

English School-based Development in Middle Schools in China

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Abstract

Doubts and questions are aroused in this paper which should be highlighted for us to cultivate creative students in the 21st century. English teaching can be changed from teacher-centered to student-centered. Hence, middle school English teachers should use various English teaching methods according to students' ability and schools. The author analyses the difficulties and advantages on the development of English School-based curriculum in Middle schools and has researched on how Xiamen No.5 Middle School and Gulang Island Middle school apply the curriculum theory to English School-based curriculum development. The paper has been conducted by data analysis to illustrate the success of Gulang Island Middle school in English School-based development in China.

Keywords: curriculum; School-based curriculum; School-based curriculum development

Introduction

School-based Curriculum Development, which first initiated in some western developing countries in the 1970s, became an international trend adapt the highly centralized educational system, develop the School-based Curriculum with individual school as the basis and realize the democratization of the national curriculum development and implement. Based on the various resources and characteristics of school, "school-based" can be defined as a fundamental condition to meet the students' study requirements and to promote the full-development of them. "Curriculum" can be defined as educational experience system, which emphasize on cultivating students' qualities in certain educational environment (Gu, 2011). The design of curriculum should maintain the dynamic balance among students, society and subjects. With the ongoing of newly 25 elementarily educational reforms, the establishment of the elementarily educational curriculum system is urgently required by quality-oriented education. According to the current situation, China needs to put more effort on this issue. "The Education Commission Report No.3 submitted by the international panel commented: "The centrally devised syllabuses cannot meet the special need of individual schools". National Curriculum reform needs to be given the priority to develop and implement. Entering into the new century, the educational authority in China decided to establish a three-tier educational system for nation, defined as the "national", "local" and "school" curriculum(Li & Zhang, 2010). From that time, School-based Curriculum Development emerges as a critical mission of ongoing national curriculum planning. Focusing on raising the general quality of the whole nation, School-based Curriculum

Development is designed and developed to explore the creativity, practical ability and healthy development of every student. Generally speaking, School-based Curriculum Development is the king of curriculum that is organized, implemented and evaluated by certain teachers in certain schools, making well use of abundant resources of schools and local communities to meet the different demands and interests of different students. During the process of School-based Curriculum Development and Implement, teachers' involvement in curriculum development will enhance the level of teaching professionalism and the characteristic resource of school adopted in curriculum development will form the school distinctive style and students' involvement in innovative curriculum implement will spur their potential ability to a full state.

1 Implement of English Curriculum

Implement Advice of English Curriculum Criteria lays emphasis to all the English teachers in middle school. English teaching should give the opportunities for students to develop in full degree and life time long. To base on this, they should also cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use languages. Teachers should strengthen the guidance to students for their English learning strategies, which will transfer into students' survival tool in their whole lives. Teachers should try to widen student' cultural horizon and explore their Cross-50 cultural Communication consciousness and capability. Teachers should offer variety of English study and use tunnels with the aid of modern educational technology. Teachers should arouse students' interests of English learning by organizing interesting after-school activities. The development of English School-based Curriculum Development in middle school, to some extent, can be widely available to all the students, promoting their qualities, the absorbance of language knowledge, the healthy development and presentation of their personalities and abilities. As an indispensable supplement to the national curriculum planning, School-based Curriculum Development can benefit students in deferent levels with different characteristics and in different areas. Students' language skills, language knowledge, sense and attitude, learning strategies and cultural consciousness can be wholly improved.

The tradition English class advocates the simple memory of English language points and organizes mechanical activities to consolidate the knowledge. This results in the out-of-dated learning material and the boring language class. Students growing up in this kind of single-receptive learning environment are deprived of freedom to create and express. Their interests are drained drop by drop owing to the lack of motivation and challenge. Therefore students are imposed to be train as ones who only can be stand up in examination-oriented education system. Additionally, their learning ability turns out to be inefficiently.

2 English School-based Curriculum Development

English School-based Curriculum Development in middle school aims to change this tough situation. Focusing on the development of students' English communication ability as the first class task, English School-based Curriculum Development will create the most personalized learning surroundings to students. At present, School-based Curriculum Development in China is still in its infancy, so there are still many shortcomings needing to be overcome. It needs more drains and brains to get involved in this essential project.

Holding a macro view on the implement of School-based Curriculum Development in china, two models of

School-based Curriculum Development were found. First, development of School-based Curriculum is made by them. "The school designs and develops its own curriculum according to the mission, educational philosophy, students' profiles and demands, teachers' professional abilities and school own styles." Second, decisions of School-based Curriculum are made by them. "A school selects from several existing curriculums and confirms its own curriculum according to the criteria established from the mission, educational philosophy, students' profiles and demands, teachers' professional abilities and school own styles." Referring to English School-based Curriculum Development, certain teachers in certain schools execute all kinds of activities by adopting and crating the teaching material according to the students' diverse personalities and learning standings. Some English School-based Curriculum are developing and implementing successfully in middle school, such as English Intensive, English Drama Performance, English Songs Competition, English Corner and English Classical Movies Watch and so on.

Holding a micro view on the implement of English School-based Curriculum Development in China, two English School-based Curriculums in Xiamen No.5 middle school will be analysed in this paper. In English Classical Movie class, students can not only watch the world-class English movies, but also indulge themselves in a whole English native environment. According to a survey, students in middle schools will have more interests in learning English if the English lesson tends to be attractive and active. The English Classical Movie provides students with twisted stories and fascinating landscapes, served as an aid to arouse students' learning interests. The teacher in this class plays as a guide, designing different activities to develop students' communication ability, which includes classical scene role play, the watching composition and the classical dialogue guessing games(Kaufman & Crandall, 2005). In this class, School-based Curriculum Development is organized on the foundation of teachers' design and students' cooperation. Students' comprehensive ability is well cultivated by this kind of dynamic class. In Western Food Class, teachers widen students' eye zone by dazzling delicious food. Teachers collect useful information from internet and introduce them to students. Students who attended this School-based Curriculum will encounter the cross-cultural shocks like table manner, having fun in studying the culture in foreign countries.

This light of this School-based Curriculum's design is to invite students to do DIYs in the class, which is a clever approach to arouse their interests and train their practical ability. These two English School-based Curriculums are undergoing successfully on the condition of the support of the principal, teachers and students in Xiamen No.5 middle school. While some barriers on the way to English School-based Curriculum Development still exist.

First, lack of curriculum experts and their guidance. It is difficult for teachers to design a fun and balanced English School-based Curriculum because of teachers' inexperience. As for the English Classical Movie Watch class, if teachers receive some information about how to make movie, how to write the script and how to appreciate, teachers can teach more to students. As to the Western Food class, if teacher can cook all the food under the help of some experts, students will benefit a lot from it. Lacking the guidance will make School-based Curriculum Development become a heavy burden for both teachers and students.

Second, the shortage of resources for curriculum development is at peak. Teachers in the two School-based Curriculums above are limited to collect the useful information, influencing the disappointing outcome of classes. Teachers need more resources, including internet, libraries and operating equipment and so on.

Third, under-qualified teachers are difficult to develop School-based Curriculum. It cannot be denied that teachers have limited professional knowledge in certain areas. Once they need to contact to another area, they realize their incapability. Owing to this reason, Chinese teachers in middle school nowadays develop School-based Curriculum by imitating other foreign countries. Thus, they should be equipped with different professional knowledge.

Fourth, middle school managements' overlook is initial on School-based Curriculum Development. The attitude of school leaders will lead the development to different stages. Leaders who highly view the School-based Curriculum Development will leave much space for teachers to develop. In the contrary, students will be restrained only in the dull language learning class. Consequently, middle schools are in urgent need of curriculum experts, qualified teachers and related resources. Emphasizing decentralization of national curriculum system, School-based Curriculum Development has positive intentions to improve students' creativity and practicality.

The introduction of national education policy will inject a power to School-based Curriculum Development. The teachers' professionalism will be constantly improved and the characteristics of schools will be enriched.

3 A case of Gulang Island

School-based Curriculum Development will improve the construction of quality-oriented education system. The middle schools in Gulang Island will be chosen as a case to develop English School-based Curriculum. English School-based Curriculum Development is a kind of curriculum development strategy which highlights the traits of teachers and students and schools with school as basis. The implement of English School-based Curriculum Development requires six essential conditions. These conditions are specifically embodied by the structural function of school system; therefore, the systematical concept should be employed to create and use these conditions.

First, education philosophy and school-running intentions are explicit and distinctive. Generally speaking, the training intentions and standards of different-class schools are stipulated by the country. The kind of regulation is the most basic principle, so it cannot meet the specific requirements of different-class schools. In addition, the united training intentions and standards cannot meet the current society development and individual development. On this occasion, schools should establish their own distinctive education philosophy and school-running intentions. Schools should develop their own styles according to teachers and students' characteristics, educational resource, school environment and school-running aims. The middle schools in Gulang Island are superior in its treasured natural environment, attracting tourists from all over the world to travel here. Based on it, students here have more opportunities to expose in real English communication surroundings. Seizing this typical advantage, middle school opens English School-based Curriculum to promote students' English communicative skill. Oppositely the missing of explicit and distinctive education philosophy and school-running intentions will obscure the ongoing of English School-based Curriculum Development. "Develop" but without "purpose" will blind the participants.

Second, it is based on democratic and open school structure. Principals, the core figure in schools, play an indispensable role in School-based Curriculum Development. A survey on the middle school in Gulang

Island indicates that if a principal determines to carry out the innovations and revolutions, the democratic and open school organizing structure will be set up. This organization should be equipped with personalized managing style and outstanding personalities. This should be given priority to reform School-based Curriculum. The implement of School-based Curriculum makes the schools become the focus of evaluation, which will receive deferent-degree pressure from outer and inner schools. This requires democratic school management and burdens the difficulty of principal's work. In middle school in Gulang Island, a democratic principal is highly respected, regarding his leadership quality, the ability of encouraging cooperation between school staff and teachers, using power without abuse, having sympathy, loving to help others and endowed with open consciousness. The responsibilities of the principals are emphasized in that the principals can promote and lead the teachers to achieve the results within anticipation.

Third, constructing a near perfect teaching system is in accordance with explicit and distinctive education philosophy and school-running intentions. In order to implement the School-based Curriculum Development in efficient way, schools should establish the teaching system with explicit and distinctive education philosophy and positive learning environment, creating the atmosphere in which work load can be shared and success can be pursued actively (Wolf, 1995). This kind of near perfect teaching system can be set up in middle school in Gulang Island. Proficient training in group decision-making process, clear and easy understanding training aims and school-running intentions, the deep considerations for teachers, the respect to students' diversity and distinctions and the multi-change of implement the curriculum are the main factors to guarantee the success of School-based Curriculum Development. Apart from this, teaching system should keep contact with the curriculum experts. The inner feedback and incentive system should be set up to stream the work and make common effort to develop.

Fourth, the inner evaluation and improvement system at school should be reasonable. Although school-based curriculum is organized by school itself, it differs one to another. It is impossible for nation to use the same examination to evaluate the implement of School-based Curriculum. Middle schools in Gulang Island carry out the self-evaluation, reflecting the problems in the process of School-based Curriculum Development. Self-criticism, self-improvement and self-motivation will put the School-based Curriculum Development in right direction.

Fifth, working time of the teachers can be flexible with more professional skills. Teachers are the main participants of the School-based Curriculum Development, so the implement of School-based Curriculum should consider the time arrangement of teachers and meanwhile teachers should have the skills to design School-based Curriculum. It can be an unsuitable policy for the burden-stricken teachers to open a School-based Curriculum Development. Teachers who only want to obey the school's policy will deal with the School-based Curriculum Development irresponsibly. If teachers are free enough to design curriculum but without the required knowledge and skills, the development of School-based Curriculum will be a dream. Teachers in middle schools in Gulang Island will spend their spare time improving professional skills and discussing the design of School-based Curriculum.

Sixth, take good advantage of various resources. Proper use of curriculum resource, reasonable distribution of the time, arena and capitals, taking good advantages from the nearby education institution like universities consist of the essentially ongoing conditions of the School-based Curriculum Development.

According to some relative statistics, middle schools in Gulang Island have sufficient cultural and natural resource to be chosen to develop English School-based Curriculum. Enjoying the reputation of “Land of Music” and “Land of Piano”, many world famous musicians were once born and grew up here. The profound artistic factor can provide resource for School-based Curriculum. Because of the colonial period of history, the building on Gulang Island are of a great variety, such as south Fujian houses with upturned eaves, the Eight Trigrams Tower, grand and towering catholic churches, European building with red tile san large roofs, and villas of both Chinese and western styles. The Island has over 4,000 kinds of plants, belonging to over 80 families. With fresh air, thick forests and blooming flowers all year around, the Island is also named “Garden on the Sea”. In this Treasure Island, it is accessible to gain all kinds of resources(Lansing, 1985).

4 Experiments in Gulang Island Middle school

There are 200 students in the school picked randomly to be split into four classes, labelled as class A, B, C and D. Each class has 50 students with class A and class B using the English textbook based on the syllabus while class C and class D using the English resources from school-based. Also, their prior English ability is balanced split into those four classes. A year later, the huge gap comes between class A, B and class C and class D. It displays in the table1 and table 2 below.

From the figures, it is easily to find out that the students with advanced level and extremely poor decline in class A and B, at the same time it is happy to see medium level students slightly increase and poor students in class A increase, while class B decrease. Compared with the class A, B, students in class C, and D have changed much in advanced level with number 14 and 13 respectively. It is surprised to find that there is no one remaining in extremely level, which means they have improved a lot in speaking, listening, reading and writing. And medium level students rise in class C, D, poor level shrink in class.

The figures could illustrate that English school-based curriculum in Gulang Island is a success, which cultivate students’ interest to learn and improve their ability.

5 Conclusions

Taking school as the base, English School-based Curriculum Development is considered to be an open, democratic process of curriculum development. With the globalization of the economics, the place of English becomes more and more critical. Therefore, it is of great significance to develop English School-based Curriculum in middle school. English School-based Curriculum Development needs some conditions to put into practice. It calls supports from the nation, principals, teachers and communities in urgent now.

Table 1. The English levels displayed before the experiment

English levels in four classes	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D
Advanced level	10	10	10	10
Medium level	30	30	30	30
Poor	5	5	5	5
Extremely poor	5	5	5	5

Table 2. The English levels displayed after the experiment

English levels in four classes	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D
Advanced level	8	9	14	13
Medium level	32	35	35	34
Poor	6	3	1	3
Extremelypoor	4	3	0	0

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