

The Politics Reform of Education in China: The Curriculum 2001 and the New Curriculum

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Abstract: The Chinese Ministry of Education produced the Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline in 2001, and it was primarily used to implement excellent education. The examination-based model of education underwent some changes in the ensuing decades, but there were also some obstacles to overcome, such as the economic disparity between urban and rural areas, the significant shortage of resources for teachers, and the conflicts that teachers had to deal with during the 2001 curriculum reform. This article suggests various remedies, including having instructors modify their instructional strategies and begin focusing on the actual needs of their pupils. The new curriculum's 2022 version was introduced in September, and there is optimism that these issues will be resolved.

Keywords: New curriculum, Education reform, China, Curriculum reform

1. Introduction

This article focuses on the recent policy shifts in Chinese education regarding the implementation of the curriculum 2001 as well as the difficulties that have arisen as a result of those shifts. Changes in the economic system have contributed to changes in education ever since the founding of New China. The promulgation of The Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline announced a shift in Chinese education from teacher-driven, fill-in-the-blank teaching to student-driven, quality education. This shift came about as a result of a desire to improve the quality of education in China. This has, to some degree, helped the growth of education in China; nevertheless, there are certain obstacles, such as the disparity between urban and rural regions and the difficulty that instructors face while moving in and out of the country. Law argues that China's education reform is based on globalization as well as changes in the economic system and that society needs more talents who meet the requirements of the new era. The promotion of the new curriculum is made more challenging as a result of all of these factors [1]. However, there are indeed some non-negligible inequalities in financial allocations due to the difference in teacher levels between urban and rural areas, and this has created a major obstacle to the process of the curriculum 2001. In this article, some suggestions on the construction of the new curricular standards are provided, and an attempt is made to propose some real answers to the challenges that have been presented.

2. Promulgation and Implementation of Curriculum Standards (2001) in China

2.1. The Promulgation of Curriculum Standards (2001)

Two key elements of education reform exist, one is to respond to the times and the other is to change the controversial education system. The rate of globalization has quickened thanks to the process of information technology and innovation, which has led to the development of a global economy, politics, culture, and education that are continuously adapting to new circumstances. Reforming China's educational system is an absolute need if the country is to stay up with the rapid speed of globalization [2]. The political system in China has started making the shift from one based on centralized state authority to one based on decentralized democracy and local autonomy. These shifts in the economic and political system provide a favourable atmosphere for educational reform, which entails transitioning from a system that has historically been rigid and closed to one that is more flexible and open. The level of competitiveness on the international stage is increasing. The ability to be creative is one of the most important factors that will determine final success in an international setting. The rapid proliferation of information technology and Internet systems has had a dramatic impact on teaching tools, classroom arrangements, and delivery modes. This is especially true with the development of the "knowledge economy," which highlights the necessity for education in China to be reformed accordingly. The new national curriculum reform in China has been affected because of this [3]. This dramatic change has also led to changes in the Chinese education system. In this current knowledge-based economy, where countries are coincidentally undergoing educational changes, if China continues to follow its previous educational model, it will inevitably have an impact on the country's economic and social development [4]. The teacher's responsibility in Chinese education is to make sure that students understand the material specified by the syllabus, which has a standardized, task-specific syllabus. The most crucial skill kids acquire in this educational system is how to avoid making errors. The most crucial competency—the capacity to cope autonomously and healthily with all forms of interpersonal contact with the outside world—is neglected in this educational paradigm because it is unduly focused on the acquisition of information on a spiritual level. The Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline was launched in 2001 to modernize education, orienting it towards the world and the future, comprehensively implementing the educational policy of the Communist Party of China, and comprehensively promoting “Suzhi Jiaoyu”, which means “quality education” [5]. Covers a variety of educational concepts, but it alludes to a more all-encompassing approach to education that puts the focus on the complete child. emphasizes the whole person [6].

2.2. The Current Situation of Implementing the Curriculum Standards (2001)

In terms of putting the curriculum 2001 into practice, the whole nine-year compulsory school curriculum is utilised. The curriculum has been expanded to cover more ground, and it now includes hands-on components from elementary school through high schools, such as instruction in computer technology, research, and community service. Students are pushed to broaden their understanding of and skill with IT while also cultivating a sense of social responsibility. An integrated curriculum is used at the primary school level. Courses in character and life, language, math, PE, art, and more are available at the lower elementary level, while courses in character and society, language, math, science, foreign languages, interdisciplinary practical activities, PE, and art are available at the middle and upper elementary levels. Subject-based and cross-curricular learning is emphasised in middle school curricula, which include topics such as ethics, communication, mathematics, science, social studies, health, the arts, physical education, and history. Insist that everyone take more interdisciplinary classes. Educational institutions should work toward establishing circumstances that

allow for the provision of optional offerings. Improved emphasis on writing instruction in required courses like language, art, and fine arts is warranted. Curriculum standards should be varying levels of requirements, while delivering required courses, setting up a rich and colourful optional curriculum, and making technical education available to all students. Make use of the credit system actively and test out the administration.

The government has changed its style of action. In the past, the central government and local authorities would manage education by way of requirements. After the curriculum reform in 2001, this approach changed, and the government started to listen to the opinions and suggestions of the people. There is a positive trend in the learning process. The reform of the curriculum in 2001 has transformed the old teacher-cantered, fill-in-the-blank education into a student-centred one. Teachers began to reflect on classroom behaviour, resulting in improved teaching quality and harmonious teacher-student relationships. Develop new ways to innovate in faculty development. One widely accepted approach is the development of a new teaching process by faculty, the Big-Name Teacher Studio (BNTS). By widely disseminating the teaching styles of outstanding teachers, the standard and quality of teachers' teaching can be improved [7]. Now, the eighth basic education curriculum reform has gone through more than 20 years. The basic education curriculum reform has driven the renewal of educational philosophy on the basic education front, promoted changes in the educational behaviour of primary and secondary school teachers, and touched off a comprehensive change and development of basic education [8].

3. Challenges During the Curricular Reform in 2001

3.1. Teachers' Dilemma

It was indicated in the article that came before this one that there was a significant amount of active teacher engagement in the adjustments that were made throughout the reform process of the curriculum 2001. However, when seen from a larger perspective, the issue is primarily about the lack of preparation for teachers as well as the insufficient desire of teachers to engage in the change. However, even though the new standards emphasize the all-around growth of students' capabilities, some educators claim that it is still challenging to put these standards into action. Teachers in remote areas are at risk of hindering the process of the curriculum 2001 due to a lack of expertise. Kids in metropolitan regions may be able to benefit from the new requirements, while students in rural areas, who tend to come from more impoverished socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, are more likely to have trouble adapting to the new standards [9].

The student-centred approach implemented by the new standards may make it more difficult to assess student achievement than the traditional teacher-centred approach. This makes it more difficult, time-consuming, and stressful for teachers to assess student achievement. This is one of the key dilemmas that contributes to the increased workload that is placed on teachers. Students were resistant to adopting new teaching techniques that were more student-centred since they were time-consuming and unpredictable. Students preferred lectures. This conflict may be made worse by student-centred teaching methods since teachers are already under time constraints to finish a state-mandated curriculum that is overloaded with kids that have inferior academic achievement in rural areas. They continue to teach entire classes and rote memorization not because they disagree with the philosophy of reform, but rather for the sake of self-preservation, as teachers are more easily held accountable for failing to complete textbooks than for poor student achievement. Consequently, they teach entire classes. The challenge that rural educators confront in balancing the needed curriculum with the inadequate academic preparedness of their pupils is mirrored by the time crunch they experience [9].

3.2. The Gap between the Urban-rural Area

According to the findings of the China Education Panel Survey carried out during the 2013-2014 academic year, a significant correlation exists between the distance from the city and the quality of the professors[10]. The proportion of teachers in the city who have earned a bachelor's degree is much lower than the number of teachers in rural areas who have achieved the same level of education. In addition, there is a disparity in the financial resources that are provided to secondary schools located in urban and rural regions. The rural schools that were in the greatest need of financial assistance only got a total of 794.76 yuan. On the other side, urban schools were awarded a total of 1,317 yuan.

This makes it very evident that there is a connection between the disparity in the quality of instructors in rural schools and the inadequate money those schools get. The discrepancy in educational opportunities between urban and rural regions makes it more difficult to revamp the old curriculum without establishing a single, universal benchmark. Since of this, instructors in rural areas are more hesitant to implement new student-centred changes because these reforms pose too much of a risk for rural students, for whom altering their destinies via testing seems to be their only hope. Individual and systemic factors of teachers together constitute barriers to change. These factors include the social structure of the school, its resources, the level, and motivation of students, and most importantly, the level of school support, which can be defined as the attitude of the school toward key issues in the reform process. These issues include the school's propensity to change and especially their response to the backlash effects of popular assessments, and high-stakes assessments.

3.3. Students have Difficulties in the Adaptation of the Curriculum Standards (2001)

Reforming the curricula should be the primary focus of education reform. The introduction and execution of the current cycle of curriculum reform have been significant contributors to the advancement of rural education on the mainland and have played an essential role in the process. The implementation of curriculum reform has not only further defined the posture of rural education management, but it has also embodied the notion of urban-rural education equality and established a solid platform for future growth. There have been a variety of perspectives, both in theory and in reality, on the objectives of rural education for a significant amount of time. The requirements of mass compulsory education should be accommodated by the curriculum standards for compulsory education. These standards should also make it possible for most students to meet the basic national requirements for citizenship through their efforts, and they should emphasize cultivating students' desire and capacity to engage in learning that continues throughout their lives. The most recent revisions to the educational system emphasize the idea that all children of school age in the country, regardless of where they live or the type of school they attend, should be required to attend school to receive a fundamental education that lays the groundwork for their future growth [11]. The education of the nation's people should be the primary emphasis of this endeavour, to establish a common groundwork for students on their path to becoming responsible citizens. This concept and these reform objectives not only establish the course for the management of rural education but also assure that rural students will have the basic rights they are entitled to as future citizens. Rural pupils, who may one day become citizens, have the fundamental right to obtain an education on par with that of urban children.

4. Suggestions for Optimizing the Implementation of the Curriculum Standards (2001)

The curriculum 2001 was already in development when this paper's study was done; it would be implemented starting in September 2022. It includes a lot of new changes, including elevating physical education's status to put quality education into practice and give students' physical health development more attention; breaking down the segment's objectives into specifics to lessen the

pressure that parents put on their kids' further education and help parents better understand their students; The new standards for mathematics in 2022 place greater emphasis on exploring mathematical thinking abilities as well as thinking and reasoning, which will significantly change. This will essentially take the place of the exam-based learning approach. However, specific conclusions can only be drawn after practice.

4.1. Conduct Teacher Training on the Curriculum Standards (2001)

The reform has been of considerable assistance to the continued professional development of educators working in rural regions. Despite this, there is still an issue with the relatively limited availability of teaching materials in rural regions in general. There is a significant loss of highly educated teachers, particularly in the central and western areas, and there are very few possibilities for teacher training. Additionally, there are very few master teachers working in rural schools. It may be challenging for some educators to adjust to the new educational environment as a result of the fact that their knowledge and practices have become out of date. Because of this, there have been certain challenges associated with putting the curriculum's ideas and information into practice [12]. It has made it challenging to put some of the ideas and information contained in the new curriculum into practice; in particular, it has made it challenging to put into practice integrated practical activity courses, inquiry-based learning, school-based curriculum development, and school-based teaching research. If there is a way to educate teachers in a standardized way using the curriculum 2001 as the benchmark, then the educational divide between urban and rural regions may be able to be closed to some degree [13].

4.2. Optimizing Teaching Methods to Meet Students' Learning Requirements

For teachers to correctly appreciate the value that students bring to the learning process, it is imperative that they actively include more sophisticated teaching ideas in their lesson plans. It is important to effectively comprehend the legitimate participation that students have in the job of teaching. Throughout the same time, instructors may more effectively encourage students to examine relevant knowledge and think deeply about it during the process of instruction, which will ultimately support the advancement of students' comprehension of knowledge. Raise the degree of comprehension and knowledge possessed by pupils. To further foster and arouse students' enthusiasm in acquiring information throughout the teaching process in the classroom. Teachers should actively research, evaluate, and successfully implement the relevant educational and instructional approaches in the classroom to further foster and activate students' desire in gaining information. As a result, they may further innovate and enhance the teaching style used in the classroom and build a strong basis for increasing students' information retention. the approach to teaching and the creation of teaching methods in a variety of ways helps students meet their psychological needs for information acquisition and has a positive influence on how well they grasp their subject matter [14]. Numerous examples demonstrate how teachers can more effectively impart pertinent knowledge through thoughtful exploration of teaching modalities and support students in achieving an effective understanding of pertinent knowledge through the process of practical activities, both of which have a positive impact on fostering students' knowledge mastery.

4.3. Local Governments Step Up Support for Basic Education

The educational model that has been employed in China from ancient times up to the present day is focused on exams, and the purpose of the new curriculum is to replace that educational paradigm. Despite this, the culture of examination, most notably the culture of examination for admittance into colleges, is still widely practised in Chinese educational institutions [15]. We have to start with the

real requirements that the students have to properly implement the new overhaul of the curriculum. This is the only way to ensure that the curriculum 2001 is successfully implemented. The goal of education reform should be to put a greater focus on the authentic needs of students while also taking into consideration regional differences to provide room for several different responses [16]. For instance, more highly educated teachers could be recruited to teach in rural areas, the current educational climate could be changed so that exams were not required for the rest of one's life, and more financial resources could be allocated to schools in rural areas so that children in those areas could receive an education in an environment that was more conducive to learning. This would allow the children in those areas to receive an education in an environment that was more conducive to learning.

5. Conclusion

This article focuses on China's education reform, beginning with the promulgation of the Curriculum (2001), which is a product of the changing times and to a certain extent, it has moderated the examination-based education model in China. The Curriculum is a product of the changing times and has led to the change. It has had many beneficial effects, including a shift in the government's approach to educational management, which no longer merely requires and allows for innovation. Educators have made the transition from a cumbersome teacher-centred, fill-in-the-blank approach to a student-centred approach to teaching and learning. The new standards place greater emphasis on improving the overall quality of education received by students. Despite this, there are a lot of obstacles to overcome in the current curriculum overhaul. The type of education that is dependent on tests has not yet been entirely transformed, and instructors are now in a difficult position as a result of geographical inequalities, economic inequities, and discrepancies in the credentials of teachers. Education reform should place a greater emphasis on the actual requirements of pupils and consider the disparities that exist across geographical areas to provide individualized solutions. The state and the authorities have considered these challenges, and in the updated version of the curriculum that is implemented in 2022, they have provided potential remedies to the problems that were mentioned before. Even though the findings will be evaluated once they have been put into reality, it is an excellent starting point for the students, instructors, parents, and community members. The ideas in this paper give some ideas for subsequent educational reform. promising to see China's educational reform movement in a more improved direction.

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