CHAPTER 7

The Initial Exploration of the Teaching Principle System of Higher Education Institutions

Higher education is a new discipline, not only is there no complete scientific system to follow but also a lack of sufficient theoretical research results that it can be based on. When we were trying to compile Higher Education, we encountered a series of problems to be solved. The teaching principle system of higher education institutions was one of the main ones.

School education is divided into primary, secondary, and higher education, which mainly pertains to intellectual education. The most significant difference between higher education and general education is their teaching theories. The teaching principle is the center of teaching theory, which is the link between the preceding and the following. On the one hand, it embodies the teaching task and reflects the law of teaching; on the other hand, it is the theory basis of organizing courses, selecting teaching material, using teaching methods, and guiding teaching activities. When we research teaching theory, we should explore the universal and effective teaching principles; when we study teaching theory, the focus should also lie in how to master teaching principles.

1 The Retrospect of the Education History

In ancient times, many educators put forward some valuable teaching principles based on their education practice. For example, Confucius of China and Socrates of Greece had put forward the heuristic teaching principles from different angles. Confucius’s teaching principles include learning and reviewing often, gaining new insights through reviewing old material, combining learning with thinking, and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude. The book Xue Ji (Note of Learning) recorded many significant teaching principles about the teaching and learning of teachers and students in many aspects, such as rise and fall, gain and loss, positive and negative sides. It mentioned learning and teaching should support each other; metaphor should be used properly and widely; learning ought to follow a proper order and advance gradually; and the educator should be good at discovering the learner’s weakness.

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and help him to overcome it. Educators of many generations, both home and abroad, also summarized their practical experience and gave out a lot of opinions about teaching principles, and some of them are very helpful. However, most of these principles and opinions were based on individual teaching experience, they lacked scientific verification, and so none of them could form a strict principle system. Comenius, in the seventeenth century, put forward the principles of visualization, consciousness, consolidation, systematization, and acceptability, which formed a relatively systematic principle system. The teaching principles of Comenius, to a certain extent, reflected the objective law of teaching. However, the entire principle system was based on the natural adaptability, which was a nonscientific theory. It also failed to fully reflect the basic tasks of the teaching. Five basic principles of teaching brought forward in *Pedagogy*, edited by Kairov, were visualization, consciousness, enthusiasm, consolidation, systematization, and acceptability. Kairov completely adopted Comenius's teaching principles, but he denied the theoretical basis. He tried to use the dialectical materialism epistemology to demonstrate these principles. Kairov's *Pedagogy* was amended in 1950s, and the principles were supplemented and modified into the following seven terms: 1) in the process of gaining knowledge, the principle of students' consciousness and enthusiasm; 2) the visualization of teaching; 3) linking theory with practice in teaching; 4) systematicness and consistency of teaching; 5) consolidation of mastering knowledge; 6) acceptability of teaching; 7) teaching tasks for the whole class while giving students individual guidance.\(^1\)

The teaching principles system constituted by Kairov's seven teaching principles was more scientifically rigorous than Comenius's, or other bourgeois scholars' theory. Kairov's theoretical basis was materialism. But influenced seriously by traditional education, his theory focused on teaching knowledge rather than developing intelligence. It was influenced by metaphysical methodology, so that it failed to reflect the law of the unity of contradiction in the process of teaching and learning. Meanwhile, as a complete system of teaching principles, seven principles also failed to fully reflect the basic tasks of teaching and learning. Many Soviet educators commented on the latter defect and put forward some opinions as supplements, such as "the educational principles of teaching and learning," "Communism educational principles," "the principles of overall development of personality," "the principles of the direction of teaching and learning," and so on. However, the students' intelligence development still did not get enough attention during teaching and learning.