

# A Shift of Teachers' Beliefs about Students in the Context of China's Education Modernization

Mao Jing

Xi'an Medical University, Shaanxi, Xi'an

**Keywords:** Education Modernization; Teachers' Beliefs about Students; Modern Teaching Concept

**Abstract:** As the process of educational modernization continues to advance, it directly promotes the shift of the teachers' beliefs about students and endows them with modern spirit and modernity. The students should be viewed as subjective, individual, social and developing people, each with unique characteristics and great developing potential. Based on these beliefs, the teachers are inevitably called for to take students' all-round development as the teaching goal, use modern educational technology to break the boundaries of the classroom, adjust the teaching methods, establish a democratic relationship so as to cultivate the students to adapt to and promote the realization of modernization.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 China's Education Modernization

The "China's Education Modernization 2035" issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council in February 2019 clearly stated that by 2035, the education modernization will be realized as a whole, and China will enter the ranks of education powers, being a big country eager to learn from, a country rich in human resources and a country full of talented people, which will lay a solid foundation for constructing a strong, democratic, civilized, harmonious and beautiful socialist modernization country by the middle of this century.<sup>1</sup>

This is China's first medium- and long-term strategic developing plan with the theme of education modernization. It makes clear that the task of "accelerating the modernization of education and building a strong country of education" has been fully put on the agenda, which will exert great and profound impact on every corner of education in China and the development of educational modernization will meet unprecedented opportunities.

### 1.2 Teachers' Beliefs about Students in the Context of Education Modernization

Education modernization includes the modernization of educational concepts, educational systems, educational contents, educational methods, educational means and so on. Among them, "the modernization of educational concept is the soul of educational modernization".<sup>2</sup> Only by changing the concept of education can we promote the renewal and improvement of the education systems, contents, methods and means. The shift of the concept of education needs to be rooted in the shift of the teachers' beliefs about students because it is the core and foundation of the concept of education. Teachers' beliefs tend to reflect their longstanding attitudes, common sense, and experiences in education, which play a significant role in shaping their instructional behaviors.<sup>3</sup> Rather, the development of teaching objectives and the implementation of educational evaluations also depend on their views about the students. At the same time, different types of ideas about students also determine teachers' classroom behavior, which will in turn determines what kind of people will be cultivated.

As a core content of the educational concept, the teachers' belief about students is bound to play the role of "vanguard" in the process of educational modernization.

Only by realizing the transformation of teachers' beliefs about students can they be guided to conduct the proper, scientific and reasonable educational behaviors to cultivate modern students and promote the development of modernization. Under the background where the tide of education

modernization has gradually spread to the entire education system, the transformation of the teachers' beliefs about students is a must. What kind of beliefs should be held by the teachers and how to realize the transformation ?

## **2. The Connotation of and Shift on Teachers' Beliefs about Students**

In its report to UNESCO, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century put forward that the modern education should promote all-round development of everyone, namely, the development of people's mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic awareness, sense of responsibility, spiritual value, etc. The education should provide the possibility and help for everyone to form an independent and critical ideology, have their own judgment and determine by themselves what should be done in various situations of life.<sup>4</sup> With reference to the current new understanding and theory of the teachers' beliefs about students, it is believed that the beliefs should be transferred from the traditional intellectual personality ,which holds that the students are "containers of knowledge", "machines of learning" and "slaves of score", to the modern spiritual personality in the context of social change and education modernization in China .The following modern beliefs about students should be held by the educators :

### **2.1 The Students as Subjective People**

The students are the subjective people, who have cognitive ability, independent consciousness and subjective initiative. This is the premise of a modern, innovative outlook on students. Through education, students can form a subjective consciousness and independent ability to choose, and can correctly understand and evaluate themselves, and can plan for their future development in a positive and reasonable way. Only when education fully respects the subjectivity of students and develops the subjectivity of students, it can stimulate the unlimited potential of students and adapt to the needs of rationalized modern society.

### **2.2 The Students as Individual People**

The students are individuals. Each student has formed a unique "psychological world" due to different genetic factors, social environment, family conditions and life experience. They have different interests, hobbies, motivations, needs, temperament, character, intelligence and specialty. Only when the teachers recognize the differences among the students and respect the dignity and uniqueness of each individual student, can they help the students to form a healthy and positive personality based on their different interests, hobbies and needs, and to form a correct experience and positive pursuit of the value of life.

### **2.3 The students as Social People**

The students are social people. It is should be fully aware that the students' ideological concepts, ways of life, and ways of act mean a lot to the existing society. On this basis, the students should be guided to form sound social values, positive attitudes towards social life and good social qualities such as respect, ability of communication, cooperation, sharing, enthusiastic participation in social construction and public affairs, and a strong sense of responsibility for social and human development. Meanwhile, with help of education, students can master the knowledge of the modern science and technology and consciously apply it to the production and life of modern society.

### **2.4 The Students as People of the World**

The students are the people of the world. The era we are in now can be summed up as the era of globalization. This requires the cultivation of students' global competence, because they must communicate and cooperate with people from different cultural backgrounds. Our era is also the era of information technology. The big data and the development of artificial intelligence have a significant impact on people's life, production and education, which calls for the educators paying more attention to develop the students' learning ability and innovative thinking. Meanwhile, the educators should help students form a healthy, open mindset and an international vision for the

world, and cultivate the students' ability to participate in international competition in the future.

## **2.5 The Students as Developing People**

The students are developing people. The students should be treated with a developing perspective. Firstly, the students' physical and mental development is not only a natural process with its own principles, but also a social historical and cultural process, a unity of naturality and sociality. Furthermore, it is a continuous process and at the same time a periodic process. The students at different age stages have their corresponding characteristics. Only when the educators are familiar with the characteristics of students' development at different ages, can they carry out educational activities according to the laws and characteristics of students' development to effectively promote students' physical and mental development. Secondly, as educators, they should be convinced that the students have tremendous potential for development and that every student can succeed. It is necessary to understand the shortcomings of students and to allow students to make mistakes. Of course, what's more important is to help students solve problems and correct mistakes, so as to continuously promote the progress and development of students. This is also an important requirement for understanding students with development perspectives. Thirdly, the development of students is a comprehensive development. From the perspective of human nature, it should include the development of human natural, social and spiritual attributes; from the individual's physical and mental aspects, that manifests the changes in the physiological regulation mechanism and psychological adjustment mechanism; from the relationship between individual and society, it should also include the development of social cognition, social adaptability and social adaptability; therefore, in terms of the development of students, it is emphasized that every aspect of the basic quality of human beings has to achieve certain development ,especially the original and unique development based on each student's characteristics.

## **3. The Teachers' New Concept about Teaching based on Their Shift of Beliefs about Students**

Only when educators recognize the principal status of students, willing to fully mobilize students' subjective initiative to actively participate in learning and teaching activities, Only when educators recognize each individual student with their own unique characteristic , great potential for development and worth cultivating , Only when educators establish the concept that students need all-around development ,have the educators realized the shift of their beliefs about students ,and thus follow the law of student growth , teach students in accordance with their aptitude and help them develop physically and mentally to become a person with modern spiritual personality.

The modernization of human beings is the inevitable stage of the all-round development of human beings. The all-round development of human beings is the ultimate goal and inevitable result of human modernization. The process of realizing human modernization is essentially the process of realizing the all-round development of human beings.<sup>5</sup> In order to cultivate modern talents with modern spiritual personality, the shift of the teachers' beliefs about students, which is viewed as the logical starting point and end point of education, calls for the establishment of modern teaching concept.

Firstly, the teaching objectives are supposed to aim at the all-round development of students, especially to develop students' lifelong learning ability and critical innovation spirit.

Secondly, the teacher should take the leading role in establishing a democratic, equal, interactive, and mutually beneficial teacher-student relationship. The interpersonal relationship between teachers and students is "I and you", not the subject-object relationship of "I and him". Teaching is a kind of interactive activities between teachers and students, who form a dual subject in the whole process of teaching where teachers are the guider and students are the center. Teachers who regard students as "active" learners and constructors of knowledge will adopt a student-based heuristic and seminar-based teaching method to fully explore the students' interest, respect the students' age characteristics and personality, and endow students with the opportunity to think , explore ,talk and construct their knowledge.

Thirdly, in the context of educational modernization, the shift of the teachers' beliefs about

students needs to break the boundaries of time and space in the classroom. The modern internet and information technology helps expand the space and time of classroom to enable the students become masters of learning, and affirm the students as life individual with comprehensive development and distinct personality.

All in all, in a certain sense, whether the modernization of education can be accomplished or not depends on the comprehensive improvement of the quality of teachers 6. Traditionally, the students are viewed as the container of knowledge, and thus the teachers are transporters and instiller of knowledge , while modern society requires teachers not only to be the instructor of knowledge, but also the producers and creators of knowledge, discoverers and perfectors of modern educational theories and principles. Therefore, the teachers are expected to improve their ability of expression and communication which enables them to move from monologues to interlocutors in the classroom, to rebuild their views about curriculum which makes them transform from curriculum executors to curriculum developers, to improve their research ability which help them move from teachers to education researchers, to set up the beliefs about the students ,which meets the demands of the age, which make the teacher move from the judge of student learning to the promoter of student development. To be specific, the teachers should have modern educational concepts and ideas, including the concept of lifelong learning, subjective education, educational fairness, the idea of innovative education, and the thought of the students' all-round development. The teachers have to master and apply modern educational technology, integrate modern educational technology with curriculum, and strengthen the scientific research ability of modern learning and teaching. Only by realizing the modernization of the teachers and the students, can China's modernization of education ultimately be realized.

## References

- [1] CPC Central Committee and State Council. China's Education Modernization 2035 [EB / OL]. [http://www--gov.cn/zhengce/2019-02/23/content\\_5367987.htm](http://www--gov.cn/zhengce/2019-02/23/content_5367987.htm),2019-06-29.
- [2] Gu Mingyuan. Modernization of Educational Concept is the Soul of Educational Modernization [n]. People' s Daily, 2016-01-31 (005)
- [3] Turner J C, Christensen A, Meyer D K. Teachers' Beliefs about Student Learning and Motivation[M]// International Handbook of Research on Teachers and Teaching. 2009.
- [4] Peter Mortimore. Learning: the treasure within Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century[J]. Higher Education Policy, 1998, 11(1):97-98.
- [5] Du Jinliang. Human Modernization and Human all-round Development [J]. Shandong Social Sciences, 2000 (4): 5-10
- [6] Cheng Guangxu. Promoting the Construction of First-class Disciplines in Normal Universities [J]. China higher education, 2016 (3): 41-44