

# ***Exploring the Current Situation and Problems of Changing Teaching Patterns in Rural Compulsory Education Through “Double Reduction” Policy Practices***

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**Abstract:** The “Double Reduction” policy is a hot topic of interest in China and in the year or so since it was put into practice. This essay, therefore, reviews and analyzes the collected literature and data to analyze the current situation of students, teachers, and parents in rural areas after the implementation of the “Double Reduction” policy and to identify changes or problems that exist. The study discovered that teachers were equally committed to their own professional growth and strategy changes, which made teaching in rural areas more suitable to the local conditions and features. The emphasis of education in the classroom was also more on the kids themselves, which significantly quickened the process of catching up to students in metropolitan areas in terms of development. However, the “Double Reduction” policy also puts instructors under pressure to work more hours, makes it difficult for them to develop their own skills, and gives children inequitable attention in the classroom. In addition, there is a dearth of rich content forms in the after-school services. Rural areas also experience challenges as a result of the “Double Reduction” policy in terms of inadequate infrastructure, human resources, and barriers to home-school communication, which merits consideration. In order to promote the full implementation of the “Double Reduction” policy, the transformation of the focus on teachers, individuals of students and their parent's education thinking should be carried out simultaneously, so as to realize the ultimate goal of education reform as soon as possible and return education to education itself.

**Keywords:** “Double Reduction”, rural education, compulsory education, educational countermeasure

## **1. Introduction**

On July 24, 2021, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued a guideline on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Out-Of-School Training for Students in Compulsory Education. The essence of “Double Reduction” is to do subtraction outside school and addition inside the school. Reductions in homework and after-school tutoring do not guarantee the quality of teaching. Meanwhile, the purpose of the “Double Reduction” policy is to transform the teaching model in order to cultivate a different, well-rounded youth, not only in terms of cultural knowledge but also in terms of the quality and commitment of the children. Meanwhile, this requires that new classroom strategies and content must

be improved, pragmatic and efficient. It is obviously stated that reducing the burden of homework and extracurricular training for students at the compulsory education level ("Double Reduction") is the way to achieve educational equity and that a benign educational ecology can be recreated, which also brings a new opportunity for high-quality learning development at the struggling rural basic education level [1]. Therefore, the "Double Reduction" policy can effectively promote the development of the basic concept of the basic education teaching model, and also reduce the burden of homework and extracurricular training for students in rural areas, which is an effective way to achieve educational equity and break the class barrier. This essay will figure out the different impacts of the "Double Reduction" policy on different groups in rural areas, analyses the current state of change and identifies the problems. It is hoped that the analysis will provide an understanding of what is lacking in the "Double Reduction" policy, with the aim of making it more accessible to students, teachers and parents.

## **2. The Current Situation and Problems of Changing the Educational Model for Teachers and Students in the Classroom**

### **2.1. New Practices for Teachers in Rural Areas in terms of Curriculum Content, Teaching Methods, and Optimization of Assignment Design**

Since more than half of our school-age children live and study in rural areas, there are poor educational infrastructures, unbalanced distribution of human resources, and further learning of teaching aids, improving the quality of teaching has become the goal of teachers in poor rural areas, and has been a common and worrying problem all year round. Nonetheless, Chinese teachers have also gained many useful experiences through the following innovative practices.

Teachers adapt their teaching strategies, improve their teaching methods, and enhance classroom efficiency so that they can effectively improve the quality of teaching [2]. The new goals of basic education reform in rural areas are roughly divided into three segments. First, achieve a change in the function of the curriculum, acquire basic knowledge and skills, and establish the correct values. Second, focus on balance, comprehensiveness, and selectivity in curriculum structure, and adjust the types of courses and the proportion of class time. Third, closely link curriculum content to lifetimes. With this premise in mind, teachers in rural areas pay extra attention to the student's discipline when conducting different teaching activities in practice. Unlike urban areas, rural areas typically have smaller student populations, with minor differences in family background differentiation. When dealing with different students, teachers are more able to target their teaching in stages and at different levels, and immediately optimize the content and framework of classroom instruction. As a result of the "Double Reduction" policy, teachers pay extra attention to students with low learning efficiency and weak foundation, giving them the opportunity to receive training and effectively alleviating the problems of low efficiency, uneven speaking opportunities, and uneven attention to student groups.

Develop curriculum resources that focus on the individual development of the teacher [2]. The modern generation of rural teachers needs to be more and better equipped to perform diverse teaching functions based on the current situation of rural students. Numerous schools have launched teaching and research activities to address the development of basic education in the context of the pandemic and the "Double Reduction" policy. In the case of YingYin Junior High School in Wakiyu County, for example, the school has a series of requirements for teachers, including solid teaching skills to be able to effectively solve practical problems; additional experience sharing and advice based on the actual content of the curriculum change; and the development of a teaching culture in which daily teaching and research in collective offices became the main forum for solving scientific problems [2]. In addition, teachers are encouraged to conduct online research and communicate more with master teachers in urban areas outside the county to learn advanced teaching models and improve their

personal teaching abilities. The school also offers a platform for teachers to express themselves and practice teaching.

The hybrid online/offline teaching model requires teachers in rural areas not only to master the technology of online resources, but also to revise their teaching philosophy. The online/offline hybrid teaching model will be useful for building multiple teaching methods and curriculum resources to co-exist and enhance the resilience of the education system. That is, to enhance the ability of the education system to withstand public health emergencies and to achieve mutual uplift between the education system and the external environment. However, learning at home is significantly different from face-to-face classroom learning, requiring instructors to modify their original teaching methods, and only by following the current teaching sequence can teaching needs and teaching standards build a fertile and diverse curriculum for students [3]. In addition, teachers of various majors should make personalized online teaching programs according to various types of courses, such as practical classes, experimental classes and seminars, and need to master a variety of teaching software application skills in combination with online teaching needs, as well as to grasp the rhythm of the course and ensure classroom interaction and feedback, all of which need to be sufficiently subversive and innovative.

## **2.2. Developmental Characteristics of Students in Rural Areas in terms of Changing Classroom Learning Patterns**

After the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy, numerous educators focused on the classroom, believing that an efficient classroom is particularly vital for "reducing the burden but increasing the quality". Take the Li Bing School in Dujiangyan, Chengdu, for example, which focuses on preparing students for "Ming fang" learning. The term "Minfang" which is taken from the phrase "a hundred schools of thought" refers to allowing students to express their opinions in the classroom to enhance creativity, fluency, fluency, and originality [4]. Unlike the rigid, test-based rural basic education of the past, the "Double Reduction" education hopes to effectively improve this dilemma by actively enabling students with no thinking skills and weak expression skills to express their opinions, share them with each other, and summarize their views in the classroom, with the goal of transforming them into well-rounded, critically thinking, and infinitely creative students. Students with unlimited creativity. This is a highly effective and positive way to revolutionize the teaching model of basic education in rural areas [4]. It not only brings rural basic education closer to advanced urban education but also has its own regional characteristics and is genuinely student-centered. This indicates that the features of the reform are reflected in the initiative of the motivated students. Rural teachers made adjustments to overall instructional pathways and strategies, specifically targeting the introduction of interest, collaborative inquiry, reflective innovation, and summative assessment in a single lesson. Students focus their lessons on effective knowledge exploration and collaborative group learning, while exercising how to raise dialectical ideas and valuable, in-depth questions in the classroom. The learning and intellectual abilities of rural students are taken into account at multiple levels to positively tailor instruction to their needs in the context of Double Reduction.

Considering the learning and knowledge ability of rural students, the basic model of teaching in rural basic education needs to consider slowing down the pace of teaching and lowering the starting point. Students need to learn step by step and learn different things from the past. Students should learn to learn independently under the guidance of the lesson objectives and the requirements of the standards, and get rid of the previous state of lying flat and passive. In the classroom, students should improve their sense of classroom participation, such as having adequate classroom thinking and appropriate classroom exercises; displaying their learning results and critiquing each other; and actively interacting with the teacher to effectively solve practical problems. The purpose of "Double Reduction" is to make teaching focus on the classroom, and to reduce the burden of students'

homework, while effectively allocating students' energy and time in the classroom can provide unlimited development possibilities for students' personal growth.

### **2.3. The Issues Accompanied by the Transformation of Modes Arise between Teachers and Students**

For teachers, the increased pressure to teach and the increased demands of giving are matched by unequal rewards, which can cause the teacher's enthusiasm to teach to decline. Deviations in teaching motivation or focus can affect teacher performance in the teaching process. It appears that some teachers focus on the instructional component and neglect to engage students in learning when in fact both components are necessary. At the same time, teachers' mastery of the connection between the classroom and after-school assignments is not precise enough to ensure the effectiveness of the assignments. Combined with mental fatigue and stress, teachers frequently unconsciously low will lose patience with student instruction, which can have a side effect on students' desire to communicate and seek help on their own initiative.

There are still obstacles to addressing the unevenness of learning and attention received by different students, mainly due to the variability of individual rural students. This is a phenomenon that exists in both rural and urban areas, but in poor rural areas, due to family reasons, the number of students with introverted personalities is considerably larger, and they tend to be afraid to communicate with their classmates and teachers and to dismiss problems.

In addition, the backward teaching infrastructure and the low level of teaching faculty in rural areas are still major problems. The rural education system still lacks a mechanism to analyze and evaluate talents and a complementary policy to introduce incentives for talents. The lack of teaching resources cannot adapt to the elevated demands and pressure brought by the "Double Reduction".

## **3. The Current Situation and Problems of After-school Services for Teachers and Students**

### **3.1. Teachers' Responsibilities of After-school Tutoring**

After-school service is one of the main elements of the "Double Reduction" policy. Students in rural areas commonly participate in after-school services because their families are unable to pick up their children for personal reasons or because they want teachers to help them with homework.

After-school services are designed to help parents solve the problem of "difficulty in getting their children to and from school," but for teachers, this means that the burden of ensuring quality learning outcomes for students falls more heavily on their shoulders. The lack of resources for after-school services in rural areas means that, in addition to the pressure to deliver results, teachers have to deal with extended work hours and mental fatigue. This is especially true for teachers who are older, teach for longer hours each day, and teach major subjects. According to the survey data, 34% of teachers hope that students will be able to diversify into school after-school services; 15% hope that teachers' salaries will be improved and supported to continue; 13% wanted small class sizes to be introduced to ease the burden on teachers; 5% wanted parents to focus on pupils' learning rather than looking exclusively to teachers, and 5% suggested that after-school services should be abolished. The number of teachers who support after-school services is more than 1,000. The number of teachers who support after-school services is less than half, which shows that teachers' attitude towards after-school services brought by "Double Reduction" is not optimistic [5]. The increased workload is likely to lead to burnout, which is not conducive to improving teacher motivation. However, most teachers still try to keep their spirits elevated and take their responsibilities seriously. Proposing policies and solutions that meet teachers' needs without affecting the larger framework may be an effective way to relieve teachers' stress.

### 3.2. Increased Burden of Students Studying after School

Rural primary and secondary schools, with their backward educational concepts and remote locations, have yet to update their ideological education and learning models. According to the survey, the content of after-school services in rural schools is mainly homework tutoring. The second is about development of *Suzhi* education. The third is club and interest group activities. The fourth is physical exercise. The fifth is additional educational activities related to the arts and sciences, such as vocational skills and general knowledge of life. Many students and their parents want to enrich the after-school services and want to get rid of negative emotions from after-school services. For students, the present content of after-school services is also dull in form and does not really play a role in helping them with practical problems [6].

Students' self-learning and goal consciousness of participating in after-school services are not clear enough, making it difficult to use their time effectively and resulting in a waste of time. On the one hand, students in compulsory education are younger, have different levels of mental and intellectual development, and are located in underdeveloped areas, so they are influenced by the surrounding environment and are mostly in a passive and negative state. On the other hand, teachers lack guidance and communication, the design of after-school work does not meet the expectations of improving teaching quality, and their ability to manage and counsel students is limited.

There is still a lot of room for students to develop the enhancement and help they get in the after-school service, which needs to be promoted by both teachers and students in the construction of the content of the after-school service and the awakening of their sense of self-identity.

### 3.3. The Need for Diverse Educational Resources

Since there are public and private schools in rural areas, different types of schools approach after-school services differently and with miscellaneous strategies. Public schools have clear rules for extended after-school services, and public schools can make special adjustments to those rules that are appropriate to the actual situation of their own schools. The situation is different in private schools, however, where a survey of inquiries revealed that some have no after-school provision or inconsistent lengths of after-school provision. As private schools are not subject to rigid controls, they do not generally pay particular attention to this aspect of the supplement, and parents have no way of putting their ideas forward. Both types of schools with extended after-school services have the comparative problem of having a single form of after-school services. Because of the lack of teachers, *Suzhi* educational programs of value, etc., often the only form of after-school service content in schools is independent learning. It also happens that the absence of a teacher in the classroom to supervise and assist during self-study hours plays a negative role in the purpose of after-school services and fails to achieve the real purpose of after-school services. In addition, the lack of investment in social resources, such as infrastructure distribution, availability of books so on and so forth, and the low pace of improving the quality of teaching and learning in remote areas have done little to help close the gap in urban areas [6].

## 4. Problems of Home-school Cooperation in Rural Areas

### 4.1. The Particular Issues of Home Education Accompanied by the Emergency of Online Teaching

In the context of pandemic prevention and control, rural primary and secondary schools, like urban areas, adopt a mixed online and offline teaching model. However, compared with urban areas, it is difficult to cooperate with home and school in education in rural areas.



In poor rural areas, students who normally study seriously at school but lack autonomy, students whose parents work outside the home, and students who live with their grandparents are prone to learning difficulties and substantial regressions in grades because they do not know how to operate the equipment but do not receive help, cannot submit after-school assignments on time, do not correct errors in a timely manner or even do not correct errors. Due to the interweaving of student self-discipline habits and various circumstances, online teaching makes students significantly more bifurcated and does not achieve the desired teaching effect [7]. Different family cultural backgrounds also affect online instruction to varying degrees for families in poor conditions. Parents of students in rural areas are typically not well educated, and it is difficult to cooperate and counsel students to study actively, which leads to the problem that students do not understand and are not interested in online teaching.

#### **4.2. The Ignorance of Special-needs Children**

As a special group, rural left-behind children have been separated from their parents for a long time, are self-reliant and independent, and for the most part, do not excel in verbal expression and often choose to give up communication with others for further improvement when they encounter learning difficulties. Take the family situation data of a fifth-grade class in Guang Rong Primary School in Dong County as an example [8]. The survey showed that approximately a quarter of the students in the class were from single-parent families. The main reason why the psychological problems of students are more prominent in this period is that in the pandemic situation, the opportunities for relatively normal human interaction in the past are inferior than usual. Thus the number and depth of psychological problems caused by it has exploded. The “Double Reduction” policy focuses on the link between home and school, but there is no corresponding solution or method to address the psychological problems of children, which hinders communication between home and school or between teachers and pupils.

#### **4.3. The Issues and Pressures on Guardians**

In addition, some cases of unequal male and female education in rural areas are a concern. Girls in China do extra housework, leaving them little time for learning, according to data collected by UNICEF. Since the reform and opening-up, the living environment in rural areas has been improving, economic conditions have been continuously improving, and people's mindset has been renewed. However, there are still more or less examples of such problems. What's more, for their guardians, most intergenerational guardians are older and less adept at using various technological devices, which can create communication barriers with schools. Moreover, older people in rural areas lack educational concepts and tutoring skills, and they mostly love their children and provide support in life, but do not play a significant role in improving the quality of their children's learning. Although the "Double Reduction" provides children with the services of after-school teachers and reduces the financial burden on parents for after-school tutoring, it does not mean that the pressure on families for after-school education is therefore reduced [9]. When in-school tutoring is not effective, parents often need to re-plan their educational programs. Many parents are anxious about their ability to educate themselves. Unlike affluent families in urban areas, parents of students in rural areas cannot afford "one-on-one" tutoring and lack the perception that quality education is critical to their children [10]. Parents who work abroad do not pay sufficient attention to their children's education, thinking that they only need to send back living expenses, and frequently have a "score-oriented" and "result-oriented" attitude, not caring about their children's learning process, which in turn leads to a shift in their children's psychology and perception [10].

## 5. Conclusions

In order to assess the current status of students, teachers, and parents in rural areas following the implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy and to identify any changes or issues that exist, this study analyzes the data and literature that have been gathered. Teaching in rural areas became better suited to the local conditions and features because teachers were equally committed to their own professional growth and strategy adjustments. Additionally, the focus of education in the classroom was more on the students themselves. The "Double Reduction" policy's reform of educational models and tactics in rural areas is distinctive, efficient, and adaptable. In order to catch up with urban regions, it has new traits and development plans.

Rural education quality, on the other hand, varies considerably and has an impact on parents, teachers, and students in different ways. By collecting and examining statistics on the three main areas of education—classroom instruction, after-school activities, and family education—it is easy to show that the problems with education in rural areas are either recent or have always existed.

“Double Reduction” policy puts instructors under pressure to work more hours and gives children inequitable attention in the classroom. Inconsistencies in the content and penetration of after-school programs. Rural areas also experience challenges as a result of the “Double Reduction” policy in terms of inadequate infrastructure, human resources, and barriers to home-school communication.

The study's objectives are to draw attention to contradictions and identify areas where policies fall short of requirements so that the relevant authority can improve policies. The “Double Reduction” policy is a route of ongoing exploration and improvement. In the future, educators are expected to give rural children greater attention, enhance the rural education system, solve the problems faced by teachers such as pressure and limited self-improvement and hasten the process of promoting high-quality education in rural areas. Additionally, in order to fully implement the "Double Reduction" strategy, it's critical to alter the perspectives of educators across the board, including parents, students, and teachers. This will support the ultimate objective of school reform and return education to its original intent.

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