Research on the Cultivation of Students’ Communication Ability in Higher Vocational Colleges Under the View of Education for Life

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ABSTRACT

At present, our education reform emphasizes the dominant position of students, promotes the comprehensive and individual development of students and opens up ample room for the growth and development of students at all levels. While Education for Life is to respect the subject and create a rich, lively and vivid environment and conditions for it so as to promote the comprehensive, harmonious, proactive and healthy education of life subjects. The cultivation of communication ability in the field of Education for Life advocates getting rid of the shackles of utilitarianism and the instrumental rationality. It not only attaches importance to the training of communication skills itself, but also returns to the life world of students and fosters them in the world of actual existence and real life. In the process of communication skills training, students will reflect on themselves, experience, criticize, create, so that they can find their own position and understand themselves, life and society, and continuously devote their own life experiences and sentiments and continuously grow and develop.

Key words: Education for Life, students, communication ability

With the rapid development of science and technology and the development of economic globalization, the demand for professionals in the social economy is constantly changing. The demand for social adaptability of professionals in the modern workplace is on the rise, which is mainly showed that professional ethics, communication ability and other professional comprehensive qualities required by occupations are increasingly becoming the important criteria for selecting and employing people. Therefore, strengthening the cultivation of communication ability and improving the comprehensive quality of professional talents has become an important part and component of domestic vocational education. It is an inherent requirement to promote people's comprehensive and sustainable development,
as well as an important means to enhance the competitiveness of students' employment. A study found that people spend 10%-85% time in communicating with others, the level of communication ability directly affects each person's career development, social status and the establishment of social relations. In professional situations, communication ability often determines the success or failure of professional activities, almost all of the positions require candidates have strong communication skills. The basis for the selection of modern enterprises is definitely not only students’ diploma or certificate, but also their professional qualifications, and communication ability is ranked first.

Faced with the needs of job market and society, vocational colleges have paid increasingly attention to the cultivation of students' communication ability. Some colleges even set up relevant courses separately and organized a large number of activities inside and outside class to enhance the communication ability of students. There are also many related literatures about how to improve students' communication ability. The author found out that most of the existing literatures are focused on the research of communication skills itself or regard it as a course to discuss how to carry it out. From the perspective of Education for Life, this paper proposes that we should not simply regard communication ability as a skill and train students mechanically for it. Instead, we should start from the height of life, return to life itself, return to the present life of students and pay attention to their existing experience, make best efforts to create a favorable environment for students to feel and experience and to guide them to express their true self bravely.

THE PROPOSITION OF EDUCATION FOR LIFE AND ITS CONNATATION

The Proposition of Education for Life

Education for life was first proposed by J. Donald Walters in the United States in 1968 and has a history of more than three decades till now. However, the implementation of Education for Life is still limited to the six Ananda Schools created by its advocates in the United States and Italy. In the meantime, its advocates wrote books expounding the idea of education for life. The representative work is Education for Life Preparing Children to Meet the Challenges. The book expands the definition of school education, and holds that education is an integrated process of book-based learning and life experience. In 1997, Professor Lan Ye published the article Make the Classroom Full of Vitality, which criticized traditional classroom teaching from the height of epistemology, and proposed that it is necessary to re-understand the classroom teaching from the higher level -- the level of life, re-construct new classroom teaching view with the concept of dynamic
generation, and make the classroom full of vitality.

**The Connotation of Education for Life**

Education for Life means respecting the life subject and creating a lively and rich environment and conditions for it so as to promote the comprehensive, harmonious, proactive and healthy development of the life subject. In term of value orientation, it emphasizes the active development of human spiritual life; in term of education process, it focuses on the transformation of spiritual energy in interpersonal communication; in term of safeguard mechanism, it emphasizes the active input and cooperation of life subjects.

**DISCUSSION ON THE CULTIVATION OF COMMUNICATION ABILITY UNDER THE VIEW OF EDUCATION FOR LIFE**

**Relationship between Education for Life and communication ability Cultivation**

The cultivation of students' communication ability cannot be regarded as a simple skill training, it should be took as the activities which awakens life consciousness of people, inspiring people's spiritual world, constructing people's life style so as to realize the value of human life. The cultivation of communication ability under the Education for Life field of version is characterized by awakening and elicitation, understanding and experiencing, communication and perception, creation and construction. Therefore, it can be said that Education for Life is the guiding ideology, starting point and destination of communication ability cultivation.

**The Principles of Communication Ability Cultivation under the View of Education for Life**

**UNIQUENESS**

Human ego is the entity of the soul. The development of personality and the acquisition of knowledge must be achieved ultimately through the internalization of students. Therefore, teachers must fully understand and accept the self-existence of students, and rely on the self-development of students to develop their self. In the process of communication ability cultivation, there is no so-called "standard answer" and "uniform template". The work to be done by teachers is to highly respect the uniqueness of students' life, to follow the inherent laws of students' physical and mental development, to enable students to express the vitality of their lives through inquiry and scene creation, to care for the sublimation of life, to strengthen the awareness of life and to create a vast free space for the development of students. At the same time, teachers should encourage and arouse the subjective spirits of students so that students can express their own feelings and experiences bravely. For example, the community activities students
participate in according to their own interests is the growth soil provided for the healthy development of students' personality, which eventually make students develop into independent, confident individual life and learn to live in harmony with nature, society and people around.

**GENERATION**

Human life is always constantly generating new life. Life itself is not a result, but a course. In this course life has been producing meaning all the time, which makes life a meaningful and uncertain process in return, and makes the development of human beings always creative and transcendent, and makes human beings always in the process of production. Therefore, in the process of communication ability cultivation, what teacher should do is to create a situation conducive to the full growth of students' lives, trigger the vitality of students, and make the learning process become the process of students' life growth as well. For example, around a training theme module, through various comprehensive practical activities, such as special subject teaching, campus theme cultural activities, community activities (volunteers, cultural volunteers), communication skills competitions, school-enterprise cooperation projects (workplace new personal appearances, special training of enterprise personnel etc.) and so on to improve particularly students’ communication ability and communication skills. In this process, students think independently and explore actively, and finally they create and develop themselves.

**CREATIVITY**

Creating activity is a high-level activity of individual life and a manifestation of individuality. Individuality does not certainly lead to creation, but without individuality, there will be certainly no creation. The good development of individuality is a good basis for creation. Without the development of individuality, it will be impossible to realize the comprehensive development of people. The process of creation is the process of self-improvement, in which students constantly become better themselves. In the process of communication ability cultivation, teachers may use textbooks or reference materials, but more is based on the personality of students to carry out personalized teaching and counseling. Therefore, communication ability cultivation itself has no fixed pattern can be applied, it itself is a work that requires creativity, thus posing a great challenge to educators. At the same time, it is also the reflection of teachers’ concern and help to students.

**INTEGRITY**

People must be educated as a whole. If communication ability cultivation only focus on the training of skills, then such skills are unable to enter the
inner world of individuals, and cannot be integrated with the student's life situation and life experience. Moreover, the improvement of communication ability cannot be realized. Human integrity manifests not only in human wisdom, but also in human emotions. The overall understanding in learning knowledge is the key to people's autonomy. If we neglect the overall understanding of human learning, we lose the opportunity to mobilize the most important educational force, the self-education force.

The Problems Should be Paid Attention to in Communication Ability Cultivation under the View of Education for Life

THE CULTIVATION OF COMMUNICATION ABILITY IS NOT SIMPLY THE TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The content of communication ability cultivation should not be too much attached to cognition and skill itself, but should return to the living world of students. In the process of communication ability cultivation, students will reflect on themselves, experience, criticize, create, so that they can find their own position and understand themselves, life and society, and continuously devote their own life experiences and sentiments in the process of communication ability cultivation. Therefore, in order to help students learn to understand themselves, develop themselves and examine themselves faster and better in the process of communication, a more diversified, lively and relaxed practice platform needs to be built for students, which requires full play to the role of the main front of student communities.

At the beginning, students can be guided to establish a sense of communication and be able to conduct one-on-one exchanges on a practical issue and then they can conduct group discussions on a simple topic. In the exchange, students should try to be able to express their ideas more clearly, and gradually be able to actively and boldly express their ideas during the group discussion of 3-4 people in the classroom. Then, step by step, from easy to difficult, gradually they can host small-scale thematic discussions, and learn to communicate with multiple subjects. A variety of activities also can be purposefully, designedly and step-by-step conducted in different forms, different contents and different themes for the communication skills improvement of new students. These activities can be skillfully integrated into the enrollment education and military training activities of new students, make them consciously focus on the cultivation of communication ability, so that new students can start their own vocational education learning career according to the requirements of "professionals to-be".

THE CULTIVATION OF COMMUNICATION ABILITY IS THE DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE BETWEEN LIFE AND LIFE

In the process of communication ability cultivation, students have learned
knowledge and skills, and what’s more, they have learned how to cooperate with others, comprise with others and live in a multi-person group through the participation of communication practice activities. In the process of interacting with others, students begin to constantly understand themselves, develop themselves and examine themselves, which is crucial in the development of human life. In the process of communication skills improvement, teachers should try their best to meet the needs of students and create a broad, harmonious and independent situation. Among them, the key is to make students have enough sense of emotional security, both teachers and students encourage each other, trust each other, so that students have the courage to meet the challenge of learning.

In a word, only through the exchange and communication with others, can people better realize themselves, understand themselves and develop themselves. For the comprehensive and sustainable development of students, in order to make students better adapt to the needs of the society and better integrate into the workplace life, the research on communication ability cultivation for vocational students should go further.

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