

Article

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Examining the Value of Teachers' Guidebook to Field Activities in Kindergartens

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Abstract: Kindergarten teachers' guidebooks play an important role as a medium for teachers to carry out educational activities and guide children's learning and development. However, at present, kindergartens do not set specific selection criteria and evaluation standards when selecting teachers' guidebooks, and the issuance and selection of teachers' guidebooks are characterised by arbitrariness. Excellent teacher guidebooks should have the values of "re-selecting excellent culture", "reflecting the integrity of the elements of the five areas", "containing the concept of curriculum reform in the new era", and so on. An in-depth analysis of their values will help teachers to improve their training. An in-depth analysis of these values will help teachers to improve their pedagogical concepts and make teachers play their proper roles.

Keywords: kindergarten teachers; teacher's guidebook; value review

1. Introduction

Kindergarten field activities are regarded as one of the basic types of kindergarten educational activities, which are based on the characteristics of each subject and integrate subjects with common characteristics into a specific subject area. The Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial Program) The Outline of Guidance for Kindergarten Education (for Trial Implementation) divides kindergarten educational activities according to the scope of young children's learning activities, and divides them into five major areas, health, society, science, language and art, and puts forward different requirements for activities in different areas. The development of kindergarten activities cannot be carried out without the organisation and planning of teachers, but at present, the quality of teachers in kindergartens in China varies and there is a lack of specific guidance in carrying out activities, so there are still many problems in carrying out activities.

Eachers' guides are books or specific text guides published with the express purpose of providing guidance and reference for teachers engaged in educational activities. These resources are designed to facilitate the harmonious physical and mental development of young children, enhance teachers' professional competence, and improve the quality of educational activities. Teachers' guidebooks can provide teachers with appropriate guidance and suggestions before, during and after the activities, thereby partially compensating for the shortcomings inherent in the process of carrying out activities in the field. Since 2010, the State Council has promulgated and emphasised a number of opinions, including the importance of validating methods for the research and development of kindergarten teachers' guidebooks. In response, many regions have introduced corresponding policies

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to regulate the selection of teacher guidebooks. For example, in 2010, the Hunan Provincial Department of Education issued the "On the Recommended The utilisation of Kindergarten Teacher Guidance Books and Supporting Educational Resource Packages was also addressed; in 2017, the Department of Education of Zhejiang Province issued the "Guidelines on Comprehensive Promotion of Kindergarten Curriculum Reform", which proposed that kindergartens could adopt teacher guidance books and curriculum resources that had been validated and approved by the provincial-level and above guidebook review committees. Furthermore, on 18 May 2022, the Recommended Catalog of Kindergarten Teachers' Instructional Books was released, indicating that the selection of teachers' instructional books has been partially supported by policy. However, the current controversy surrounding this issue persists. With regard to the question of whether kindergarten teachers should make use of teachers' instructional books in the course of their professional activities, it is evident that a considerable number of teachers place undue reliance on such books, to the extent that they are unable to perform their duties adequately in the absence of these guides. In order to gain an accurate understanding of the connotations of teacher's guidebooks and eliminate any potential cognitive bias, it is essential to re-examine the value and significance of teacher's guidebooks in kindergarten field activities. Furthermore, it is crucial to discern the characteristics of these books in order to ensure that they can effectively fulfil their role in the design process of field activities and facilities.

2. The Role of Teacher's Guidebooks in Kindergarten Field Activities

The word "guidance" comes from "Han Ji - Xuan Di Ji Yi", which is interpreted in the Chinese dictionary as "instruction, guidance", and the biggest role of teacher guidance books is to provide guidance for teachers to carry out educational activities. Currently, the sources of teacher's guidebooks are mainly divided into three kinds: recommendations from higher administrative departments, kindergartens' initiative to choose from popular teaching materials on the market, and kindergartens' own writing [2]. The teacher's guidebooks from different sources have their own advantages. Teacher's guides from different sources have different characteristics, but in general, a good quality teacher's guide should contain a wealth of educational materials, be consistent with the physical and mental development of children and the implementation of educational activities, and be easy for teachers to understand. The correct use of teacher's guides in the implementation of activities in the five domains plays an important role in the preparation of teachers and in the improvement of their professional competence.

2.1. Helps Teachers to Clarify the Objectives and Requirements of Activities

Both the Learning and Development Guidelines for Children Aged 3-6 and the Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (for Trial Implementation) stipulate the educational objectives of the five major areas of kindergarten education, and teachers need to be guided by these objectives when carrying out activities in these areas, and they should always be centered on the objectives. The objectives of the activities are both the starting point and the final destination of the activities carried out by the teachers. However, the Guidelines and the Outline only put forward requirements for the development of educational activities from a macroscopic point of view. When carrying out activities in the field, teachers not only have to consider the provisions of the programmatic documents, but also have to take into account the real conditions and circumstances, and flexibly adjust the objectives of the activities in the light of the children's needs and the teacher's own ability. Some of the teacher's guides with excellent cases and case studies as the main content will provide detailed guidelines for teachers to design the activity objectives. For example, in the "Fujian Kindergarten Teacher's Educational Book - Guidance for Domain Activities", there is a special "Activity Objective Network" under each thematic activity, which provides effective reference for teachers to formulate the activity objectives. A complete objective system for kindergarten teachers' books should be composed of three levels:

general objectives, objectives for each grade level, and specific activity objectives [3]. Teachers should understand the logic and principles of goal-setting through the guidebook, and follow the objective laws and design the activity goals scientifically according to the actual situation, so as to promote the comprehensive and harmonious development of children's bodies and minds.

2.2. Contribute to the Improvement of Teachers' Educational Philosophy

Teachers are the key factor for the smooth development of kindergarten education activities, whether the activities meet the current needs of high-quality development of kindergarten education and whether they can promote the development of young children depend on the improvement of teachers' professional ability and professional concepts. At the same time, the reform of kindergarten curriculum and the high-quality development of preschool education cannot be separated from the innovation of teachers' educational concepts. There are many ways for teachers to improve and enhance their educational concepts, such as participating in regular training and building learning communities, among which reading professional books and journals is also an effective way. Shulman divided teachers' knowledge into seven categories and believed that subject teaching knowledge is the core of the seven categories. And this kind of subject teaching knowledge can be acquired through reading in addition to accumulating and summarizing in teaching work. High-quality teachers' guidebooks are a kind of professional reading materials prepared with the Guidelines and the Outline as the guide and the requirements of kindergarten education in the new era, covering not only the theoretical knowledge of the five major fields of specialization, but also the specific guidance for teachers' teaching and children's learning. By reading such books, teachers can identify and improve their own shortcomings in organizing activities, raise their professional level and update their educational concepts.

2.3. Contribute to the Professional Development of Teachers

To a certain extent, teacher guidance books can support teachers' professional development, help them build self-confidence and enhance their sense of professional well-being. For early childhood teachers, the sense of fulfillment in teaching is expressed in two ways: one is their own growth and progress, and the other is the growth and progress of young children [4]. The first is their own growth and progress, and the second is the growth and progress of the young children. Both teachers' own growth and young children's growth are related to teachers' own behavior. Teachers accumulate work experience and professional growth through continuous teaching practice; they enrich their educational knowledge system through participation in training and professional reading, and constantly update their views on education and children. Teachers' guidebooks provide teachers with pre-designed activity programs, so that when teachers encounter difficulties that cannot be solved when carrying out activities, they can find appropriate guidance from the books to solve practical problems, ensure the smooth implementation of activities, and enhance teachers' self-confidence in carrying out activities. Young children develop through a variety of activities, the quality of the activities directly affects the process of early childhood development, good educational activities can not be separated from good teachers, but teachers are not omnipotent, whether novice teachers or experienced teachers, there is a period of burnout, the professional ability to enhance the short-term bottleneck, the teacher's guide not only for the development of educational activities, but also for the development of professional competence of the teacher to provide guidance. Teachers' guidebooks not only provide guidance for the development of educational activities, but also for the development of teachers' professional competence. Through the guidance of professional books, teachers believe that they are still capable of doing their job when they face difficulties, thus enhancing their sense of professional well-being.

3. Research on the value of teacher guidance books

3.1. *Its role reflects the integrity of the elements of activity design in the five domains*

A complete educational activity should include "activity design", "activity implementation", "activity evaluation" and so on, in this part of the activity design, the teacher's guide book in the form of the most intuitive. In this part of activity design, the teacher's guidebook provides teachers with the most intuitive form of help. Currently, when teachers carry out educational activities in the five fields, they may neglect the issue of completeness of the elements. A complete design text for educational activities in the five fields should generally include the name of the activity, the design idea (intention), the goal of the activity, the preparation for the activity, the object of the activity, the focus of the activity, the difficulty of the activity, the process of the activity, and other elements [5]. The design of a complete educational activity design text should generally include the name of the activity (intention), design ideas, activity objectives, activity preparation, activity objects, activity focus, activity difficulties, activity process and other elements. However, in the actual design of activities, many teachers will ignore several of these steps, resulting in the activity process can not be naturally connected, which is not conducive to children's learning. The reason for this problem lies in teachers' lack of scientific concept of education, low professionalism and competence, and the belief that the completeness of the text of the educational activity is not very important, as long as the teaching activity is implemented in the class, and then it can be completed when the activity is over [6]. Thus, for some teachers, there is a need for clear guidance in designing educational activities, and teacher's guidebooks are playing such a role. Most teacher's guidebooks for kindergarten field activities contain quality lesson plans and complete activity examples, and elemental completeness is one of the most essential characteristics embodied in these examples. By reading and studying good examples of activities, teachers can improve the quality of the activities they design by providing them with a clear outline.

3.2. *Its essence is the re-selection of the culture and experience of a society*

Education has the function of selecting and transmitting culture, and the subject of this special function is the teacher, while one of the carriers is a variety of textual tools, such as guidebooks, teaching materials, teachers' reference books, and, in the case of kindergarten education, teacher's guidebooks. A qualified teacher's guide contains the writer's interpretation of the content and methods of education. A qualified teacher's guide is one in which the writer, based on his or her own understanding of contemporary society, culture, education, and children, analyzes existing universal educational problems, interprets all kinds of educational phenomena in accordance with the scientific concept of development, summarizes his or her experience, and finally offers suggestions and guidance. If the process of children's activities includes the teacher's choice of society and culture, the teacher's guide book is the author's summary of the valuable contents after the summary analysis of the activities and is a re-selection of culture.

A teacher's guide cannot be characterized simply as a resource for teachers to teach and learn, but rather as a resource, a dynamic resource that is constantly being developed and re-selected, not only by the author's choice of the current educational culture, but also by the teachers' creative choice of its content as they use the guide. According to Dewey, "the record book of knowledge is the result of inquiry and a resource for further inquiry" and should not be "used to fix the meaning of knowledge, facts, and truths" [7]. According to Dewey, teacher guides are not resources to be collected, used, and constructed in the process of carrying out educational activities, but teachers should consciously focus on their own and children's experiences as a basis for reflecting on the use of guides, and continually make new designs, implementations, and re-selections of cultural content, so that when teachers have problems with the process of carrying out the activities, teachers will reorganize and use teacher guides to help the children reach the goals of the activity.

3.3. Embedding the concept of curriculum reform for a new era

Teachers' guidebooks are one of the key factors in the reform of the kindergarten curriculum in the five areas in the context of the new era. Educational and curricular concepts determine the organization of teacher's guides. When examining the value of teacher guidance books, they cannot be divorced from the entire kindergarten curriculum context, and a good set of teacher guidance books should also fully reflect its curriculum philosophy. The Draft Law of the People's Republic of China on Pre-school Education (Draft for Opinion) stipulates that "the education of pre-school children should adhere to the principle of giving priority to children and maximizing children's interests, respecting children's personalities, and guaranteeing pre-school children's rights to enjoy games and to be treated equally", and that the idea of children's orientation is the starting and ending point of the reform of kindergarten curricula and the implementation of educational activities. The idea of child-oriented is the starting and ending point of kindergarten curriculum reform and implementation of educational activities, and is the core of kindergarten curriculum modernization, which pushes the kindergarten curriculum from teaching materials to young children's life and experience, from teachers' "classes" to young children's multi-form activities, and from pre-determination to generation [8]. It is the core of kindergarten curriculum modernization.

The implementation of the curriculum is divided into three main orientations: the faithful orientation, the mutual adaptation orientation and the creation orientation, and there is a big controversy over the relationship between the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum and the use of teacher's guides. On the one hand, teachers who hold the faithful orientation think that it is easy for teachers to implement these contents in the activities in a complete way according to the original intention of the curriculum design, and it is convenient to teachers, and it is also convenient to teachers with a low level of professionalism and new teachers, saving a lot of trouble in the process of activities. On the other hand, teachers with a creation orientation believe that what children learn and who they are in the activities are not static, while the teacher's guide book is completely static. If the activities are carried out in full accordance with the contents and steps in the guide book, not only are teachers prone to relying too much on the guide book and failing to generate the activities in accordance with the children's needs, but they will not be able to carry out the activities without the guide book, and will not be able to carry out the activities without the guide book. It is not only easy for teachers to rely too much on the guidebook and fail to generate activities according to children's needs, but it is also not conducive to the creative development of teachers, and they will fall into the predicament of "guidebook-centeredness". Such a situation makes it difficult to meet the needs of young children's physical and mental development, and runs counter to the child-centered view of the curriculum. In this regard, some scholars have suggested the use of "low-structured" teacher's guides, which are different from the highly structured guides that emphasize the presetting of goals and teaching by teachers; "low-structured kindergarten curricula and educational activities emphasize the process of curricula and educational activities, the learning tasks generated by children, and the learning tasks based on children's participation". learning tasks, and emphasizes evaluation based on factors such as children's participation and teachers' satisfaction"[9] For example, one of the activity objectives in the Fujian Province Provincial Kindergarten Teachers' Book "Guidance on Domain Activities (First Book for Small Classes)" is "to like going to kindergarten and to experience the joy of living with teachers and peers", this kind of low-structured teachers' guidance book is broad in setting the objectives of educational activities, only putting forward general requirements for educational activities, and is simpler in the statement of educational contents. The statement of educational content is also simpler, and does not give teachers specific operational suggestions, but rather gives them ample room for free play, with variability and generativity.

Low-structured teacher's guides strike a balance between teachers' use of guides and teachers' creative generation of activities. The use of such teacher's guides is an intrinsic need of kindergarten curriculum reform and is in line with the view of kindergarten curriculum reform in the context of the modernization of pre-school education.

4. Conclusion

Values are the core issue of teacher guidance books and the key to measuring their appropriateness. Examining the values they project is the first step in choosing a teacher guidance book. A quality teacher's guide contains the writer's interpretation of the current society and culture, is child-oriented, follows the characteristics of children's physical and mental development, and promotes children's all-round and harmonious development from the shallow to the deep, from the easy to the difficult, and progressively, and gives the teacher enough room to play in the arrangement of the objectives and the structure of the content, allowing the teacher to rationally utilize the guide according to the actual situation of the activity. In actual kindergarten activities, the use of teacher's guides is often overlooked, but as a carrier of kindergarten curriculum activities, teacher's guides deserve to be emphasized in terms of their value and role. The focus of the current discussion should not be on whether or not to use teacher's guides, but rather on their quality and the development of standards for their selection, a high-quality and qualified teacher's guides, if fully utilized, will be able to play a maximum educational role.

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