



Reinforcement on Teachers' Morality Construction --- An Eternal Subject in Educational Development

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Abstract

Teachers perform the duty of imparting knowledge and educating people, and undertake the important task of cultivating socialism builders and successors and the mission to improve the quality of the nation a whole. Therefore, teachers should set an example in abiding by teachers' professional ethics, intensifying construction of teachers' morality, and improving level of education. This article proposes the constructive thought in teachers' morality construction in vocational education, that is, to try to improve the overall quality of a teacher in vocational education. Improvement of moral trait is the foundation, improvement of cultural awareness the key, improvement of innovative quality the core, and improvement of health and psychological quality is the basis.

Keywords: Construction of teachers' morality, Eternal subject

Excellent teachers' morality was born during several thousand years' education in China. Confucius said, "To be a person of exemplary virtue", Mencius said, "Teachers should be correct themselves", and Mr. Tao Xingzhi said, "A learned man for a teacher and his integrity for pattern" etc. Without doubt, these are spiritual treasures in Chinese traditional morality, and have been shining until today, so they should be inherited and developed. However, as an important component of moral criterion in a harmonious society, teachers' morality is also changing and advancing with the times. On one side, it has undergone long-run cultural accumulation, and on the other, it also reflects intensive characteristics of the times. With development of the reforming and opening up and the market economy, cultivation of practical, and technical talents has been an urgent requirement for construction of a harmonious society and campus, and construction of teachers' morality, especially that in vocational education, has been integrated with more enriched meaning, such as cultivation of innovative and practical talents. Therefore, construction of teachers' morality in vocational education has been encountered with new challenges and ordeal.

1. Importance and urgency of intensifying teachers' morality construction in vocational education

The Party and the country attaches great importance to vocational education, and has regarded development of vocational education as the strategical focus of further implementation of Scientific Outlook on Development and as the strategical breakthrough of the entire education. According to <<Decision by the State Council on Vigorously Carrying Forward Vocational Educational Reform and Development>>, the total enrollment scale of vocational education in China will be roughly equivalent to that of ordinary high school. Success and failure of education rests with teachers. Implementation of developing vigorously the policy of vocational education and realization of development goal calls urgently for further reinforcement on construction of vocational education teachers. However, that should concentrate on improving morality of teachers and their practical teaching ability, which can be realized by training a batch of virtuous and excellent teachers who are dedicated to work and have exquisite professional skills. By this means, they can become facilitators and promoters for advanced productivity and advanced culture, become instructors and guides for health growth of young students and play an important role in construction of a harmonious society and campus. (1) Reinforcement on construction of teachers' morality is a particular requirement of vocational education on professional quality of teachers. Characteristics of vocational education call for higher professional requirements and conditions from teachers, who should not only understand theory, but be proficient in practical skills. That is the particularity of vocational education, and more a precondition for ensuring talent training quality of vocational education. Therefore, the target should be positioned in realizing specialization of teachers, and what's more, specialization including connotation in a broad sense, and by no means merely improving professional level and skills in a narrow sense.

Construction of teachers' morality should be connected with specialization, and what's more, the former should be emphasized first of all, because teachers' morality is a construction of connotation and an internal core formulated by specialization. Just as the Minister of Education Zhou Ji says, "Construction of teachers' morality determines success or failure of reform and development in Chinese education. If we intend it for better, then the crucial factor is teacher, and what's most important in the quality of a teacher is the morality." Growth of teachers cannot go without escalation of morality. If we define educational function merely as imparting knowledge and define teachers merely as those who impart knowledge, then that might result in emphasis on professional quality assessment and negligence of teachers' morality assessment, and emphasis on external criterion and negligence of internal morality. Therefore, teachers of vocational education should not only improve their professional level and skills, but pay more attention to learning of the theory and escalation of morality, and regard construction of morality as an important content of their specialization.

(2) Reinforcement on construction of teachers' morality is a particular challenge to teachers' morality by characteristics of students in vocational education. First of all, poor foundation of students is the major feature of vocational education students. Since most students are eliminated by the exam-oriented education, there exists a serious inferiority complex among them. Besides, they don't have enough confidence, and have resistant feelings toward education and teaching in the school. They are at the most important stage of growth and development in their life, so they have a strengthened independence consciousness but a relatively weak self-control awareness. Many of them are "indifferent" to those behaviors such as violation of classroom discipline, destruction of public property, fighting and abusing, and consider such behaviors normal phenomena as being late for or absent from class, and intimate relationship between boys and girls. Some of them are lacking in a definite concept of right and wrong and a concept of beauty and ugliness, with weird hair and clothes and full of four-letter words. Furthermore, some students have a rather weak collective concept, weak legal awareness, indulged in smoking and drinking, punching up, blackmailing and stealing. In addition, quality and competence of graduates from vocational schools cannot satisfy requirements of modern enterprises. Due to the fact reform measures are not powerful in current vocational education, practical training conditions are limited, and professional teachers are lacking, comprehensive quality and professional skills cannot meet new requirements of modern enterprises on occupational capacity of a position, which calls for new ordeal and higher requirements for reinforcement on construction of teachers' morality and establishment of a harmonious campus. Characteristics of teachers and students in vocational education determine significance and urgency of teachers' morality construction, which is associated with realization of the goal of a well-off society, with survival of a vocational school and with the comprehensive development of a teacher. Reinforcement on construction of teachers' morality not only helps improve ideal of teachers, their philosophy of life, their value orientation, their moral trait, teaching approach, and even attitude of conducting themselves, and enable them to make clear their occupational characteristics and role value, but also can build excellent moral exemplification for students, lead them to choosing a correct path, furthermore, bring into existence a healthy style of study, precise school spirit, realize talent training goal of vocational schools and promote a better and faster development.

2. Major issues in the current teachers' morality construction in vocational education

Generally speaking, in recent years, professional quality and ideological and ethical standard of teachers in vocational education have been continually improved. Under attack of all sorts of social trains of thought, they still hold their spiritual home and holy land of morality, voluntarily comply with professional ethics, work hard, make selfless and extraordinary contributions to reform and development of vocational education, cultivate batches of constructive talents and technical backbones with virtuous morality and excellent skills, and therefore, make significant contributions to social and economic development of China. However, it cannot be denied that, there also exist some unneglectable issues in morality of teachers in vocational education under the circumstance of market economy and the reform and opening up. First of all, quite a large number of teachers are lacking in correct ideal and push-and-go. They mistakenly believe that it's rather difficult for them to get promoted if involved in vocational education for years. Their students are weak in foundation, difficult to control; their students won't have a bright future, and it's also difficult for the teachers to go forward. Therefore, they don't pay much attention to their pursuit of their ideal and career, and separate their work from the future and fate of the school. Some teachers don't learn or have no knowledge of the basic line of the Party and relevant policies and guidelines, don't care about students' ideological and moral conditions, mistakenly believe it's enough for them to accomplish the teaching task, and don't expect much in their political thought. Some cannot and even don't want to adapt to requirements of vocational education reform. There lack new ideas in their own lesson notes, but they don't want to take pains to learn any more. Some don't want to learn a new major even if their current major doesn't adapt to requirements of teaching reform. They are even not aware of that, and don't expect much in their work. What is more, some teachers ignore the morality of a teacher, so they are biased in their world outlook, their philosophy of life and their values. They propagandize the dark side of the society in their communication with their students, and teach some unscientific and incorrect ideas with or without consciousness, so the students are misguided and affected in their healthy growth. Some teachers overemphasize their personal value and material interests because they are corroded by the social mammonism. The previous problems are likely to cause emphasis on wisdom and negligence of

morality, careless attitude, irresponsibility on post, decline of teaching competence and practical skills. Therefore, the reputation of the school slides down, and the development of the school is obstructed. Secondly, a minority of teachers are short of morality quality, sense of responsibility and mission. They merely regard teaching as a means of subsistence or as a transition and springboard to transfer to other occupations, without responsibility, and fundamental dedication awareness. Some flighty and impetuous teachers overemphasize economic interests, put too much energy and time to part-time jobs or commercial service activities, and merely regard teaching as a stable living channel; they cannot be devoted to teaching, exploring reform of teaching, or innovation. What should be specially pointed out, there exists a serious tendency of academic utilitarian among some teachers, who make false academic study, and false teaching evaluation to cope with their work. Some of them don't have a meticulous attitude in teaching, seriously lacking in knowledge, and they are content with superficial understanding, which causes a serious impacts upon teaching quality. Furthermore, some teachers are short of cooperative awareness and an attitude to cooperate harmoniously with colleagues, and malign their superiors and colleagues by means of complaint, anonymous letters, and some hearsay. What's more, some disparage their school, superiors and colleagues, deteriorate and damage their image and relationship in the presence of other institutions and parents of their students. Unfriendliness between teachers may also do harm to the students. All the above phenomena have serious negative impacts on the internal unity of the school, and leave bad impression upon all teachers and students. A minority of teachers are not meticulous in teaching; they don't care about study of their students, lacking in love and patience, consider teaching as a task to cope with, and carry out "No Man's Land", namely, what students do, whether they listen or not, and whether they comprehend or not). What's more, some teachers even write down an outline on the blackboard for students to let them learn by themselves, and lead the young astray. They know nothing about students' life, thinking and psychological condition, unable to treat students equally without discrimination, short of patience for those underachievers, simple and crude, satirize and discriminate against them, which brings about serious psychological harm to students. Some individual teachers even punish students with corporal punishment in a disguised form, and seriously hurt their personality and self-esteem. Some teachers abuse power for personal gains, accept students' invitation to eat by means of enrollment, transfer into another class, and admission into the Party, etc, and even accept the gift of money. At the current transformable age, especially a key period, there are also a minority of teachers who recklessly disregard the moral dignity of being a model for others, but merely regard themselves as ordinary social practitioners, such as "Fan Paopao" and "Yang Buguan", etc. There exist serious issues in terms of their morality. Although there are only a few exceptions, this brings seriously negative effect to the improvement of the teaching quality and to the reputation of the school, which sets back reform and development of the vocational education.

3. Approaches and methods of reinforcement of teachers' morality construction

First of all, awareness of the significance of teachers' morality construction should be improved. A great many teachers, and even some superiors, are not quite aware of its importance. As for them, they mistakenly believe that the central task is teaching, which is closely connected with the assessment, their workload, and the title promotion, but that ideological, political and moral consciousness is virtual, which can only cause trouble if too much focused upon, and may waste time for teaching. This viewpoint is extremely one-sided. Teaching cannot proceed if isolated. But for perfect teachers' morality, a team spirit of mutual respect and mutual cooperation, and understanding of moral and ethical conditions of students, it's impossible for them to accomplish their teaching task or cultivate qualified talents. Then, a managerial mechanism should be established and formulated. There haven't been any special morality institutions in vocational schools to manage, guide and coordinate teachers, and construction of morality system, work approach, methods and means are far from perfect, so continual exploration and combination of practice should be conducted for further establishment and perfection. At present, reinforcement on construction of teachers' morality in vocational education can proceed from the following several aspects. Teachers should volunteer to devote themselves into construction of teachers' morality to improve their comprehensive quality. Improvement of moral trait is the foundation, improvement of cultural awareness the key, improvement of innovative quality the core, and improvement of health and psychological quality is the basis.

Comprehensive improvement of the quality means a lot to teachers. Firstly, the status of teachers is significant, and their role cannot be overestimated. As a poet said, "Do you want to change today? Then you can do business. Do you want to change tomorrow? Then you can be a teacher. If you die as a businessman, all will go with you. However, if you die as a teacher, your thought will perpetuate." This deeply reveals significance of a teacher and role of a teacher in the human society. Secondly, occupation of teachers is particular and irreplaceable. The position of teachers is a particular occupation with high content of morality, and what they produce are intellectual products. Their target is not only to impart knowledge and skills, but more to teach students how to conduct themselves. What they rely on are not only teaching materials at hand and equipment in the laboratory, but more virtuous personality and morality. Particularity and insubstitutability of the occupation is determined by the fact this occupation is one that cultivates people, and one that leads people to sublimity and a more beautiful life by cultivation. Thirdly, teachers' morality should be prior to all in education. Imparting of knowledge and educating of people is the mission of a teacher. To illuminate others, they should,

first of all, have brightness themselves, and to light others, they should, in the first place, have their own tinder. As the Chinese proverb goes, ‘to be “a teacher of imparting knowledge’ is easy and to be ‘a teacher of people’ is difficult’. It means that, it is easy to impart knowledge, while it is difficult to teach students to conduct themselves. As a teacher of the people, one should not only impart knowledge, and educate others, but should be accustomed to loneliness and be indifferent to fame and wealth, and overcome fickleness and falsehood as well as eagerness for instant success and quick profits. In the process of education, a teacher should insist on priority of teachers’ morality, because virtuous morality is a flag, a perfect textbook for life, and a strong spiritual power, and has an imperceptible, huge and profound influence upon students, even benefiting them all their life. In one word, teachers who practice vocational education should strengthen their quality in several aspects, which mainly include the following four aspects.

Firstly, improvement of moral trait is the foundation. Moral trait is soul of human being, and plays a leading and dynamic role in their growth. To lay a foundation for that is actually to set up one’s own business. The Italian Poet Dante said, “Morality, in most cases, can fill up defect of wisdom, while wisdom can never fill up defect of morality.” Connotation of morality involves how to conduct oneself, how to care for others, how to cooperate and how to deal with all sorts of contradictions in a correct way. Improvement of morality should be based upon emphasis on cultivation of personality power. Personality refers to sum of such characteristics as disposition, temperament, and capacity, etc, while morality trait refers to essence of personality. One well-known American Managerialist said, “One can usually accomplish nothing if he/she regards the occupation as a job, while his/her achievement tends to be uncommon if he/she regards the occupation as a career. If we regard the occupation just as an occupation, then what’s on our mind is only a job, and a means of subsistence. However, if we regard the occupation as a career, then it will become an indispensable part of our life. We will have the enthusiasm to go forward with a strong push-and-go and desire of learning, and pursue realization of the value of our life. Therefore, teachers should get down to teaching, display their rich spiritual life and pursuit of distinguish ideal without cease, and bring the role of teaching into a full play with their perfect personality charm and diligent and joyous working attitude.

Secondly, improvement of cultural awareness is the key. The Educator Ye Shengtao said, “The entire job of a teacher is to be a model for others.” “Teacher” refers to a learned man for a teacher, which means that a teacher should not only grasp rich knowledge, but should be learned and accomplished. To be a teacher, one has to be well-read, diligent and eager to learn; one has to really have firm knowledge, proficient skills, rich practices, and really play the role of “teaching and disabusing”; one has to mould oneself to be both proficient in professional theory and in practical operation, so as to really become a model for students to conduct themselves and to learn. Meanwhile, cultural awareness not only refers to cultural knowledge, but more an internalized humanistic spirit and cultural awareness from humanistic, artistic, social and natural science. It is a social wealth accumulated in the process of human social development, which not only brings knowledge and capacity to human being, but also constrains formation of the world outlook, philosophy of life and values and confirmation of a distinguish mental realm. In one word, cultural awareness is a kind of knowledge and wisdom, also an excellent character, a tolerance, a spiritual state, and a thought on the quality that makes humans human, the core of which is to how to conduct oneself. Those with bad cultural awareness have knowledge but without cultural awareness, have intelligence but without wisdom, and have personality but without quality. Difference between excellence and mean does not lie in intelligence quotient, but in nonintellectual factors, which depend on cultural awareness. Therefore, as a teacher, one should take the initiative to improve the cultural awareness, then he/she can live up to the title of “engineer of the soul”.

Thirdly, improvement of innovative quality is the core. Innovative quality is unification of innovative consciousness and competence, while cultivation of the latter rests with innovation of thinking and rich imagination. Einstein once said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge, because knowledge is limited, while imagination is unlimited, and is source of all knowledge. As a teacher, one should, first of all, have innovative consciousness and competence. That is, one should have originality, become an actual torch for students’ rationality and enlightenment, and lead them to a path of truth. At the same time, a teacher should pay attention to the personality development of students, and create conditions for their personality development, because personality is the core of creativity and lack of personality means lack of creativity. Only a teacher with enriched spirit, distinguish morality and outstanding intelligence can respect and edify personality of students, while a teacher without any particular features cannot cultivate students with extraordinary features, but can only result in their spiritual poverty. Therefore, a teacher should support students’ vagarious activities and thinking, create atmosphere and enlarge the space for their free presentation and innovative development, and provide perfect teaching environment.

Fourthly, improvement of health and psychological quality is the basis. World Health Organization made such a conclusion on health: health not only means elimination of disease, but means a sound personality. Once a scholar said that, to be successful, one has to have motive, competence and energy. Lack of motive means unwillingness to perform, lack of competence means inability to perform and lack of energy means impossibility to perform. However, abundant energy exactly originates from perfect psychological quality, and a health build also depends on high-level psychological quality. Improvement of health and psychological quality should be based on reinforcement of learning of

pedagogics, psychology, management and sociology, etc, on correct understanding of the society, oneself and correct treatment of colleagues and students. One should be broad-minded, good at adjusting one's feelings, optimistic strong-willed, pioneering and innovative, and improve the ability to endure frustration, so as to adapt to requirements of the lofty occupation.

All in all, attack of market economy upon traditional morality of teachers will necessarily penetrate into vocational education under impact of various interests and trains of thought. Therefore, some news situations, changes and problems arise, and as a social being, teachers are necessarily affected. Likewise, connotation of teachers' morality construction should also go forward with changes of the situation, and new content is added which reflects requirements of the times and educational development. Today, teachers of vocational schools should not have scientific world outlook, philosophy of life and values, selfless devotion to vocational education, perfect professional ethics and healthy psychological quality, but should try to have new thought, new concepts of the new era and advanced morality awareness with characteristics of the times.

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