

A Comparative Study Between Chinese Exam-oriented Education and International Baccalaureate

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Abstract: In recent years, more and more International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in China have gained widespread attention. Many students choose the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system and the IB system, but because some of them have not studied international education, they do not understand the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system and the IB system, or even the differences between these two education systems. This paper aims to research the differences and ensure which is more suitable for different kinds of children. This paper analyses and concludes that there are a lot of differences between the two systems of education in curriculum system and education management, which can bring certain positive and negative effects, such as enhancing international perspective and too much high stress. Based on this, this paper proposes the following suggestions. Firstly, teachers' understanding and respect for students should be strengthened so that they can understand how to help students better. Secondly, the number of assignments and quizzes for students should be reduced.

Keywords: Education, Chinese Exam-Oriented Education, International Baccalaureate.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of International Baccalaureate (IB) World Schools had a large improvement in China, which means that many students are likely to choose IB courses. IB is an international education system whose mission is to cultivate lifelong learners who thrive and make a difference [1]. According to the data online, there are 284 IB World Schools in China from 1991 when the first IB school was successfully applied by China to now [2]. The education system in China become more diversified and students have more choices to choose the most suitable education system for themselves.

As people all know, the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system and the IB system have differences and both of them have their own merits and demerits [3]. The Chinese Exam-oriented Education is a traditional education model which aims for examinations and entering a higher school. Some students and their parents used to hesitate between these two systems but eventually chose to read one of them. This is because they feel that the kind of education system they choose is an advantage for them.

The paper aims to research the difference between IB and Chinese Exam-oriented Education and make sure the two education systems are more suitable for different kinds of children by analyzing these differences in depth. Therefore, people can better estimate the advantages that each education

system can bring to bear on different children's growth and learning, avoiding the weaknesses of that system at the same time, thus helping children to develop optimally in the environment that is right for them. This paper through three different aspects, including curriculum system and education management, investigates the differences between Chinese Exam-oriented Education and IB deeply. Then the positive influence and negative influence will be analyzed through different aspects, including creativity.

2. Analysis of Differences

2.1. Curriculum System

The IB system can be divided into four parts namely Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-Related Programme (CP) respectively. Different ages students can enter different parts, while both the Diploma Programme and Career-Related Programme are suitable for students who are between 16 and 19. The difference between DP and CP is the emphasis, the DP focuses on academic studies for students to get a better education in universities, while the CP is designed for students to develop career skills and a fraction of higher education [4]. In addition, the 3-12 children can have PYP and MYP is suitable for 11-16 students. Segregating students by age in this way can ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to learn, rather than mixing students with uneven cognitive abilities, physical development or emotional maturity, which may lead to some students being disadvantaged. In addition, schools usually design their curricula and teaching plans according to the age and learning progress of their students, so that teachers can be better arranged to provide more targeted education.

Besides, the IB system not only focuses on academic skills but also emphasizes the student's development in an all-around way, which means that the students are asked to develop their sports, socialization and so on. For example, the IBDP is formed by six subject groups and three cores, including extended essay (EE), theory of knowledge (TOK) and creativity, activity, and service (CAS). Students can choose one subject which they are interested in to do deep research and complete one at most 4,000-word essay by themselves. The benefits of this are fostering students' thinking skills and communication skills, and engaging in a personal exploration of the topic. CAS requires students to have a persistent experience (at least 18 months) and at least one project in which the role is a leader. This can ensure that students can serve their communities or society as a whole while developing their compassion and practical skills. Regarding TOK, it is a required course like philosophy to lead students to find the origin and nature of knowledge. Students can cultivate critical thinking and have an in-depth understanding of the complexity of different areas of knowledge. Therefore, the IB system aims to foster comprehensive development in students, including service spirit, operational ability, capacity for independent thinking and wonderful academic skills.

Compared with the IB system, Chinese Exam-oriented Education tends to focus on academic performance rather than other aspects, such as sports and arts. High school students, for example, are asked to select six subjects, which is the same number of subjects as the IB system, while these students do not have three cores, meaning they merely need to pay attention to their academic performance. Students entering school in the first school year can only choose the subject which they want at the beginning of the second school year. Chinese, mathematics and English are required courses and students must select one of politics and physics as their fourth subject, leaving two courses to choose from at will, such as history, geography and chemistry. It is worth noting that the students who choose politics are called liberal arts students and other students who select physics are students who majored in science. The two kinds of students are assigned to different classes, for example, one class can be full of liberal arts students because it is beneficial for the teachers the control and teach students. Dividing into two classes can tailor the course schedule by analyzing the

students' fortes and shortcomings so that they can develop their potential ability in their interest field and avoid spending more time on some subjects that do not interest them. Moreover, the teaching contents can be more concentrated and teachers can also target their lessons more effectively and improve the efficiency of their teaching.

2.2. Education Management

In addition to the different focuses of the curriculum system of the IB and Chinese Exam-oriented Education, there is also a large difference between these two education systems in terms of education management. The Chinese Exam-oriented Education system tends to favour one final exam to determine students' final grades. For example, Students who finish junior high school have to examine themselves through the Senior High School Entrance Examination and they merely have one chance to take the exam, which means that they need to prepare for the exams with all their might. This is because the final grade for every third-year middle school student is the grade of the Senior High School Entrance Examination, so no matter how well students have done in the past three years and achieved very good grades, if they fail in the Senior High School Entrance Examination, they can only apply for high school with these low grades. The National College Entrance Examination, like the Senior High School Entrance Examination, has only one chance and is based on the results of the Senior High School Entrance Examination.

The IB system is different from the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system, the process of studying and researching is more significant than the results, which means that internal and external assessments, including lots of quizzes, form the IB students' grades. IBDP, for example, students need to do their best to complete all the classwork and coursework because the grades of these works can influence the final estimated score which is used to apply to university. In the student's final grades for each term, the classwork, coursework, monthly exam or mid-term examination and final exam have a certain percentage respectively. Therefore, students can not complete any of the assignments or exams halfheartedly because these assignments or exams are related to their final grades. Besides, the IB education system has an intense and future-oriented programme for IB students from a set of curricula and educational ways, including developing an ability to deal with the challenges of the future. The IB students can learn how to be independent thinkers and problem-solving decision-makers. This educational model fosters not a single skill, but a lifelong ability to help students stay on top of their game in society and the workplace.

3. Influence

3.1. Positive Influence

Both the IB and Chinese Exam-oriented Education have technical schools and academic schools, such as IBCP and Chinese technical schools, aiming for different training objectives, including theoretical talents and technical talent. Senior High School Entrance Examination, for example, can have a certain extent enable students to clarify their professional orientation, such as whether they are more orientated towards theoretical studies or technical skills. Therefore, after the students graduate from technical schools for 3 years, they can find jobs in the job market at express speed. This can increase the employment rate to a certain extent. Besides, because the skills are professional, if other people do not study these technologies, they can hardly do well in these fields, students from technical schools do not usually worry about unemployment, which means that their jobs are stable and they will not suddenly be laid off one day.

As for the IB system, it can help international students cultivate a global perspective through a set of curricula. For instance, through learning a language, the students not only learn the language itself but also understand the cultural background, history and social development of the country in which

the language is spoken [5]. In addition, each subject is permeated by the global perspective in IB curricula and during the study process, students can meet global issues, such as climate change, social inequality and cultural differences and cultivate global citizenship awareness. This can develop students' understanding and respect for different kinds of cultures, increasing their ability to adapt to a globalized society and helping give them an edge in the international arena in the future.

3.2. Negative Influence

Chinese Exam-oriented Education can reduce the illiteracy rate and enhance students' theoretical ability and theoretical research base to a certain extent. However, based on the Chinese national conditions, such as more than the normal population and the teaching method of large classes, this has led to the phenomenon of education showing scale and fixation. This also limits the individual development and differentiation of students [6]. This is because this Chinese Exam-oriented Education system aims to help medium-level students get a better education and have better lives. For these top students, this Chinese Exam-oriented Education system makes it hard to develop their potential abilities completely. However, to better keep the level of education balanced, these top students need to attend classes with medium-level students every day and gain the same amount of knowledge.

Besides, students lack enough personality development and thematic ideas under the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system. This is because from the beginning of primary school to the end of high school, students learn a lot of theoretical knowledge in the classroom, but practical and labour lessons are missing. When they encounter something trouble, they start thinking if there are some solutions in textbooks and then solve the problems according to practical conditions. This means that the students' thinking is fixed without realizing it and they also lose critical thinking because the students accept all knowledge passively and do not think why or how the knowledge forming [7].

Regarding the IB system, because IB students have to develop internationally, they need to learn in multiple dimensions, which can lead to a lot of stress in their studies in general. Everyone knows that the IBDP curriculum is prepared for university and academic research, and IB students always need to get high grades to make their university applications competitive. This pressure can lead to anxiety and restlessness. The IB is very strict on each assignment, which can be a huge time management challenge for many students. In addition, IB students usually need to finish many subject assignments at the same time, to get high grades in the final global examination. Assignments in these courses often involve a lot of reading, writing, experiments, and revision, which can put students in a high-pressure situation throughout the semester. Besides, students need to prepare for future universities and careers as early as the IB stage, and this early planning and choice of direction can sometimes cause anxiety for students, especially those who have not yet identified their interests and areas of specialization [8].

4. Enlightenment for the Education Field

According to the advantages and disadvantages mentioned above, the education field has various shortages that need to change, so this paper decides to give some suggestions to develop education systems. Firstly, if the teachers want their students to pursue their interests in a completely unfamiliar studying environment, they must understand the diversity of students' individuality and respect all of the students. To do this, the teachers must realize that they need deep experiences and improve the significant constituent part of education quality so that teachers can do comprehensive reflection and help the students through every aspect [9]. This is because only when the teachers get well with students and understand what students need, so that teachers can better help students improve, including academic performance and other abilities.

Besides, students must relieve high stress from school assignments and various exams. Chinese Double Reduction Policy, for example, aims to reduce the academic burden on students and promote educational reform. Overmuch assignments and supplementary tutoring make many students feel great pressure and even have psychological problems such as anxiety and depression [10]. The Double Policy can release the students' time and help them keep a more healthy and efficient study and lifestyle by reducing the number of homework and stress of training. Therefore, students can spend more time with family members and friends, developing interests better and improving their feeling of well-being.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, there are two obvious differences, including curriculum system and education management respectively. In the curriculum system, the IB system divides students by age in this way can ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to learn and provide more targeted education. It also emphasizes the student's development in an all-around way, such as creativity, service and critical thinking. Conversely, the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system focuses on academic performance more and spends more time on improving higher grades. As for education management, the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system tends to favour one final exam to determine students' final grades, while the IB teachers believe that the process of studying and researching is more significant than results, which means that internal and external assessments can form the IB students' grades.

Because of these different systems and teaching models, there are various advantages and disadvantages. The Chinese Exam-oriented Education system can cultivate different types of talents, such as theoretical talent and technical talent. In addition, the IB system can help international students cultivate a global perspective through a set of curricula. However, although the Chinese Exam-oriented Education system can increase the employment rate, it leads to the phenomenon of education showing scale and fixation and a lack enough personality development and thematic ideas. Moreover, IB students are usually under high stress because they need to prepare for future universities and careers as early as the IB stage.

To develop the education field and give future kids a better education, teachers need to understand students more, know their shortages and help them solve this problem. Reducing the number of assignments can reduce the academic burden on students.

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