

The Current Situation and Suggestions of Teaching and Curriculum Reform for Overseas Chinese Left-behind Children

-- Taking Ouhai District and Wencheng County of Wenzhou City as Examples

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Abstract

This article takes Ouhai District and Wencheng County in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China as examples to study the current situation and suggestions of teaching and curriculum reform for overseas Chinese left-behind children. Research has found that due to parents going abroad, the education of left-behind children faces many challenges, including differences in Chinese and Western educational models and cultures, rigid Chinese language curriculum structures, and academic difficulties. Therefore, the article proposes a series of improvement suggestions: the government should provide policy support and financial guidance; The curriculum system should integrate Chinese culture and local culture to enhance students' cultural identity; Teaching methods should be diversified, emphasizing interactive and differentiated teaching; The evaluation methods should be diversified and a "four modernizations" evaluation system should be constructed. Through these measures, we can better promote the healthy growth of overseas Chinese left-behind children.

Keywords

Left-behind children in overseas Chinese hometown; Chinese language education; Curriculum reform.

1. Introduction

The total number of overseas Chinese in China, distributed around the world, is about 60 million, mainly from coastal overseas Chinese towns such as Qingdao in Shandong, Wenzhou in Zhejiang, and Chaoshan in Guangdong. Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province is a famous hometown of overseas Chinese in China. There are over 420000 overseas Chinese and their families residing in Wenzhou City, and the footprints of Wenzhou overseas Chinese are spread across 112 countries around the world. There are over 30000 overseas Chinese in Li'ao Street, Ouhai District, Wenzhou City, distributed in 27 countries and regions around the world; There are over 25000 overseas Chinese in Yuhu Town, Wencheng County, Wenzhou City, ranking first among all towns in Wenzhou in terms of the number of overseas Chinese [2].

With the increasing number of overseas Chinese, left-behind children who stay in their hometown due to their parents going abroad or are sent back to China by their parents after birth have become a special group. Left-behind children in overseas Chinese hometowns, also known as "left-behind children in overseas Chinese communities", "affluent left-behind children", "overseas left-behind children", and "parents left-behind children abroad", mainly refer to children under the age of 18 whose parents (new overseas Chinese) are both overseas and who are left-behind as family members in domestic overseas Chinese hometowns. How to better promote the healthy growth of these children has become an urgent issue for local families, schools, and society to solve.

2. The Current Situation and Effectiveness of Education for Overseas Chinese Left-behind Children

As a famous hometown of overseas Chinese in Zhejiang Province, Ouhai District and Wencheng County have always attached great importance to the education of Chinese and overseas Chinese, and have specially introduced measures for the enrollment management of Chinese and overseas Chinese children and policies for bonus points and care. A typical example is the Chinese education base represented by the Wencheng Experimental Primary School, the Zhounan Branch of the Happy Camp for Left-behind Children in the Overseas Chinese Community, and the "Chinese Accelerated Class for Overseas Chinese Children". Three pairs of friendly schools at home and abroad have been established, with five happy campsites for left-behind children in the overseas Chinese community. Ten summer camps for Chinese youth have been held. According to statistics, a total of 1500 overseas Chinese children have been provided with various forms of Chinese language education activities in the past three years. In addition, an "online Chinese language school" has been established, using international communication platforms such as overseas Chinese language schools and overseas communication stations as bridges, to deeply tap into the excellent teacher resources of the county, plan to build a "cloud classroom" international cultural communication digital platform for the new generation overseas, and help overseas Chinese children "stop classes and not stop learning". Embark on the "Cloud Roots Hunting" journey, collaborate with 8 overseas Chinese schools, organize overseas students, and jointly launch the "Family Chinese Roots Hunting Journey" online summer camp with "cloud based" teaching. At the same time, Wenzhou University has jointly established Wenzhou University Overseas Chinese Research Base and Overseas Chinese College Chinese Education Base in Yuhu Town and Baizhangji Town, to conduct in-depth research on overseas Chinese history and promote its development.

3. Several Prominent Issues in the Teaching of Overseas Chinese Left-behind Children

3.1. Education Model - Challenges of Traditional Education Models from Differences in Thinking and Culture between the East and the West

Structural changes have occurred among overseas Chinese, with new overseas Chinese and the new generation of Chinese descent gradually becoming the main force. Whether they are the new generation of Chinese Americans born in their home country or the new immigrants who have gone abroad after the reform and opening up, the education and ideological concepts they receive are different from traditional Chinese education. Overseas Chinese children born abroad, influenced by Western culture for a long time, have a strong sense of democracy and human rights, are rich in personality, and pursue free, equal, and open learning methods. They find it difficult to accept the dogmatic traditional classroom education model in China.

3.2. Curriculum Structure - The Current Chinese Education Philosophy and Curriculum Structure are Unreasonable

The current Chinese education curriculum is a rather rigid, dull, and monotonous classroom style Chinese education model, and the curriculum structure lacks rationality, which makes the new generation of overseas Chinese feel pressure on Chinese education activities and lose interest in learning Chinese.

3.3. Academic Difficulties - low Grades, Bad Attitudes, and Bad Habits

According to a research report conducted by Xiao Linying and others, they chose to conduct research on Li'ao Overseas Chinese Primary School in Ouhai District and Central Primary School in Yuhu Town, Wencheng County, Wenzhou City in 2022. A total of 1496 children were

surveyed, including 535 left-behind children from overseas Chinese hometowns, accounting for 36.98% of the total sample size. The sample is typical. The survey data shows the following results: Firstly, the academic performance of left-behind children in overseas Chinese hometowns is relatively low. From the perspective of academic performance, their Chinese language scores are generally lower than those of non left-behind children; Secondly, there are biases in learning attitudes. Among left-behind children in overseas Chinese hometowns, due to the lack of necessary family education and guidance, there are more prominent problems in learning attitudes, such as inadequate learning attitudes, low learning enthusiasm and initiative, and lack of self-discipline; Thirdly, there is a need for improvement in learning habits, including active learning, homework performance, classroom discipline, and focused listening. [4].

4. Suggestions for Teaching and Curriculum Reform of Overseas Chinese Left-behind Children

4.1. Government Level Support

The government can provide the following policy incentives and support for Chinese language education:

Policy support: The government can introduce relevant policies, such as providing financial subsidies, tax incentives, land use rights, etc., to reduce the cost and risk of social forces running schools, and encourage and guide social forces to participate in the education industry;

Public-private partnership: The government can collaborate with social capital to run schools, jointly invest in educational resources, and improve the level of educational services through public-private partnership models and other means;

Commendation and reward: For social forces that have made outstanding contributions in the field of education for overseas Chinese children, the government can give recognition and rewards as a sign of encouragement;

Financial guidance: Through the establishment of special funds or scholarships, guide social capital to invest in the education field of overseas Chinese children.

4.2. Curriculum System Reform

The curriculum design approach is based on teaching objectives, learning situation, key and difficult points, combined with the advantages of Chinese and Western education, integrating Chinese culture and the local cultural ideological and political curriculum of Wencheng "Shanshui Overseas Chinese Town"; The overall goal of the course is to enhance students' understanding and identification with Chinese culture, improve their Chinese listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, cultivate their cross-cultural communication skills, and promote their comprehensive personal development and innovation abilities. Form a "four haves" teaching ecosystem that is emotional, intelligent, orderly, and effective, adapt to individual differences of students, and promote individual development.

The following are the contents of the curriculum system reform:

4.2.1. Language Skills Development Course

---Chinese English bilingual or Chinese+other target language elective courses: bilingual courses from basic to advanced are set up for overseas Chinese children of different school ages and levels, with a focus on improving their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, especially enhancing oral communication and reading comprehension.

(1) Advanced Language Foundation Course:

Starting from the basic phonetics of the language, further explanation of spelling rules is provided, followed by training to help students accumulate a certain amount of vocabulary, ultimately advancing their learning of the core sentence structure and grammar.

(2) Advanced Listening and Speaking Skills Course:

Listening practice: Improve listening comprehension skills by listening to stories, songs, etc.

Oral expression: Engage in role-playing, group discussions, and other activities to enhance oral communication skills.

Reading and recitation: By reading texts and reciting poetry, one can improve their pronunciation, intonation, and expression abilities.

(3) Advanced Reading Comprehension Course:

Text learning: Read texts related to daily life to improve reading comprehension skills.

Picture book reading: Cultivate reading interest and comprehension through interesting picture book stories.

Chinese cultural knowledge: Introduce traditional Chinese festivals, historical stories, and other content to deepen cultural understanding.

(4) Advanced Writing Skills Course:

Diary writing: Encourage students to record daily life, practice expression and writing.

Essay practice: Improve writing skills through guided writing and free writing.

Letter exchange: engage in letter exchange with overseas pen pals and practice written communication.

4.2.2. Global Synchronous Thinking Course

Mathematics and Science: Adopting bilingual teaching, combined with international teaching standards, to ensure the modernity and global universality of subject knowledge.

Sociology: To promote understanding and respect for multiculturalism by comparing the historical, political, and social structures of different countries.

4.2.3. Chinese Cultural Heritage Course

Chinese perspective: an understanding of Chinese history and civilization, geography and folk customs, enhancing a sense of identification with Chinese culture and identity;

Chinese Aesthetics: courses on traditional Chinese art, folk activities, calligraphy and painting, music and dance, etc., to experience the charm of traditional Chinese art firsthand;

Exploring the Cultural Roots of "Shanshui Overseas Chinese Town": Liu Bowen Culture, She Culture, Overseas Chinese Hometown Culture, Red Culture, Filial Piety Culture, and Health Preservation Culture, etc., to enhance the empathy of overseas Chinese, cultivate their inheritance of fine traditions, stimulate their love for their hometown, and cultivate new forces in the overseas Chinese community.

4.2.4. Life Skills and Mental Health Course

Life Skills Course: Teach daily life skills such as time management, money management, and healthy eating.

Psychological Adaptation Course: Provide psychological counseling to promptly address potential issues in cross-cultural adaptation, such as cultural shock and identity confusion.

4.2.5. Sports and Leisure Activity Courses

Physical Education Curriculum: Provides diverse sports activities, encourages students to participate in sports such as football, basketball, table tennis, etc., enhances physical fitness, and promotes teamwork.

Interest groups: Establish various interest groups, such as robot clubs, chess clubs, drama clubs, etc., to meet the personalized interest development of students.

4.2.6. Career Planning and Development Course

Career guidance courses: Help students understand their interests and potential, and provide consultation on further education and career planning.

Internship and Project Practice: Led by the government and education departments, agreements are signed with relevant enterprises to provide targeted internship opportunities for overseas Chinese students, allowing them to learn and grow through practice.

Community service: Participate in Chinese language activities organized by the community and practice language skills.

Through these diverse social practice activities, overseas Chinese children can not only better understand and integrate into local society, but also achieve personal growth and development in various aspects. When organizing these activities, relevant departments should take into account the special background and needs of overseas Chinese children, ensuring that the content of the activities is both interesting and educational, so that they can learn and grow in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

4.3. Reform of Teaching Methods

Considering the special background and needs of students, as well as the cross-cultural communication they may face in the future, the following diverse teaching methods can be adopted:

4.3.1. Bilingual Seamless Teaching:

In order to help overseas Chinese children better integrate into the local educational environment while maintaining familiarity with Chinese, bilingual teaching methods can be adopted. This teaching method allows students to learn and use Chinese while mastering the local language.

4.3.2. Cultural Integration Teaching:

Integrating Chinese cultural elements such as history, literature, traditional festivals, etc. into the teaching content to enhance the sense of identity of overseas Chinese children towards their own cultural identity. At the same time, comparing the similarities and differences between different cultures can also promote their understanding and respect for multiculturalism.

4.3.3. Situational Experiential Teaching:

Through simulation or practical experience, enable students to learn language and culture in specific contexts. For example, students can be organized to participate in celebrations of traditional Chinese festivals, or arranged to visit historical sites and cultural sites in China.

4.3.4. Interactive Teaching:

Encourage students to participate in classroom discussions and activities to increase their participation and learning interest. Teachers can stimulate students' learning enthusiasm through group cooperation, role-playing, and other forms.

4.3.5. Differentiated Teaching:

Provide personalized teaching support tailored to the individual differences and learning needs of different students. This may include adjusting the difficulty of teaching, providing additional tutoring, or designing special learning plans.

4.4. Reform of Evaluation Methods

Build a "four modernizations" evaluation system, record learning trajectories, and assist in comprehensive evaluation. Teachers, students, foreign teachers, and all members of practical units work together to achieve diversification of evaluation subjects. The evaluation system covers the entire teaching process, achieving a comprehensive evaluation span. The three-dimensional teaching objectives are comprehensively considered to achieve multi-dimensional evaluation content. Utilizing information technology, developing an evaluation system that tracks changes in student learning both inside and outside of class, quantifying various evaluation indicators along the entire path, forming a systematic learning archive, achieving

comprehensive evaluation, visually presenting learning outcomes, and increasing value and efficiency.

4.5. Key Points to Pay Attention to in Course Design for Each Academic Year:

Flexibility: The curriculum should have sufficient flexibility to meet the needs and progress of different students;

Interactivity: Encourage interactive learning and increase student engagement through group discussions, field visits, and other means;

Internationalization: While valuing the inheritance of Chinese culture, it is also important to focus on cultivating students' international perspectives and global competitiveness;

Evaluation and feedback: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make adjustments based on feedback from students and parents.

5. Summary

With the development of China's economy and society, China is the most reassuring destination for overseas Chinese. According to estimates by overseas Chinese leaders, only 1/10 of Italian overseas Chinese choose to return to China for development. And their descendants urgently need to receive higher quality education in order to better and faster integrate into the local educational environment. Chinese language education shoulders the inheritance of Chinese civilization and love for hometown. In order to achieve healthy and sustainable development, it requires close cooperation and collaborative promotion from relevant parents, schools, and government departments, as well as the strong support of capable individuals and overseas Chinese communities.

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