

Thought and Interpretation of Teachers' Leading Position in Inquiry-style Chinese Classroom

Han Yan

Jiangsu province xuzhou technician institute
Xuzhou, Jiangsu 221151, China
1030638329@qq.com

Abstract—The root of the problems in “Inquiry -style” Chinese classroom mainly is the lack of teachers' leading position. To solve the problem, teachers should change teaching concept, define proper roles, and improve teaching ability. Inquiry-style class should fully demonstrate the leading position of teachers. And it is not a real inquiry-style classroom if it is lack of the teacher. At the same time, inquiry-style classroom also requires teachers not only to have enough knowledge reserves and flexible adaptability, but also to change the concept of teaching, and regard training students' thinking as an important task. In the specific teaching practice, teachers should base on the text, and then intervene and participate in the students' inquiry. In the process of teaching, teachers should teach students how to explore problems, and then help students turn it into learning ability.

Keywords—Inquiry-style; leading position; Chinese classroom

I. INTRODUCTION

New curriculum “actively promotes independent, cooperative, inquiry learning style, and it requires to “change from imparting type to independent, cooperative, inquiry learning style”, and “determination of the teaching content, choice of the teaching methods, design of the evaluation methods should contribute to formation of this learning style”. Under the new situation of curriculum reform, teachers acquaint the harm of “cramming education”. Thereupon, “Inquiry-style” class is increasingly becoming the mainstream of secondary school Chinese classroom [1].

II. THE PROBLEMS IN “INQUIRY -STYLE” CHINESE CLASSROOM

In the “Inquiry-style” classroom, students are the subjects of learning and development. Teachers should play the role of organizer and leader. But in the teaching practice, there is such a strange phenomenon in the classroom:

A. The exploration lacking of teachers

There was such a public course:

Teacher: This week, we learned about the “scanning tradition” section. Today, please talk about your understanding of culture on the topic of “culture”. You can discuss and argue

with others, and you should have your own opinion.

After the teacher had finished the arrangement, he just stood aside. The students prepared for about ten minutes, then they started to exchange views. The students rushed to argue with each other. The teacher didn't say anything until the class finished. When the class was almost over, he said: “Today, you are very proactive. I think you all have a further understanding about culture after discussion. I hope you can continue to explore after class.”

Research direction: language education, vocational college campus culture construction. “Cramming education” should be to blame. However, if a class is lacking of teachers, should we get the blame?

B. An exploration without a result

The following is the dialogue where a teacher and students are exploring the reason of Sister Xiang Lin's death:

Teacher: Boys and girls, what do you think are the causes of Hsiang Lin's Wife's death?

Student A: The persecution of Mr. Lu.

Student B: The persecution of a group of ignorant people in Lu Town.

Student C: Because of poverty, such as hunger, cold and disease or something.

Student D: The oppression of feudalism.

Student E: The oppression of thearchy.

Teacher: Very good! What you said are all reasonable.

When dealing with this section, the teacher tried to use Inquiry-style teaching method to analyze the cause of Hsiang Lin's Wife's death, and to reveal the theme of the novel. However, from the result, the students only completed the initial judgment of the death of Hsiang Lin's Wife. This judgment is only a perceptual understanding, lacking of rational analysis.

At this moment, the teacher should make a brief comment on the above answer, and he or she should further set the problem to stimulate students to think, and to guide students to think deeply. So that the students can seize the essence of the death of Hsiang Lin's Wife. In the meanwhile, the teacher can

Han Yan, Female, born in 1972, Han Nationality, Master of Education, senior lecturer.

help students master the analysis of such problems, instead of stopping exploring the unknown door.

C. The exploration deviated from the text

Text is the carrier of knowledge. In the process of teaching, we should respect the text, and lead students to obtain knowledge and improve literacy according to interpretation of the text. But in the practical Chinese classroom, there is deviation from the text when we are exploring [2].

Teacher: Boys and girls, in the text Nuwa Creating Human Beings, Yuan Ke thought the human beings were created by Nuwa. Do you agree with this view?

Student A: I do not agree with the author's view, I think people are evolved from the ape.

Student B: I think people are made by alien man. I have seen such an article in the newspaper.

Student C: Man is created by God.

Teacher: The views of the three students are very representative. Which view do you agree? Please talk about your view. Everybody can talk freely and can argue with the others.

(Students have their own words and argue furiously. In the meantime, the teacher doesn't comment and guide with a smile on his face.)

Obviously, the question "who creates man" has deviated the topic "Nuwa Creating Human Beings". Of course it deviates from the teaching objectives. No matter how active the talk is, it all loses its value. Moreover, the teacher's topic itself has deviated from the text. If the teacher can get involved in good time when the students are in the process of exploration, the question can be put forward "why Yuan Ke thought the human beings were created by Nuwa"? Thus, this may get the students return to the text itself.

III. THE REASONS OF THE LACK OF THE LEADING ROLES IN THE "INQUIRY-STYLE" CLASS

In the "Inquiry-style" class, the lack of the leading roles often exists in it. I think the reasons are:

A. Teachers' Partial Understanding of Inquiry-style Teaching Method

Autonomous, cooperative, and explored ways of learning are considered to be the reactionary of inculcated teaching. Many Chinese teachers believe that infuse-teaching style is inefficient and harmful to Chinese education. So, it should be abandoned when we use the new curriculum reform. This is not wrong. But, Many people mistakenly believe that inquiry-style teaching can only be "students' inquiry". The teachers can not intervene.

The consequences of this understanding are excessively emphasizing on the student's leading position and weakening the leading role of teachers. Some teachers think that it is the so-called autonomous, cooperative, investigative learning method to let "students talk actively and teachers stand still".

So, they lose their value in the classroom. It goes without saying that this teaching effect is not good.

Now let's take a look at what is inquiry-style teaching.

The ideological origins of inquiry-style teaching can be traced back to Dewey in the early 20th century. His well-known "five-step approach" laid the foundation for the implementation of inquiry-style teaching. After that, Schwab, Gagne and other educators conducted a further study on inquiry-style teaching. In the middle of the 20th century, the Soviet educator Bubansky also had a profound discussion of inquiry-style teaching. He think the inquiry-style teaching should "ask the teacher to create a problem situation, so that students can actively think deeply and carefully. And on this basis, students can improve independently with the new knowledge". In the meanwhile, he pointed that "this method itself contains some methods, such as, problem-telling method, partial exploration method, heuristics and researching method in teaching". In his book "Encyclopedia of Teaching and Education" Anderson thinks that the essential feature of inquiry-style teaching is not to directly tell the students the relevant concepts and cognitive strategies constituted the teaching objectives. Instead, teachers should create an intellectual and social interaction environment to have students discover subject elements and cognitive strategies which are in favour of exploration. At the same time, students can also realize that the ability and knowledge are variable in this process, thereby the learning process can be regard as a developmental process.

We think that the Inquiry-Style classroom teaching is a teaching form that under the guidance of teachers , on the premise of students' independent learning and cooperative discussion, taking the current teaching materials as basic exploration content, and the world and life around students as the reference object, the teachers should provide students with the opportunities to fully express, question, explore and discuss problems, and let the students learn knowledge by individuals, groups and other forms. So that, the students can help students build knowledge and improve capacity. It is essentially an imitative scientific research activity. To be specific, it includes two interrelated aspects: firstly, it should have a simulated learning environment which regards "learning" as the center of the inquiry. In this environment, there are plenty of teaching materials which surround some knowledge subject. And there is a harmonious classroom atmosphere which is actually an environment that enables students to have a real independent opportunity to explore and desire, but not an environment where the teacher directly lead the students to the answers. Secondly, teachers should provide students with the necessary help and guidance. This kind of help and guidance are fundamentally different from the "inculcation" which teachers used in traditional teaching. It is mainly through the arrangement of teaching materials whose "content is suitable for students to make independent conclusions and can reveal the causal link between phenomena". And teachers provide students with the necessary tips at the crucial time which aim to enable students to "understand the knowledge independently".

Obviously, there are three elements of inquiry-style teaching: teachers, students and the learning environment. Moreover, the position of teachers in inquiry-style teaching is very significant, which directly affects the process and the effect of exploration.

B. Inaccurate positioning of teachers in inquiry-style teaching

As we see from the above analysis that the task of the teacher, tutor of the inquiry-style teaching, is to mobilize the enthusiasm of the students and enable them to build their own knowledge. Therefore, teachers should to set up an inquiry situation for students, establish an inquiry atmosphere, promote the development of research, grasp the depth of inquiry and evaluate the success or failure of inquiry. On the basis of the conditions offered by the teacher, the students, host of inquiry-style teaching classroom, can ascertain the objectives of inquiry, think over the questions of inquiry, master the method of inquiry, open the idea of inquiry, communicate the content of inquiry, and sum up the results of the inquiry.

In general, inquiry-style teaching generally consists of three steps: self-study and self-exploration, discussion and co-exploration, and summary and improvement. In the period of self-study and self-exploration, if the teacher can not wisely set up the inquiry situation, establish a good atmosphere of inquiry, the student's self-exploration is easy to be fruitless. The discussion and co-exploration is not only the mutual cooperation among the students, but also the discussion and communication between the students and teachers. For the time being, the leading role of teachers is significant and should be manifested. It is conceivable that in the course of the inquiry, what will happen if there is no teacher's stimulation when the students feel dull. What will happen if there is no teacher's timely guidance when the students encounter their own puzzles difficult to solve. What will happen if there is no teacher's correction when the student's inquiry deviates from the subject. And what will happen if there is no teacher's encouragement and recognition when the student gets the result of the inquiry. In the period of summary and improvement, teachers are really needed to finish the comments and sublimate the theme of the inquiry [3].

As a result, the inquiry which is lack of teachers is not really a true inquiry. In the inquiry-style teaching classroom, the leading position of teachers should not only be weakened, but should be strengthened.

C. Teachers don't know how to guide students to explore

The question is how teachers direct students to explore, that is, whether the progress of the inquiry can be pre-determined or designed by the teacher, whether it should be given the students a period of time to let them carry out non-guided inquiry, what the focus of student activity is in the process of inquiry, which aspects of inquiry the teachers should focus on in guidings, how to guide, when to intervene, how much the teachers involved, which guidance is necessary, how to guide sufficiently, when to provide background information or related information, when to teach the

appropriate preparative knowledge, when to recommend students to read textbooks, or when to ask the library, the Internet, adults for help. In the actual teaching, if teachers involved too early(didn't leave enough time for students to fully explore), it will keep the students from discovering by themselves(we almost find the answer!). If the intervention is too late, it will make students helpless too long and feel at a loss. Thus it can be seen, teacher's guidance is sometimes unnecessary, because it deprives students the opportunity to try to to be wrong and learn from failue. Sometimes the guidance is not enough, so that students feel helpless.

IV. GUIDE STUDENTS TO EXPLORE

It is a question worthing exploring when the teacher go into the student's inquiry process in inquiry-style teaching classroom. Whether they can guide students to explore is an ordeal which tests a teacher's knowledge reserves, teaching wisdom and professional endowments.

Here, we can see an inquiry-style teaching lesson fragments:

Teacher: in the last lesson we appreciate Su Shi's Prelude to Water Melody (How long will the full moon appear?). After class please discuss the formation of "moon" image, and comprehend the development process of China's moon culture. I think you have accumulated a certain amount of material. Now, you could communicate with each other of your views, then talk about your own research results.

(Ten minutes later...)

Student A: (talking with the displaying of multimedia courseware) firstly I collected the poems of Li Bai and Du Fu's, and classified them according to the contents of poetry. There are some poetry depicting the beautiful scenery in the moonlight, such as, Floating on a Boat in Donglumen(The sky is reflected in the water and the sand becomes brighter at dusk.), Songs of Autumn Pool (The furnace fire makes bright the earth and sky), Du Fu's Written at Random (The moon in the river is only a few feet far from me); there are some poetry depicting the homesick under the moon, such as, Li Bai's Thoughts on a Silent Night, and Du Fu's Hatred for Leaving(It's four thousand li from Luoyang since I wandered aimlessly in a strange land); there are some poetry depicting the missing for friends and relatives, such as, Li Bai's Waiting in Vain on Marble Steps, Ballads of Four Seasons(Autumn), and To Wang Changling Banished to the West, Du Fu's A Moonlit Night, Thinking of My Brothers on a Moonlight Night. In addition, I also collected the poems of Bai Juyi, Mid-Autumn Moon (How can Mid-autumn moon transmit my thoughts) and Liu Yong's Bells Ringing in the Rain. These are the poems depicting the scenes appreciate the moon during the Mid-autumn Festival and missing relatives under the moon. It is thus clear that from the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, the moon is first described as a scene, and then the sustenance of missing.

Student B: Miss, I also found (How bright the moon shines at dead of night.) in Nineteen Ancient Poems and Cao Cao's A Short Song. It is thus clear that the moon was already the image of love in the poem before the Tang Dynasty.

Student C: It is not actually true. In the same era, the moon, as an image of a poem, can be described as a scene, also as a carrier of love.

Student D: I think that "moon" being a poetic image has been formed before the Tang Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, the "moon" became a carrier of love.

Teacher: Which students have their own views?

Student E: I also found Wang Wei's white—pebbled Shallows and Meng Haoran's Mooring on the River at Jiande. They are all depicting the moonlight scenery. But, I have not reached a conclusion yet.

Teacher: Boys and girls, "Moon", as the image used in the ancient Chinese poetry, has a long process of development. China's first poetry collection "Book of Poetry" has a poem on the moon. "Moon" is just a matter of nature, not an aesthetic object in it. Such as, in the Book of Poetry • Songs of Chen • Moonrise, the real aesthetic object is the beauty of the moon, not the "moon" itself. In Elegies of the South, there are six parts including "moon" which are also as a natural scene in the poem. "Moon", as an artistic image, began in the Eastern Han Dynasty.

In the above-mentioned inquiry-style classroom teaching, the conclusions of the inquiry are prone to deviation because of the incomprehensive materials collected by the students and the superficial analysis on the problem. So, when should teachers intervene in the student's inquiry process, how can the necessary guidance be made?

The teacher's explanation is very clear, and has showed his valuable academic quality. We think that teacher's intervention timing is pretty good in this inquiry-style class, but he was too anxious to show the results to the students.

When the students arrive at the inaccurate conclusion because of the incomprehensive materials, teachers can show their own information in good time. In the meantime, the teachers can tell students how to collect information and their experiences when they collect these information. Then lead students to continue to explore the "moon" image formation and development on the basis of understanding all the information. And then learn to explore the image formation and development of "willow" and "chrysanthemum".

When students come across some problems in inquiry, teachers should get involved in time and help students "take a stand", and help students explore the problem, so that students can understand the process of knowledge generation. The teachers shouldn't regard students as containers, and pour knowledge into students like water to the students.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, through the analysis of the fundamental question of "query" Chinese classroom, it is concluded that teacher leadership is an important influencing factor in teaching process. And pointed out that to solve this problem, teachers should have sufficient knowledge reserves and flexible adaptability, but also to change the teaching concept, to cultivate students thinking as an important task.

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