

A summary of research on Higher Education curriculum setting in China in recent 10 years

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Abstract: With the internationalization and democratization of higher education, the development of higher education has become one of the indicators of national education. As the core of higher education, curriculum plays an important role in the development of higher education. Development of China's higher education's discipline in 10 years has come to some progress. However, there are a series of problems involved it, such as a lack of unified standards for curriculum classification, unreasonable curriculum structure, unified curriculum standard and so on. Only by studying the problems, then we can find out the countermeasures and promote the development of China's higher education. We mainly use literature method in this paper to find the proposed problems and take measures on three aspects to solve problems in higher education curriculum, at the same time, point out the developing direction of China's higher education .

Keywords: Higher education; Higher education discipline; Curriculum

I. INTRODUCTION

As an important part of the national education system, higher education plays an important role in all senior talent training. With the development of modern economy, higher education is becoming more and more internationalized, democratic and popular. The higher education is, the more responsibility it takes to promote people to adapt to the international and social development. Comprehensive and multiple understanding of the current situation of curriculum can promote the professional development of higher education, improve the quality of high education graduate in theories and in practice. it also helps the universities to reexamine their curriculum settings and provide a useful reference for curriculum setting in colleges and universities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW OF HIGH EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

After years of development, higher education curriculum system is being more and more mature. Throughout the ancient to modern times, Confucius, Mengzi, Xunzi and the The Sophists have discussed the importance of curriculum and it is still the focus of many scholars to think and to discuss today. In the study of literature selection process, I first begin with the purpose of my research by data and information selecting on higher education courses and conclude similar views together, also remove literature which in a low download rate; then, in the process of screening articles, I learned that high education research in china started relatively late . Based on the selection of the above, I focus on the articles in recent 10 years. However, articles or research methods that have new ideas or references that are more comprehensive, complete and accurate are retained. Finally, they are carefully read, classified and compared. Ultimately, I determined the 11 Chinese literature and 3 books as the study reference. The literature contains 2 articles in 2005, 1 articles in 2006, 1 articles in 2007, 1 articles in the year of 2008, 4 in the year of 2009, 1 in the year of 2010, and 1 in the year of 2011. After carefully reading and comparing to the selected articles, the following findings are obtained:

2.1. The definition of relevant concepts

2.1.1. Higher education

In general, higher education is a kind of education in secondary education level; in the content of education, higher education is professional education; in educational institutions, higher education is undertaken by the special education institutions.¹

2.1.2. Higher pedagogy

Higher education is a new discipline of higher education, which aims at the study of higher education as the research object, and reveals the special law of higher professional education. But due to immaturity and imperfect of the higher education at present, in order to know the research of its own field and enrich the theory

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of the basic science of education, higher education must undertake the research task of certain basic theories.²

2.1.3. Course

Curriculum is the subject of teaching, is the learning experience, is the cultural reproduction; and also is the process of social transformation.³ In summary, the curriculum in broad sense, broad curriculum refers to the sum of the contents and a process of students studying during school time, narrow curriculum is the sum of teaching subjects in schools and the setting up between them with the order and time ratio.

2.2. Research status at home and abroad

2.2.1. Domestic research status

In the 11 paper, the authors of the 9 articles think that there are the following problems in the curriculum setting of higher education specialty:

1. Lack of uniform standards for curriculum classification;
2. Unreasonable curriculum structure;
3. Lack of curriculum standards;
4. The curriculum is too subjective.⁴

In these articles, there are as many as 7 articles referred to establishing reasonable curriculum structure as the improvement measures, pay attention to basic courses, outstanding methodology courses, increasing practical courses and other measures. In particular, it is worth mentioning that two measures on establishing a reasonable curriculum structure and increase practical courses have been mentioned many times in the text, and have become an extremely important measure to optimize the curriculum of higher education. There are many explaining for the reasons of the problems in the course of higher education:

1. Inaccurate orientation of training target;
2. The theoretical system of discipline is not mature;
3. Influence of traditional training mode;
4. The construction of teaching staff lags behind.⁵

1.2.2. Foreign research status

The research on foreign course problems are very macroscopic, at the same time, they are very deep. They include *curriculum: Fundamentals, principles and problems; postmodern curriculum view; curriculum theory and practice examples*. In the curriculum research setting, the basic education is relatively more, primary and secondary is the second, research on university curriculum is relatively small, and the number of courses for graduate students is less. In foreign language literature, most of them involve the cultivation of doctoral students, and there is little mention of the cultivation of Master Students.⁶ To sum up, in order to obtain a new breakthrough on the basis of previous studies, I put forward the research on the curriculum of higher education and the optimization strategy.

III. RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGN

3.1. Feasibility analysis

First of all, using the literature method can not only ensure the authenticity and effectiveness of data, but also bring forth new ideas on the basis of previous studies; From the point of view of international development, national policy and real life, the course of higher education is in line with the trend of contemporary social development. As a student of pedagogy, I have some knowledge on high education to study the subject; Nowadays, higher education has been put on the agenda to talk about the importance of it. As a new generation of social groups of college students, it is necessary for us to grasp the important opportunity to understand the specialization of higher education curriculum and to promote the perfection of recommendations. To sum up, this research topic has high feasibility.

3.2. Research methods

The main method adopted in this paper is literature review.

IV. RECENT RESEARCH STATUS OF CHINA'S HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

In the early 1970s and late 1980s, higher education was a new discipline confronted with the background of restoration and development. It was also the branch of pedagogy. After deep research, the curriculum system of higher education in China is mainly based on foreign and general pedagogy. At present, the curriculum of higher education in our country is set up according to the mode of "theory curriculum and practice curriculum". Theoretical courses include public required courses, professional basic courses, professional courses and elective courses, practical courses including training and scientific research training. Generally speaking, China's higher education curriculum setting has been greatly adjusted, however, it is still a systematic frame been

combined by different curriculum type, the course distribution is unreasonable, It is just based on public basic courses and specialized basic courses, it occupies 60% - 70% of total credits; Excessive emphasis is paid on curriculum specialization and specialization in the system of professional courses. Also, the course of practice is not comprehensive enough. Practicing course is confined in narrow field, lack of cross-curriculum, relevant curriculum and comprehensive curriculum.⁷

V. PROBLEMS OF CHINA'S HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

5.1. Lack of uniform standards for curriculum classification

Generally speaking, there are two categories of higher education courses: first, according to the "credit" requirements, it can be divided into elective courses and required courses, in accordance with the "degree", be divided into degree courses and non degree courses.⁹ Generally speaking it is lack of considering to the role of knowledge and skills on students development. The true fact is the actual situation is different, the curriculum is also different. But in particular, the curriculum is a cross rather than a corresponding relationship, therefore, the disadvantage is that it is not conducive to the sharing of different courses and exchanges if the courses classification lack of a unified standard.

5.2. The curriculum structure is not reasonable

5.2.1. The imbalance between required and elective courses

The study showed that most of the required courses in universities in China have reached 67% of all the courses and the average elective courses are between 10%-20%. In addition, there are fewer types of elective courses, one university only have three elective courses. While the number of required courses are significantly more, the number of elective courses is too few, in this case, students have little selection for elective courses. The elective courses involve fewer subjects, less cross subjects and less interdisciplinary subjects and can't meet the needs of the society and the needs of the all-round development of students. It is not conducive to the cultivation of compound and innovative talents.

5.2.2. The imbalance between public courses and professional courses

The setting of public courses in higher education is too large, and because of the lack of undergraduate courses in higher education, so there are a large number of professional courses in the courses to make up the shortcoming. Therefore, there are a large number of making up courses in postgraduate curriculum setting.

5.2.3. The curriculum is not standardized

The main reasons for the lack of curriculum standards is for a larger gap between the degree courses and basic courses. Degree course is a core course of a subject. The content and composition of a degree course can reflect the basic requirements of a degree and enable students to master broad basic theories and systematic specific knowledge. However, research shows that many higher education curriculum in colleges and universities is set up only by some educators¹⁰ which causes students' narrow and unreasonable theory, knowledge and intelligent structure. Thus, it is necessary to set up scientific, systematic standardized curriculum system.

5.2.4. The curriculum is too subjective¹¹

With foreign higher education compared with the course of higher education in the United States, such as the United States, Germany, on the curriculum of higher education in China is mainly from the theories and knowledge system of the education theory of higher education for a theoretical exploration and research. Therefore, there are many problems, such as the obvious curriculum discipline and the low comprehensive quality in the course of higher education,

5.2.5. The lag and repetition of the course content¹²

Curriculum content is the carrier for us to realize the goal of curriculum education. In the era of knowledge economy, the characteristics of digitization, information and internationalization are obvious, and the contradiction between the speed of knowledge updating and the lag of talent training mode is becoming increasingly apparent. The advanced nature, the basic nature and the comprehensiveness of curriculum contents bear the important foundation of reconciling this contradiction. Higher education in the professional part of the course does not reflect the latest research achievements in this field, can not reflect the frontier and hot issues in the field of profession, edge subjects and high and new technology disciplines can not be well received into higher education courses. In addition, the course of higher education also repeated the course of undergraduate education, resulting in a waste of manpower and material resources.

VI. THE CAUSES OF THE PROBLEMS IN THE CURRICULUM SETTING OF HIGHER

EDUCATION.

6.1. Inaccurate orientation of training target

In China, graduate education is a kind of education which between undergraduate and doctoral education, however, although it is in the middle position, but it is not a transition. Graduate students have their own unique training model, so they can not be confused with undergraduates and doctoral students.

6.2. The theoretical system of the discipline is not mature

As we all know, whether a subject is mature or not, its final sign is whether its theoretical system is established or not. After 40 years of development, China's higher education professional has made some achievements, but there is still a big gap between western countries with higher education and "Western Manufacturing" titles.¹³At present, our country is a subject or a field for higher education, which needs to be studied more clearly. The reason is the essence of higher education discipline system not established mature, so that it can't make the discipline of higher education separate from its own detailed subjects, and it can't win public recognition.

5.3. The influence of traditional training mode

Curriculum is one of the basic elements of the training mode, whether the curriculum is scientific or not directly determines whether the training mode is scientific or not. China's higher education started relatively late, and basically developed from the foreign higher education and higher education model. At first, it was modeled on the "moral model", but it was not conducive to students' curriculum learning because they did not offer courses, which led to students' lack of professional and theoretical learning and engaged in scientific research is not solid, can't be a good use of theory to guide practice. After the liberation of China, it was modeled on the Soviet Union, but the purpose of the Soviet Union is the more detailed the better professional courses, since the implementation of a long time, it has caused higher education to pay more attention to professional knowledge and despise theoretical knowledge. Similarly, because of the lack of the support of the basic disciplines, the students can not fully meet the requirements of the society and their all-round development.

5.4. The construction of teaching staff lags behind

The construction of teaching staff lags behind mainly embodied in two aspects. First, China's current education resources are unevenly distributed, for example, the eastern part of the educational resources is better than the western region, which makes the western region's the outstanding, young and energetic teachers of colleges and universities be seriously lost; Second, because of the particularity of disciplines of higher education, there are many instructors experienced, knowledgeable, but lack of theoretical literacy of higher education.

VII. CONCEPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM SETTING

After the discovery of problems, research questions and analysis of problems, this paper puts forward the corresponding optimization strategies and future development ideas for higher education majors.

7.1. Set up the correct orientation of curriculum value¹⁴

The correct orientation of curriculum value is an important direction for the development of curriculum. In the course of higher education, we should follow the principle of the society, the knowledge and the students which can guide the school teaching.

7.2. Establish a uniform standard for curriculum classification

As mentioned above, the confusion of higher education is unclear because there is no uniform curriculum standard so that there is no independent position. Therefore, in addition to establishing the correct macro concept of curriculum value, a unified theory system of higher education should be established and a unified curriculum classification standard should be established within the system. Because the classification is not absolute, therefore, in the process of classification, it is not too demanding to intersect with other categories, but we must have the distinct characteristics of our own disciplines.

7.3. Establish a reasonable curriculum structure

As mentioned above, the curriculum structure of higher education discipline is not reasonable at present. The main reason is the imbalance between elective courses and required courses. The proportion of basic courses and subject courses is not reasonable, so we must adjust the curriculum structure appropriately, for example, increasing the proportion of elective courses to improve students' comprehensive qualities and increase the curriculum to enrich students' knowledge. According to the characteristics of adapting to the society, we should keep a high degree of demand for curriculum as a compulsory course, the rest as an elective course, at the same time, in the curriculum setting way, we should try to achieve high quality and do appropriate prune in the courses which can be learned or not learned.

6.4. Strengthen the basic theory courses and highlight the methodology courses

The discipline of higher education is not standard because of its own particularity. By strengthening the basic theory courses and highlighting the methodology courses, we can improve the drawbacks of this problem. Specific practices are as follows:

6.4.1. The gap between the basic courses and the degree courses in universities is mainly due to the fact that most courses are arranged in two disciplines, and some even as three disciplines, and the university curriculum in blind pursuit of "new", make the curriculum more and more narrow. This course will impact on the basic courses, so that graduate students can't develop their own knowledge, ability and innovation ability well. Therefore, in order to broaden the horizons of students' knowledge, enrich knowledge, and lay a solid foundation for future research, we should attach importance to and strengthen the importance of basic courses.

6.4.2. The total amount of knowledge is increasing and the rate of updating is speeding up in contemporary society. It is impossible for anyone to see all the knowledge stored in mind, even for a very narrow academic field, the most knowledgeable people can not master all the knowledge and information. In this case, the methodology can help students learn by analogy, therefore, the methodology of learning must be all higher schools' attention. For example, in University of HongKong, the two disciplines are set up as elective subjects, and practice is combined to highlight the importance of methodological courses.

6.5. Increase interdisciplinary courses

At present, the development of higher education is not mature, so the curriculum is limited to the profession, which limits the students' vision. In addition, the specificity of higher education is closely related to society, politics, economy and culture, so in order to better understand the development of higher education, it is necessary to understand the basic knowledge extensively. The vision of graduate students should not be confined to the major, the latest development in interdisciplinary and marginal disciplines are also essential to graduate's development.

6.6. Strengthen practical courses

The teaching of graduate students attaches great importance to scientific research and innovation ability, but it is difficult for students to find the mistakes and shortcomings in theory if there is no practical guidance. In campus, in order to reinforce or modify the mastery of the theory, we should make good use of learning theory, teachers, students and other advantages of the library platform, should also be in the appropriate learning theory based on practice. For example, carry out simulation classroom activities and encourage students to practice.

6.7. Strengthen the teaching staff

As a director of teaching, teachers play an important role in the setting, understanding and implementation of curriculum. In the situation of being lack of funds, the government should further promote the distribution of education resources fairly, to make each place have excellent teachers as leader; For the irrational structure of teachers' knowledge, teachers' education should be vigorously developed so that teachers engaged in higher education and can understand teaching, love teaching and can present a flexible teaching content according to the actual situation of students, select appropriate teaching methods, and achieve the desired effect.

6.8. The overall conception of curriculum design

The development of majors on higher education in our country is in ice breaking period. As the discipline center, Curriculum should be paid enough attention. In view of the current problems in the curriculum setting of higher education in China, as well as the improvement measures, the most fundamental way is to take the "platform + module" approach. The platform is a curriculum framework consisting of general subject knowledge or professional knowledge according to the common development of students and the requirement of subject characteristics which can reflect the basic specification and level requirements of personnel training. The platform is designed to ensure the students to learn general knowledge and professional knowledge. "Module" curriculum is based on different students' personality requirements and characteristic development and it reflects the combination of professional education and personality education. Module curriculum focuses on personalized training, so that students have a choice to learn curriculum they are interested in.¹⁵

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