anxious and perplexed of new things.

Our teachers should talk more about current news about the frontiers related to the courses and compare our researches with others to find out advantages and disadvantages. We can also talk more about our research and methods and improve the evaluation system gradually to stimulate students' interest in learning and their creativity [4].

## **2.3 In Order to Be Objective and Fair, Joint Efforts Should Be Taken.**

Suggestions are need not only from the officers in administrative departments and experts of curriculum, but also from teachers and managers in colleges and universities and training institutions, especially the first-line teachers.

## **3. Problems**

We got several conclusions in the research, such as the complex cause-and-effect relationship between general education courses and the development of students, the basic concept of general education courses is to make our students developed both physically and mentally by taking full advantages of our teaching resources. And the original intention is to realize the fundamental purpose of educating by virtue. Here are several problems we found.

### **3.1. College Students Do Not Have Enough Freedom to Choose General Education Courses They Like.**

How free they are can be simply reflected by the ratio of elective courses' credits and general courses' credits. We found students in schools we surveyed all have a low level of freedom to choose their general education curriculum. Among these, Xi 'an Jiaotong University in Shaanxi Province did the best, with a ratio of 36.8. For most of them, the ratios are between 20 to 30 percent. In some universities, however, such as the University of Science and Technology of China, the ratio was as low as 13.1% [5]. The study shows that nowadays, our college general education is mainly under control of the strong arrangement in these universities and students do not have much freedom. However, the most important purpose of general education is to respect the students' right to choose what they like according to their different interests and the characteristics. Only by doing that can they improve their comprehensive quality from all aspects. We need to give them more freedom, but at present, there's not. Our college students are greatly restricted from a better development.

### **3.2. Our General Courses Are More Application-Oriented and Instrumental**

At present, most of our general education courses are compulsory. If we think carefully, we'll find that almost all our compulsory courses are more application-oriented and instrumental in nature. For example, the politic and military theory courses are needed for ideological education. Computer and English classes can meet students' needs of higher grades and more applications to make

themselves more competitive in job market. P.E. is a must to improve their physical fitness. Even some science classes are set to help students do better in their major courses. Because of that, they have limited effect in improving the humanistic quality and cultural accomplishment of college students [6]. That's why many prestigious universities, such as Peking University and Nanjing University, set up special courses to develop students' humanistic quality in addition to public compulsory courses. However, because of the limited time, the advantages of those special courses cannot be fully taken. However, compared to the four major goals of general education courses in Harvard University which was put forward in 2007, we can find that they care more about student's spiritual level and habits to reflection, which is what we haven't noticed. The four major goals are: to prepare for social life in the future, to develop the awareness to different cultures, to think critically and make constructive response to the environment and to gain a better understanding of what we say and do in our daily life.

### **3.3. Lack of Characteristics**

According to our investigation, these universities have similar general education curriculum. There are politic and military theory courses, computer and English classes, military theory courses and P.E., and they are all set as compulsory courses, which are highly stipulated by Ministry of Education toward the syllabus so that the schools do not have much freedom to choose. Besides, since these courses make the majority of general education curriculum, there can be a highly similarity in general education curriculum in Chinese higher education system,

However, we are happy to see that these universities have created special characteristics during the long period of time, which shows that leaders were influenced by many educational concepts, as well as their own foundation, tradition and advantages. We can find many differences among different schools, which reflects different understandings of the concept of general education. For example, Tsinghua University, University of Science and Technology of China and Shanghai Jiaotong University, which are known for their science and engineering, have significantly higher requirements for arranging natural science courses than schools like Peking University and Fudan University, which are famous for their humanities and social science. Tsinghua University pays much attention to students' physical fitness traditionally, which is reflected in their requirements of physical education. In addition to the requirements of the public compulsory courses for physical education, Tsinghua University also sets special physical education courses during the 5th to 7th semesters without credit, the assessment shall be recorded as "pass" or "fail". Those who fail the examination will not be permitted to graduate [7]. Although these universities have made great efforts to create their own characteristics, due to various restrictions, the characteristics of general education courses in these universities are still not distinct enough.

### **3.4. The Concept of One-Sided General Education**

It is believed that general education courses are influenced by some educational concepts, which are generally influenced by educators' quality structures. Besides, it is also believed that we can cultivate all-round talents only through education, according to the existing view of talents. In order to achieve the integrated development, it was put forwarded that we should pay attention to the all-around development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetics and labour education. Nowadays, in our daily educational practice, specialized courses are more focused on the intellectual education, general education courses are more focused on the moral and physical education, as well as some parts of intellectual education. However, we have some misunderstandings about the meaning of moral, intellectual and physical education due to the limitations of some historical reasons and personal perspectives. Moral education is always equaled to political quality, which means that our citizens should follow the rules, be responsible for the society, be friendly to others as well as ourselves and develop our awareness of globalization and adapt to it. However, we don't have enough teaching methods for developing their moral and intellectual awareness. As for the intellectual education, it's often regarded as the specialized knowledge, students' ability of independent judgements, critical thinking, habits of reflection, interdisciplinary views and intercultural awareness. As for the physical education, we only pay attention to the course itself, but

not care much about how to develop their awareness of excerpting and the habits to live a healthy life. What's more, the aesthetics and labour education refer to develop students' aesthetic cultivation, in order to improve their taste of the art. However, we still don't have enough ways to teach effectively. In a word, these misunderstandings have made a negative impact on our general education curriculum which leads to the critical shortage of meaningful courses.

In the meantime, it's also important to gather students' ideas, as well as graduates. They are playing an important role in all kinds of positions in our society. We need different kinds of suggestions in different stage during the development of curriculum, which is the must for our education revolution.

Their suggestions are needed during the whole process, as well as the results evaluation and feedback gathering. It has been proved that we need suggestions provided by many members in different fields and the joint efforts to analysis, rather than depend on traditional investigation only. We need to make them the members of our evaluation system to participate in all stages during the process.

### **3.5. Dare to Innovate in The Evaluation System of Ideological and Political Courses.**

One of the important ways is to educate separately. Due to the differences of different student groups such as party members, student cadres, top students, RMO and minority students, we should carry out different and diversified education in platforms, contents and levels instead of one-size-fits-all approach.

### **3.6 Deepen Our Socialism Education.**

To enhance the pertinence of the evaluation system of ideological and political curriculum, we need to deepen socialist education with Chinese characteristics and arm their minds with the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

To develop the effectiveness, we need to enhance their identity by heart in theory, political model. Make students really learn, understand, trust and practice the knowledge. Unite their strength with the Chinese Dream. Encourage them to connect their personal goals with the future of state. Then they will build firm ideals and beliefs, study hard and participate in more social activities with great enthusiasm. Propagandize more about Chinese Dream and socialism with Chinese characteristic, as well as firm students' ideals and beliefs to develop the effectiveness of Ideological and political curriculum.

In May 2020, during the period of the epidemic, American protests about George Floyd's death, which needs to be noticed. According to CNN, one of a U.S. media, black people and the left in the United States also put forward new requirements, to cancel science, technology, math, engineering and other related courses. They hold the view that these subjects are too difficult, black people can't get good grades, but white people can, and that's blatant racism.

In addition, according to the magazine "the blood and the black" in 8th September 2020, American students in colleges and universities set their studies and researches aside to actively participate in the support of "black lives matter" movement led by their professors.[8] During the strike, professors jointly hosted the lecture against racial discrimination as well as to support the black feminism. In addition, they also posted the lectures on the Scholar Strike channel on the YouTube to spread the Black Lives Matter movement widely. Lucia Cheng, a student in Grinnell College, said that it should be more content related to this kind of social issues.

All these protests have caused great distress to American society. This is the so-called freedom that black people in America, as well as college students, have been told again and again. Without setting up correct view of world and life, correct values and patriotic education, there won't be a correct evaluation system of curriculum. And that's because for those American people, the patriotism is actually love themselves.

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