

Postmodern View of Knowledge and Reorientation of Teachers' Role

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Abstract—The purpose of the work is to explore and construct the future teacher's role view from the perspective of postmodern knowledge view. Postmodernism is a philosophical and social trend of thought popular in Western society at the end of the 20th century. After Lyotard put forward postmodern view of knowledge, the form, nature, transmission mode and value of knowledge have undergone unprecedented changes. This work puts forward new requirements for teachers transmitting knowledge. Future teachers should abandon the traditional authoritative role and become the collaborators and promoters of students learning knowledge, pioneers of lifelong learning and designers of classroom teaching, to better adapt to the development of contemporary education.

Keywords—*postmodern view of knowledge; future teachers; role view*

I. BASIC VIEWPOINTS OF POSTMODERN KNOWLEDGE VIEW

Postmodernism is a philosophical trend of thought formed on the basis of critical modernisms emphasis on absolute rationality, normativeness and certainty since the middle of the 20th century. It advocates the transcendence of rationality and the pluralism, openness and uncertainty of the world, and criticizes and deconstructs modernist philosophy in many fields including history, culture, nature, education, art, architecture and so on, thus constructing the philosophical paradigm of postmodernism. [1]The knowing of knowledge and the postmodern view of knowledge formed on this basis have important enlightening effects on the reform of education and the construction of new teaching concepts in China today. The postmodern view of knowledge emphasizes the subjectivity, diversity and difference of knowledge, and believes that knowledge has historical, social and cultural nature, and its basic viewpoints are mainly reflected in the following aspects.

A. Cultural Nature of Knowledge

The postmodern view of knowledge holds that any knowledge is the knowledge of a certain stage of history and social development, the nature of knowledge is inevitably restricted by the cultural traditions and cultural patterns in which it is generated, and it is inseparable from the values, lifestyles, and languages and even life beliefs in a certain cultural system. This leads to people's specific thinking and cognitive styles, forming a multi-dimensional perspective. The postmodern view of knowledge holds that the cultural nature of knowledge determines the diversity of human knowledge, and there are humanistic knowledge, social knowledge, explicit

knowledge, implicit knowledge, tacit knowledge, local knowledge, foreign knowledge, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and strategic knowledge. [2]Scientific knowledge is only one kind of big family of knowledge, every kind of knowledge is equal, and the equality of knowledge determines the selectivity of knowledge acquiring. No one can stop the right of an independent individual to acquire knowledge, nor can impose knowledge on an individual who has no preparation and interest in it.

B. Values of Knowledge

The postmodern view of knowledge holds that knowledge is generated and organized in a specific historical environment and cultural background. It is guided by the value of society and constructed by human beings, having a significant value tendency. Different historical stages, different countries and nations, different groups and individuals have different value needs for knowledge, and they present different knowledge forms in their respective fields of view. In terms of specific social and historical stages, the value characteristics of knowledge are first reflected in social power. Any knowledge is subject to power constraints in the process of communication. For the relationship between power and knowledge, power determines the production, selection and distribution of knowledge and it reflects the interests and benefits of classes and groups. Especially the knowledge in school education, its selection, organization and determination must be filtered by the value of the class will and interest, with obvious mainstream ideological characteristics.

C. Relativity of Knowledge

With the resolution of knowledge universalization and objectivity and the establishment of knowledge's cultural nature and values, knowledge becomes a kind of relative knowledge instead of absolute knowledge. The postmodern view of knowledge holds that "knowledge is not a mirror of the objective world" and is not absolutely objective. The establishment of any knowledge in the development history of human knowledge has its own specific subjective and objective conditions, and at the same time suspends or neglects other conditions. It is true under certain scope and conditions, but it would become a fallacy once exceeding these conditions and scope. It is also the existence of the relativity of knowledge that expands infinite space for its development, through which the realm of human understanding is constantly improving. Any knowledge is a hypothesis or a guess on objective things or

problems, and needs to be further tested and refuted through practice.

D. Contextual Nature of Knowledge

The postmodern view of knowledge holds that all knowledge is local, uncertain, and contextual. All knowledge exists in a certain time, space, theoretical paradigm, value system, linguistic symbols and other cultural factors. The statement of knowledge should be expressed according to its meaning system.[3] There is neither knowledge nor any cognitive subject and cognitive behavior without a specific historical period, specific space and specific cultural background. The contextual nature of knowledge makes knowledge individualized. The subject of knowledge understands the objective world in a specific situation from a unique perspective and generates personalized knowledge. As Nietzsche said: "As there are all kinds of eyes, there are all kinds of truths." In the process of education, teachers should not adopt a fixed and rigid teaching mode without focusing on the cultural background and cognitive style of students, which may obliterate the individuality of students.

II. THE UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION OF TEACHERS ROLE BY THE POSTMODERN VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

A. Knowledge Diversification of Teachers Role

The postmodern view of knowledge emphasizes the diversity, non-integration and incommensurability of knowledge. The post-modern view of knowledge does not believe that teaching is simply a transmission of information. Even efficient capabilities cannot be attributed to good memory of data or good ability to enter machine storage. Today, with the development of information technology, teaching should not only ensure the replication of capabilities, but also ensure the improvement of capabilities. Thus, "the transmission of knowledge should not be limited to transmitting information, but should include learning all the procedures that can improve the capability connecting different fields." The era of knowledge economy calls for future workers with new literacy and new knowledge, but the traditional teachers' role cannot be qualified for this new demand. The uncertainty of the future refreshes the meaning of "knowledge."

B. Dynamic Individualization of Teachers Role

The teaching objectives of postmodern knowledge view are not pre-predetermined but are dynamically generated by teachers and students through interaction and mutual negotiation in the teaching process. In this sense, the role of teachers is not so-called "knowledge authority". It is impossible to use a unified and universal view to educate students in a one-size-fits-all manner, because students are diversified and different and have different personal characteristics. The personality here is closely related to human nature which not only refers to the essential attributes of human beings as a species, but also refers to the individuality of human beings. Individuality firstly refers to the existence form of a certain group of human beings, and secondly refers to the characteristics of specific individuals. Teachers should change their role accordingly to adapt to the changes in society and the

times, and also should pay attention to the needs of students individual development, truly pay attention to their growth and cultivate real people.

C. Understanding Interactivity of Teachers Role

The "misconstruction" model pursued by the postmodern view of knowledge emphasizes the function of understanding and equal communication, because education is essentially the interaction between teachers and students, and there is no role of isolated teachers and students. The roles of teachers and students can only exist and are realized in the organic interaction of education. In turn, teaching is the process by which teachers and students use their imagination to engage in meaning creation and sharing. Teachers are not providers of knowledge, and instead, they exchange and share learning topics, opinions, ideas and emotions with students, which require a real exchange between teachers and students. The main form of educational communication between teachers and students is dialogue, through which true communication is formed, so as to achieve understanding, that is, spiritual communication. [4]Therefore, the teacher-student relationship is definitely not a binary opposition, but a symbiotic relationship. The role of teachers should be the interlocutor and the interpreter, so that they can treat students equally, respect students, understand them, and give guidance and help, to achieve "integration of horizons" understood by both teachers and students.

D. Creativeness and Openness of Teachers Role

Socialization is a process in which human beings can exert their functions. Human beings are not just passive objects that are waiting for guidance or arrangement. On the contrary, through negotiation and creation, individuals gradually understand and accept social roles in the process of continuously advanced social interaction. The creativeness of the teachers role is to create a new and lively way of thinking on this basis, liberating people from the shackles of existing rationality and experience.[5] The postmodern view of knowledge advocates the creativeness and openness of teachers role, and its core is to embody an open spirit. Nowadays, the cultivation of innovative talents first requires teachers having a sense of creativity and openness; secondly, teachers must be able to think deeply about the problems arising in the fields like politics, economy, culture, science and technology in information society, online world and high-tech era; thirdly, teachers can creatively come up with a set of methods fitting the concepts of the new age; finally, the ways of education enable students to internalize scientific thoughts, philosophical thoughts and research methods into skeptical and negative instinct, in order to accelerate the cultivation of innovative talents.

III. REORIENTATION OF TEACHERS' ROLE FROM THE POSTMODERN VIEW OF KNOWLEDGE

A. Collaborators of Students in Knowledge Learning

In traditional teaching, teachers are regarded as the transmitters of specific knowledge, and students are viewed as the receptors of knowledge. The role of teachers in education is

only to convey teaching content, impart knowledge on books, but ignores students' ability to actively construct knowledge and experience through daily life and experience outside classroom, their ability to explore learning through cooperation, and students' promoting role in the growth of teachers. The postmodern view of knowledge advocates the generative nature of knowledge, and believes that knowledge is no longer an eternal truth, teaching is no longer a process in which teachers unilaterally impart knowledge to students, but a communication and dialogue between teachers and students, and also the mutual exchanges, mutual inspiration and mutual complementation of the two sides; teachers change from the authority of knowledge to the equal participants in students research, from the knowledge transmitter to students learning partner, and the traditional sense of teacher-student model will continue to give way to the mutual learning model of teachers and students, forming a true "learning community". Thus, students can truly acquire knowledge and translate book knowledge into inner spiritual wealth on a more reasonable and valuable level.

B. Promoters for Students in Knowledge Innovation

Postmodern view of knowledge believes that knowledge is fluid and uncertain. Based on such characteristics, teachers become the promoters of knowledge, while students are the discoverers and creators of knowledge. On the one hand, this kind of knowledge view requires teachers should no longer regard students as immature cognitive subjects, but treat them as people who have a certain cognitive ability and also develop rapidly; no longer regard students as people who lack knowledge and thus need to constantly master and accumulate knowledge, but see them as people who have their own knowledge and need to constantly correct and develop this knowledge as adults and scientists. On the other hand, teachers should not regard textbook knowledge as absolute and value-neutral knowledge, nor as the basis for students to engage in knowledge innovation in the future; but should recognize the social nature and value of textbook knowledge, and realize that the true basis for students to engage in knowledge innovation in the future is their curiosity and craving for knowledge. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to cultivating students ability to explore in knowledge teaching, and be good at discovering problems, analyzing problems and then solving problems, so that students can learn to learn, learn to think, have innovation ability, and be able to reform and recreate the world.

C. Designers and Planners of the Learning Situations of Students Classroom

Postmodern knowledge view links knowledge with specific, rich, lively and diverse situations, to cultivates students problem awareness in the process, help students master the problem-solving knowledge, procedures and methods, keep knowledge fresh and lively, and restore the supposed function of classroom teaching. In addition, the postmodern view of knowledge raises questions for the theoretical basis of the content of traditional sub-curricular courses. The openness, complexity and network of students' life world and the transformation and generative nature of knowledge provide a reference and enlightenment for the arrangement of multi-

curricular content. Therefore, future teachers should not be engineers conducting construction based on blueprints, but a project planner. Teachers should use it as a teaching concept and an open flexible teaching plan when designing teaching. Such classroom teaching actually increases the opportunities for challenges and the possibility of breakthroughs and transcendence for students. Meanwhile, such classroom teaching planning requires learners to have sufficient understanding on the materials studied and to solve, interpret, analyze and express the materials presented, which avoids the disadvantage of the lack of initiative in the arrangement of traditional course content.[6]

D. Forerunners of Lifelong Learning for Students

The main symbol of postmodern society is the informationization, networking and globalization of knowledge. When education enters the network, the education becomes learning and education, teachers retreat from the center of stage to the back of stage, and students become the central figures on the stage. Therefore, the future society is a learning society, and the networking and the broad connotation of knowledge put forward increasingly higher demand for teachers knowledge, so lifelong learning is particularly urgent for teachers. In order to adapt to the challenges of modern society, and for the future of students, teachers must constantly enrich, improve and update their knowledge, ability and quality structure to adapt to the overall changes in postmodern education society and knowledge status, and to be the models of lifelong learning for students. Only in this way can the needs of learners be satisfied, can learners shoulder the responsibility and mission endowed by future education, and can education develop in a sustainable way.

IV. SUMMARY

Although the popularity of the great postmodernist view of knowledge has gradually faded, its unique spiritual temperament has formed a lasting and far-reaching impact on all areas of society. In the post-modern knowledge era, university education, as a rational, scientific and organized academic institution, has been in the mainstream of social culture and become the "power station" of knowledge to promote social progress. It is an inevitable change in the era of knowledge pursuit and talent training.

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