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Learn Tao Xingzhi's Educational Thoughts: Revitalize the Education Activity of Chinese Rural

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ABSTRACT

According to the investigation of the Replacement Teaching Practice which carries out by the Gannan Normal university, I discovered that practice teaches have great influence to the majority normal university students. Some of them complain about the difficult condition and are unwilling to take Practice Teaches in Chinese rural. Therefore, this article is going to talk about the influence of Tao Xingzhi's country educational thoughts on the aid-the-poor practice teaching program. It mainly analyses Tao Xingzhi's rural educational ideas, he put forward the country educational thoughts, which includes his rural educational practices, his knowledge to the importance and function of the rural education, the method of the rural education, the relationship between teacher and student of the rural education. All of these contribute a lot to the aid-the-poor practice teaching program. This paper will cause the students to change the view of practice teaches, they will become less reluctant to help the education at the countryside area, and to a certain extent convert their perception of working at a developed city with high income, arose their interest in the teacher occupation and the deep love to educational business; also it can help change the fact that teachers are extremely in need in Chinese rural.

Key words: Chinese rural education; Replacement Teaching Practice; Tao Xingzhi; Country Educational Thoughts

1. Introduction

Mr. Tao xingzhi once said: "China's normal education mostly located in the city, which can't understand and adapt to the needs and sufferings of the rural children." Thus he advocates normal education to go to the countryside, training rural school teachers in rural road. Tao Xingzhi also pointed out that the practical ability plays a vital role in strengthening the young teachers' professional spirit; cultivate preschool teachers' professional competence¹.

The aid-the-poor practice teaching program marked the reform of practice education, which also causes the public's attention to the development of education at poor areas and has a better understanding of the current situation of the education in the countryside²⁻⁵. It also helps to improve the students' knowledge and talent, to train the students' teaching ability. Teaching practice is pivotal in teacher education and it can promote the growth of teachers' practical knowledge⁶.

Many scholars have studied much about the significances of the practice teaches and the influence to the normal students. They have discussed the problems in the aid-the-poor program and given some good suggestions on how to deal with them. However, few of them have focus on the theoretical basis of this program. So I'm mainly going to talk about the influence of Tao Xingzhi's country educational thoughts on the aid-the-poor practice teaching program⁷⁻⁹. By learning Tao Xingzhi's educational thoughts, the students of normal university school will have a brand new cognition about 'teaching practice as substitute teacher' which will be gradually evolved into the integration of teacher education model, and will become one of the dominant modes of teacher education in our country¹⁰⁻¹².

2. Basic Concepts

2.1 Brief Introduction of Tao Xingzhi

Mr. Tao Xingzhi is a great Chinese educationalist for the people. Born on October 18 in the County of Anhui Province, he went to study in the US after graduating from Jinling University in 1914. He came back to China in 1917. Mr. Tao Xingzhi always gives whole-heartedly to the people and takes nothing back', sharing both happiness and sadness with the general public and working closely with Chinese Communist Party¹³⁻¹⁶.

Mr. Tao spared no effort for his whole life and had made indelible contribution to the cause of

people's education, liberation and democracy. Mr. Tao Xingzhi left behind works of 6 million words, which are treasures for the mankind. Pooling the souls of thinking of different educationists, he founded the theory of 'Life Education 'and advocated to improve the education in countryside area, laying the spiritual foundation for the reform and development of Chinese people's education. There's no doubt that his struggle for our country's education through all his life.

Tao Xingzhi toiling masses from the purpose of people's liberation, criticize old education, tries to establish a new education. In order to realize it through education to liberate toiling masses ideal, he put forward a series of education thought theory, such as: democratic education, life education, he made outstanding contributions.

Mr. Guo Moruo praised him 'Two thousand years ago, we had Confucius, and now two thousand years later, we have Mr. Tao Xingzhi. A learned and respectable paragon for teachers, Mr. Tao is deserved to be a "Giant" in China's modern history of education. In addition, Tao Xingzhi once studied under Dewey in American period, and was influenced deeply by his "the education is the life""the school is the society "and so on, unified our national conditions, finally in end of hills and rivers realized the unity of teaching learning and doing. At the same time, he agreed with the thought of Wang Yangming unity of knowledge and action, especially interested in the theory of "the knowledge is beginning of the action, the action is the becoming of knowledge", proposed the important thoughts through the practice "the action is the beginning of the knowledge, the knowledge is becoming of the action", which has realized the transformation from idealist thought to the materialistic thought. Mr. Tao Xingzhi belongs to not only China, but also the whole world.

2.2The Current Situation of the Education Activity of Chinese Rural

China was faced with the domestic turmoil and foreign invasion last the half 20th century, and in this condition the education activity of Chinese rural occurred. Considering the fact that education is often directly linked to a better standard of living, and considering increasing rural discontent and unrest due to heavy peasant burdens and worsening living conditions, how to level the playing field, clarify the relationship among different levels of government in the provision of primary education for rural residents, and improve education opportunities for rural children remain the main tasks for the Chinese government¹⁷⁻¹⁹.

Education in rural China has been marginalized for a considerable period of time. It is compromised, firstly, by the societal emphasis on economic development that puts more

immediate and measurable economic growth ahead of a more long-term and less visible improvement in educational development. Secondly, it is weakened by the fact that urban education enjoys more attention and resource input from the central government. Due to the lack of public educational funding in rural areas, children from peasant families are usually forced to drop out of schools at the junior, high or even primary level, thus losing the opportunity to take the national College Entrance Examination to further their studies at institutes of higher learning. The ratio of the urban primary school enrolment rate versus that of rural enrolment rate was four to three in 2002, which meant that 1.1 million children in rural areas were unable to attend primary school. From an early age, these children are in a disadvantageous position. The unequal distribution of opportunities to pursue higher education is also shown by statistics that indicate that urban youth is more than three times more likely to be admitted to college and university than rural youth. According to Hong Wei from the Peking Academy of Education and Science, the proportion of new students from rural areas admitted by Qinghua University dropped from 20.8% in 1998 to 17.6% in 2000; the proportion of rural students admitted by Peking Normal University dropped from 30.9% in 1998 to 22.3% in 2002. Moreover, in 1999, urban students dominated military academies, colleges and universities affiliated with state ministries, and art academies, with a proportion of 90% to 99%.

Rural education is the focus of education reform and development in China. Since the rural population accounts for the vast majority of the country's population, while very few people has accepted advanced education. Thus they are short-sighted. Therefore, we need to vigorously develop rural education, in my opinion; this is an important goal in our educational development. As we all know, China has high proportion of agricultural population, agriculture is the foundation of the national economy and the countryside is a major area for building a moderately prosperous society. If there is no stability in rural areas, there would be no stability and progress of the whole society. To achieve the goal of building a moderately prosperous society, the key is in the rural areas. The lack of the number of teachers in the western region, the low quality of teachers, teachers' instability problems, as early as in the 1980s, has caused great concern to the central and local governments.

2.3 Tao Xingzhi's Country Educational Thoughts

It is a historical task of the Party and the Country to build a new socialist countryside, and it is also the needs of the time development. The development of rural education as the important content of building a new countryside and the driving force, its reform and development also

receive the attention. Tao Xingzhi as the leader of Rural Education Movement, his education thoughts have important experiences on the current education reform in rural areas.

Last the half 20th century, China was faced with the domestic unrest and foreign invasion in turmoil, at that time the quality of farmers is generally low, and conditions of rural areas are very poor, especially in agricultural production, life and education, and in its condition the education activity of Chinese rural occurred. Regardless of theory or practice, Tao xingzhi was the most influenced person and made the big achievement beyond doubt in that activity. Tao xingzhi deeply disclosed much disadvantage in the education activity of Chinese rural, held for the students to study and master knowledge. Tao Xingzhi, after the analysis of the situation in China, he tried hardly to break the limitations of the traditional Chinese "elite education". He promotes to vigorously popularize the compulsory education. The key target of the educational goals is the majority farmers of ignorance, poverty and backwardness. Therefore, he as the founder of the village school, he makes a significant improvement and breakthrough at the educational content and teaching methods. Educational content, he advocated "Life is education", teaching methods, he proposed "the unity of teaching learning and doing".

2.4 Teaching practice as substitute teacher

'Teaching practice as substitute teacher' is a new mode which unites 'education supporting', 'update' and 'teaching practice' as one. It is a reform of teacher education system and promoting development of student teacher' practical knowledge is one important part of it. In order to improve the quality of teacher education, many normal universities and weak primary and secondary schools in rural areas form partnership by 'teaching practice as substitute teacher'. A substitute teacher assumes the responsibilities of a regular teacher when the regular teacher is absent. During that time, the substitute teacher imparts knowledge and provides instruction, just like regular teachers. But they work either for only a few days at a time or when the regular teacher is away on extended leaves, like a vacation^{20,21}.

Substitute teachers use lesson plans, assign class work and homework, keep the class in order. They often work in new places, with new students. This is both a pleasure and a responsibility. The job of substitute teacher provides plenty of variety; you will work with many different students in a wide range of capacities. On any given day you may be covering a full day of lesson plans left by the full-time teacher or monitoring a class that is completing previously assigned work. If you take over for a teacher who is away on medical leave, you could find yourself in the role of full-time teacher for several weeks. No matter what your experience is

as a substitute, you'll learn firsthand what it means to be a teacher. Like the requirements for full-time teaching, the requirements for substitute teaching vary by state. In general, substitute teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree in any subject area. Most states also require substitute teachers to successfully complete a competency exam and to undergo a background check. Some states make exceptions to these general requirements or have additional requirements, such as substitute teacher training.

3. Analysis of the Aid-the-poor Practice Teaching Program

3.1 The Significances of the Practice Teaches

Teaching practice as substitute teacher “plays a positive role in relieving the teaching practice problem of normal universities and supporting basic education of poor rural schools. School districts need substitute teachers on a daily basis to fill in for absent teachers. Assignments for substitutes range from a single day to longer term. If your long-term career goal is to become a teacher, beginning as a substitute teacher is a good way to gain experience in the field and try out the classroom experience.

We consider that student teacher is a special group with the exception of qualified teachers who should have general practical knowledge structure and should also have some special practical knowledge from the view of 'teaching practice as substitute teacher'. The knowledge is not only essential for student teacher, but also can achieve expected 'targets'. Although there are some problems in 'teaching practice as substitute teacher', but it can exert a desired effect by improving it, and as time goes, 'education supporting', 'update' will gradually fade out. For the rural teacher problems, which has been limiting the education improvement of the poor area of our country, the students of normal universities, have “teaching practice as substitute teachers” in those poor rural schools whose basic education are very weak, so that the interrelated co-operation between the normal universities and the countryside schools can be sought. And also, the problems of poor rural teachers as well as students' teaching practice of normal universities can be solved. After finishing teaching practice, the attitude of the students has been a great shift, they said to support education is not as terrible as we imagine. Instead, they find their value has been reflected, all aspects of the quality and ability has been greatly improved.

We see this as an integral part of teacher education. An introduction to the realities of the situation is an essential part of effective professional training. This process also allows the student teacher an opportunity to determine whether the appropriate choice has been made.

The aims of the teaching practice experience are to provide opportunities for student teachers to integrate theory and practice and work collaboratively with and learn from the teachers. Student teachers observe subject teachers at work so as to learn about teachers' skills, strategies and classroom achievements. They also evaluate their own teaching experiences through conferencing with teachers and lecturers and, through self-reflection, implement a variety of approaches, strategies and skills with a view to bring about meaningful learning. In this way student teachers gain experience in managing and evaluating class work; in maintaining discipline and good order in the classroom; find their own teaching style and personality and become acquainted with school organization and administration.

3.2 The Problems of Teaching Practice as Substitute Teacher

Many students feel worried and hesitant when they know that they have to go to the poorest rural place to support the education there, they are worrying about the bad condition in poor areas such as the lack of security, no water, no electricity, no signal. These resulting in a resentment of teaching practice as substitute teacher, most students are not willing to go to support education. Substitute teachers are a diverse group whose experiences are, not surprisingly, colored by the context of the school community in which they work.

An overwhelming majority of participants described substitute teaching as a rewarding experience. At the same time, they raised a number of significant issues. One such issue is the lack of transparency in some jurisdictions with respect to how teachers are hired. Another is the discrepancy between substitute teachers and regular classroom teachers with respect to such matters as pay, benefits and access to professional development opportunities. Some permanent teachers don't like substitute teachers. After having a substitute in their classroom, teachers often say that they not only have to re-teach what the students were to learn, but had to un-teach what was taught them by the substitute teachers. Still another is that, in some jurisdictions, substitute teachers are subjected to working conditions that actually violate legislation and/or the terms of the collective agreement.

The purpose of Teaching Practice in addition to support basic education in rural areas, also to enhance the quality of teaching and the ability of normal school students. Because the internships schools mostly are primary and secondary schools in the town as to Normal School Students the teaching force is relatively weak, so how to guide Normal Students in a timely and effective way has become an urgent need. Moreover, the funding burden is heavy. Compared with traditional internship mode, Teaching Practice mode is full-time which requires for payment or subsidies, such as in accordance with the standards of a monthly

subsidy of 200 yuan per capita, with 2000 participants in the calculation, every semester at least needs to increase the amount of 2 million yuan. In addition, it is hard to manage. In general, schools provide internships positions, according to the real interpersonal situations, the same professional students can't be arranged in the same school. Lastly, most educational practice arrangements is in the seventh semester internship, which coincides with the college students employment or the Kaoyan time, especially is in conflict with Normal Students special recruitment time, not conducive to the peace of mind of students. If the internship schedule in the sixth semester, the students' teaching skills is also weak, thus is difficult to achieve the desired goals.

3.3 How to Deal with the Problems in the Aid-the-poor Program

Occupying the practice base isn't enough because the effective teaching practice doesn't mean only to provide students with place and chance of teaching practice. In order to make teaching practice really play its role, we should carry on the overall reform of curriculum system of normal universities and realize organic integration of practice and theory, and the key point is to establish cooperating training system between universities and primary and middle schools.

Firstly, it's urging to promote the reform of teacher education training model. I think by means of the implementation of the Teaching Practice in Colleges, combined with the requirements of social development and the reform of basic education teachers, to reform teacher education training model, thus training the formation of innovative application-oriented talents. Base on traditional teacher training model and start from the curriculum provision, faculty, syllabus to strengthen the practice teaching, building four integrated vocational skills prospective teachers. Thus, the normal school students not only have a deep discipline professionals and knowledge of educational theory, but also have excellent skills and a strong spirit of innovation.

Secondly, it's important to strengthen the process of training and the internship of Normal School Students. Unlike other educational internship model, Teaching Practice requires the interns have the independent education teaching ability, and the consciousness of improving their own quality.

Finally, it is important to improve Normal Students' enthusiasm to participate in internships to support education. In order to make the normal college students pay more attention to rural primary and secondary education, and to participate the Teaching Practice voluntarily and consciously, in addition to increase the propaganda of teaching practice, more importantly, to

fully consider and care about the actual situation and the difficulties of the intern, take effective measures to address their worries. For example, the internship school should ensure the safety and lives of interns. Teachers colleges give policy and funding support: during the course to give exemptions or Free listen; employment, it is recommended that the timing of the special recruitment Normal Students should in the eighth semester and given the first priority to the outstanding interns. It is good to give a certain monthly meal allowance for each of the students to participate in internships to support education.

4. The Function of Tao Xingzhi's Country Educational Thoughts

4.1 The Significance of Tao Xingzhi's Rural Educational Ideas

Tao Xingzhi growth in semi-colonial and semi-feudal old China, he witnessed the poverty and backwardness of rural areas, and the ignorance of farmers.

The Chinese people suffered the oppression and exploitation of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, and he thinks it's time to awake the public; we must take great efforts to popularize the rural education and to train highly qualified nationals. Education is responsible for rescuing the nation from peril. He analyzed the essence of traditional education and westernized education is out of productive labor and the toiling masses. Therefore, he tried to appeal to people from all social class should pay attention to rural education. He realized Chinese rural population account for more than 80% of the total population, and agriculture is the foundation of our country in China's national conditions. So he proposed the combination of rural education and agriculture.

He believes that if rural education runs very well, the farmers will go to heaven; otherwise poor farmers can go to hell. He places a lot of hope on rural education; he believes that the mission of rural education is to help the farmers to get rid of poor and become rich. From which we can see that the rural teacher's duties are no longer simply "preaching, tuition" but as the leader of reconstructing the rural education. China's rural education is the top priority of education, if the ruler does not pay attention to it, it is impossible to improve the quality of all citizens, social stability, long-term peace and stability of the country will be out of the question.

Tao Xingzhi want to go through the transformation of rural education to achieve the transformation of rural society, he wants to use the power of education to wake up the old farmer, cultivating new farmers to build a new China. He takes the education and the transformation of the society as a thing, rather than two different stages. He believes that the

transformation of society if not start from the school, they couldn't transform the human's inner thoughts thoroughly. The school he wants to do is different from the traditional rural schools. The new schools become the center of the transformation of rural life, it will guide the farmers gain rich knowledge and to change the hard situation of the rural areas.

4.2 The Content and Method of the Rural Education

The rural education includes five aspects: First, the concept of the education function, namely the rural education is the basis which founds a nation. Tao Xingzhi thought that in fact the reform of education reforms the society, and only the education reform can truly reform the national, improve the national quality, finally realizes the goal of reforming society. Rural schools are the center of transforming village life which is the only possible center, and summon that the fellow citizens join the rural education reform movement together. Second, the concept of the education content, namely the life is the education. Thought that the life is the template, the prototype and the center of the education; in life inherent education factor and significance; the life decides the education, the education takes transforms the life as a goal. Third, it's the concept of the education method, namely the unity of teaching learning and doing. Thought that "the unity of teaching learning and doing" is not only the basic method of transforming the rural education, moreover is also the basic method which the society transforms "the unity of teaching learning and doing" denies the traditional spoon-feeding pedagogies; "the unity of teaching learning and doing" requests "to work with the heart in the labor force"; "the unity of teaching learning and doing" reflects the epistemological ideas of dialectical materialism. Fourth, the concept of the teacher, namely the rural teacher is the soul of transforming the country life. He believes that teachers need to be the soul of transforming the country life. Meanwhile he proposes the good teacher's standard also the goal of the teacher's education-- has the farmer skill, the scientific brains, and the spirit of transforming society. He proposes "the child teacher system" which "transmits while you know". Everybody may become others' teacher. Fifth, educates practices, namely rural normal schools and technology groups.

He puts forward the concept of "life education", and its purpose is to make the rural education has a tight link with the farmer's actual life. He objects to the traditional education and westernized education, which are not adapted to the real rural life. He said: "Our actual life, all our courses; our courses, our real life." At the same time, he mercilessly criticized the drawbacks of the rural schools in the teaching content. He said: "Now the rural schools, to be honest does not adapt to the needs of the countryside. They give the children something only

book knowledge, they never pay the attention to the farmers' real needs'.

To make the transformation of rural areas, we have to promote the development of modern agriculture. The development of modern agriculture needs a large number of new farmers to master new knowledge, new technology, and to cultivate this rural talent must rely on rural schools, so rural schools' teaching content must be changed. Addition to the emphasis on life education, Tao Xingzhi also vigorously promote science education to develop students' creativity, developing children in science and scientific people and make the Chinese nation to become a nation of science, in order to adapt to the world of science.

4.3 The Influence on the Normal Students

Tao Xingzhi's rural education thought and our country rural education actual situation has induced the following enlightenment. For rural teachers, rural teachers must have three conditions: "The first skill of the farmer; the second scientific mind; Third transforming society spirit". According to the study on Tao Xingzhi's rural education thought, most Normal students who take the teaching practice have a lot of positive impact: It changed their views of teaching practice after having a better understanding about the current situation in rural areas and the farmers' desperate need for education; deepened the feelings of rural areas, and to a certain extent, changes in the concept of employment, inspired them on the teaching profession's interest; deepen their understanding of the new curriculum, more in favor of the new curriculum reform; their teaching ability and organizational management capacity has been greatly improved; consolidate Normal University Students' professional ideology; make them understand their own inadequacies, inspire they return to school to learn initiatively.

We know 'Tomorrow outstanding rural teachers, beginning today'. The school must establish close contact with rural departments, to make friends village cadres, to give students the opportunities to create, to arrange students regularly to rural schools, to the fields, to the township and village enterprises, and to understand the rural, deep into the countryside. Specifically let the students through the network, telephone and other modern means of communication, help farmers to learn scientific and technological knowledge.

What's more, it's important to encourage the students to write the rural social practice report, talk about their own ideas on the problems in rural areas. Tao Xingzhi's rural education thought and his thought that "the unity of teaching learning and doing' just have great influences on normal students. They know how to improve their practical skills and seize the opportunity to take part in the teaching practice as a substitute teacher. He advocated Normal

Schools' personnel training must be combined with the practice of social life and the practice of school education, the combination of teaching and learning.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, teaching practice as substitute teaching has changed the normal students' personal life, interpersonal relationships and their social activities; the capacity has been significantly improved. Therefore, it is recommended that normal universities constantly improve the organization of teaching practice, trying to play its positive impact. Mr. Tao Xingzhi rural educational thinking and practice has gone through seven or eight years, but because of the war, political movements, the examination-oriented education, it is difficult to popularize genuinely. His educational theory is based on the concept of "the unity of teaching learning and doing" and the idea of education in the countryside.

Today, education is not really well in China's vast rural areas. To building a new socialist countryside, we have to learn Xingzhi's thoughts. College Students are the bone oh building new countryside, it's their duty to dry out new ways to a revitalization of rural education, to help the farmers reform the education in rural areas. Tao Xingzhi founded the theory of life education and the principle of combining teaching with learning in the practice of education, which has laid a theoretical foundation for reforming the teaching content and method in normal school. Teacher education reform today has important reference significance. Now think about Tao Xingzhi's rural education reform and innovation in the twenties century, he put forward that rural education should shift from elite education to the mass education, and to implement a basic education, vocational education and adult education, especially in rural areas. Three educations together help students gain the skills to prepare for their own future to make a living, raising a family, the prophecy which had amazing depth understanding of rural China.

Pace with the times towards the 21st century, various contradictions and problems of rural emerged. The issue of farmers, agriculture and industry issues, the issue of rural development, rural education problems are waiting for people to understand, to think, to solve. Tao Xingzhi's education thoughts can improve the overall quality of the farmers in the short term, so that they become educated, skilled new farmers; transfer rural surplus labor force as soon as possible, and effectively improve the cultural quality of human resources in rural areas and the level of science and technology, rural education adapted to local economic and social development needs. With the continuous advance of the times, the technology continues to

progress, the continuous development of the social economy, the government pays more attention on rural areas, gradually increasing investment in rural education, the deepening of the new rural construction, various contradictions and problems of rural will be a step-by-step solutions, rural children will certainly be able to achieve their own hearts dream.

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