

Enlightenment of Comenius Moral Education on the Implementation of Primary School Moral Education*

Hong Kaifei, Xiao Jumei
Huzhou Teachers College, Zhejiang, China

Cultivating virtues such as prudence, moderation, perseverance, and integrity is an important part of Comenius' moral education thought. The cultivation of virtue must have certain conditions, that is, it should be taught early, learn virtue in practice, set an example for children, and formulate rules of conduct. Based on this, in order to effectively implement moral education in primary schools, we should set an example, provide a good campus moral environment, formulate a strict punishment system, and arrange diversified practical activities.

Keywords: Comenius, moral education, virtue

Introduction

Under the background of cultivating morality and cultivating people, various departments of the state have issued various documents on moral education, aiming at better cultivating people and making people can develop in an all-round way. However, there are still many deficiencies in the implementation of moral education, and moral education has not caused some schools pay more attention to intellectual education than moral education schools. The way of moral education is single and the quality of teachers is not high. In order to solve these problems, we can learn from Comenius' thoughts of moral education and further clarify the importance of moral education, early moral education for people, and through setting a good example, to create a good learning environment and learning atmosphere, formulating strict punishment system and arranging diversified practical activities to better implement moral education.

The Connotation of Comenius Moral Education

Comenius believes that morality is a kind of intelligent learning, "It improves us, makes us stable, and makes our hearts noble" (1984, p. 179). Schools should master the art of moral education and use clear methods to carry out this art so that human beings can be trained. Comenius advocated that all virtues should be cultivated in young people. He believes that "virtue includes not only the etiquette of appearance, but also the whole tendency of our internal and external movements" (1984, p. 25). Of course, because there are many

***Acknowledgements:** This article is the phased results of the National Social Science Fund's general pedagogy project "Research on Central Education Administration in the Early Period of the Republic of China from the Perspective of Quantitative Analysis" (Fund project No. BOA180050), the Ministry of Education's Policy and Regulations Department's project "Research on the Development, Practice and Historical Impact of the Party's Education Theory from 1921 to 1949" (Fund project No. JYBZFS2019112), and the 2020 Zhejiang Province's educational science planning project "Research on Zhao Tingwei's Primary Education Thought and Practice" (Fund project No. 2020SCG032).

Hong Kaifei, B.A., College of Teacher Education, Huzhou Teachers College.

Xiao Jumei, Ph.D., associate professor, College of Teacher Education, Huzhou Teachers College.

virtues, Comenius believes that the main virtues of prudence, moderation, perseverance, and integrity should be cultivated first.

Be Careful

Comenius's prudence refers to a sound judgment of factual issues. He argues that "a sound judgment on a question of fact Breaking is the real foundation of all virtues" (Comenius, 1984, p. 179). With sound judgment and knowing what is valuable and what is not, we can make a correct evaluation of things, obtain truth, and have real wisdom. Comenius believed that in order to be prudent, one should receive good teaching, understand the differences among things, and understand the value of things themselves. He also agrees with Vygotsky's view that sound judgment should be practiced from an early age. Children pursue correct judgment and avoid wrong judgment. Correct judgment can be called the second nature of children.

Moderation

Comenius believes that children should abide by the golden rule of "everything must not be excessive". They should strike a good balance between drinking and eating, sleeping and getting up, working and playing, talking and silence. They should not be lazy or indulge in playing. They should be measured in talking and know when to say, what to say, and what not to say.

Perseverance

Perseverance requires us to learn to exercise restraint. When we find ourselves making mistakes or losing discretion, we should exercise restraint in our desires and suppress our impatience, dissatisfaction and anger. Is to do things prudently, rationally, and not impulsively? Comenius believes that children do not have the ability to think rationally and cannot be very prudent and rational in their behavior. Therefore, they need to obey the orders of the long term and accept the guidance of the long term. However, can dour and generosity and hard work are especially necessary perseverance for young people, because people live in society and are bound to contact and communicate with different people. Therefore, they should learn to be frank and generous in order to talk with people better and to bear hardships and stand hard work in order to live a better life. Among them, can dour and generosity are finally obtained after receiving the teachings of valuable people and putting them into practice. Hard work is formed by continuous work or playing games.

Honesty

It can be understood as helpful, dedicated, benevolent, humble, etc. Comenius believes that the evil virtue of selfishness is inherent in our nature, so we must teach young people how to give, how to help others, and how to make themselves useful to others, thus ensuring the happiness of our public and private lives.

Judging from Comenius' understanding of morality, learning morality well can improve us, stabilize us, and noble our hearts. Knowledge is of course important, but if a person blindly pursues intellectual progress and ignores moral progress, he is still regressing. Comenius also believes that virtue is one of the sources of happiness. A person of good character, following his heart and insisting on doing good things, can get a steady stream of happiness from it.

The Implementation of Comenius Moral Education

Virtue Should be Taught Early on

In Comenius's view, "virtue should be taught early before evil occupies the mind" (1984, p. 182). Because

young people like imitation and have strong plasticity in character and behavior, at this time people lack sound judgment on external things, cannot distinguish good from evil, beauty, and ugliness, are easily influenced by external things, and learn bad behavior habits. However, in the mature period, people's thinking and behavior are relatively solidified. If the bad habits acquired in young age have not been corrected, it is relatively difficult to make changes at this time. Just like farming, if we do not so good seeds on the land in advance, then the land will not grow the good things we want, only the worst weeds will grow. However, if we reclaim a piece of land in advance, remove the weeds that have not yet grown and spread the good seeds in early spring, then our hope of harvest will be greater. If we teach people such fine qualities as prudence, moderation, perseverance, and integrity early before evil thoughts corrode their hearts, then these people are more likely to develop in the good direction we expect. Therefore, it is easier for schools to carry out moral education according to students' psychological characteristics in their childhood and adolescence, which can help students develop good virtues.

Learning Virtue From Practice

Comenius believed that "virtue is learned by doing legitimate things frequently" (1984, p. 182), "children can easily learn to walk from walking, talk from talking, and write from writing. Similarly, they can learn to obey from obedience, moderation from moderation, truth from telling, and constancy from constancy" (1984, pp. 182-183). If children keep working or playing games, they can learn to be hard-working and industrious. In other words, when schools carry out moral education, We should not only give children theoretical moral education, only tell the child what is prudence, perseverance, integrity, kindness, and courtesy, but give the students correct guidance in practical activities, such as games and labor, train the students' brain and practical ability, so that the students can truly understand what is excellent virtue and quality through practice, that is, moral education needs to combine theory and practice to achieve the unity of knowledge and practice. For example, in a two-person three-legged game, the two partners finally reach the finish line through tacit cooperation. In the process, both learned to cooperate with each other. Another example is in the class cleaning activities, when one student stands on the stool to clean the blackboard, another student can take the initiative to help hold the stool, and another student is willing to take the initiative to change water, then these students understand the division of labor and cooperation, and learn to care for each other. In practical activities, students will actively use their brains to achieve tasks, and good conduct will be imperceptibly formed and internalized in the process. In other things in the future, they will naturally show these excellent qualities without anyone's reminder.

Set an Example for Children

Comenius believes that children like to imitate everything they see, but they cannot distinguish between good and bad imitations. In other words, children may make mistakes and deviate from their behaviors in practice, so children need advice and help from parents, teachers, and others while practicing. In Comenius's view, the so-called "role model" refers to written role models and living role models. Among them, living role models are more important, because living role models can provide children with more intuitive and vivid imitation objects and impress children more deeply. Aristotle had made Alexander contact with valuable people on a regular basis, hoping that Alexander would continue to act under the teachings of these people and become a frank and generous person. Thus, at the age of twelve, Alexander was able to talk harmoniously with all kinds of people. When teaching unarmed arts, the master did not exhort them to the rules from the beginning, but took the apprentices to the workshop and let the apprentices look at the finished products first. When the

apprentices want to imitate the finished products, the master will give them the tools and instruct them how to take and use them. If the apprentices do something wrong, the master will correct them. In this process, role models are used more often than words alone. Similarly, a series of behaviors, such as children's speech, walking, and running are learned in the process of self-imitation and correction by others. In daily life and study, parents and teachers should first do a good job.

Formulating Rules of Conduct

It is very difficult for us to be cautious about the emergence of evil things and the generation of students' evil temperament at all times, so we need to formulate strict discipline to stop and resist evil thoughts and evil things. Here, we need to make it clear that strict discipline, including children's behavior rules, is formulated in order to ensure children's clear virtue and establish their character, rather than forcing them to study hard or suppressing them. We punish them in the hope that they will realize their mistakes, have the courage to correct them, and promise not to make them again in the future. At the same time, we should also let children understand this and fully believe this, so that they will not be little discipline and will not intentionally violate discipline. In addition, we also need to know that strict discipline can only be used when children have moral problems. In schools, teachers should make themselves living role models and provide students with imitations of good behaviors. When students have mistakes in virtue, teachers should take immediate measures to restrain the wrong behavior as soon as it appears. Of course, teachers should not enforce discipline according to their own subjective emotions, but should give students advice, persuasion, or condemnation according to the objective actual situation. When students perform very well in virtue and can set an example, teachers must also praise these students in front of the whole class and stimulate other students to strive for progress. Comenius also believed that if such gentle methods as advice and persuasion do not work for a person, rough methods, such as beating, must be used. Although Comenius believed that this crude method should not be used casually and frequently, its purpose is not to make us exhausted before extreme situations occur. Therefore, to some extent, Comenius's corporal punishment method is extreme. Corporal punishment is not worth advocating and is prohibited by law.

Enlightenment of Comenius' Moral Education Thought

Nowadays, the country attaches great importance to the moral education of primary and secondary school students and has issued various documents on moral education. However, there are still some deficiencies in the actual implementation of moral education in primary and secondary schools, such as the single way of moral education, the emphasis on intellectual education, and the neglect of moral education. Although Comenius' moral education thought is permeated with religious meaning, there are still many places worth learning from in terms of its specific moral education thought content. Schools, teachers, and parents should attach importance to moral education, understand the importance of moral education, and actively learn Comenius' moral education thoughts. In addition, schools should carry out moral education activities in a timely and timely manner according to the laws and characteristics of children's physical and mental development at different ages, in combination with the documents issued by the Ministry of Education, and drawing lessons from Comenius' moral education methods.

Set an Example to Follow the Role

The leading role of role models is very important. Comenius mentioned that role models include "written role models" and "living role models". According to this, teachers need to provide written examples for

students when carrying out moral education for students. Teachers can tell students their favorite allusions, celebrity stories and publicize Lei Feng's deeds. In addition, teachers can also collect public service advertisements promoting traditional virtues and broadcast them at appropriate times. For example, there was once a public service advertisement about "filial piety": The mother who had just left work took pains to wash her old mother's feet. This scene was seen by the young son, so the young son also learned from the mother's appearance and staggered to carry the foot washing water and said to the mother, "Mother washes her feet". As for living role models, because the people that students come into contact with most in schools are teachers and classmates. Therefore, on the one hand, when recruiting new teachers, schools should assess their ideological and moral quality as much as possible, select teachers with good quality, and regularly carry out moral education and quality training for teachers, so as to continuously improve teachers' ideological and moral quality and provide good examples for students in ideological and moral quality. On the other hand, the school can select civilized students or moral model students every period of time, and arrange the photos and deeds of the students who have won honors together and display them in the campus window, providing excellent small models for students in a similar way. In addition, teachers can also arrange time for students to watch relevant videos that touch Chinese characters at present to further deepen ideological and moral education for students.

Creating a Good Campus Moral Environment

Environment has a subtle influence on people's growth. As a child, the environment in which students live is mainly school and home, so providing a good campus environment for students is of great importance to the cultivation of students' virtue. A good campus environment includes not only good basic environmental sanitation on campus, but also good school spirit and style of study. When the school arranges the environment, it can hang some calligraphy and painting works with moral education significance in corridors, classrooms, corridors, and other places to imperceptibly educate students about morality. In addition, in the school, the teaching and administrative staff should create a good learning environment and growth environment for students, try their best to eliminate the factors that interfere with the cultivation of students' good virtue, create a good campus moral environment, form a good campus moral atmosphere, and let students get moral edification in such an environment. Schools can innovate the form of civilized class appraisal activities, show the characteristics of each class in a more interesting and meaningful way, unite the class spirit of each class, let each class carry out healthy competition, and create a high-spirited and upward spirit of the class. Schools can also hold moral-related activities, such as moral-related reading experience sharing activities, ancient poetry recitation competitions, story-telling competitions, calligraphy competitions with famous sayings and short poems as the content, etc., which can not only carry out moral education in various forms, but also improve students' comprehensive quality from different aspects.

Formulating a Strict Punishment System

We cannot completely eliminate the evil forces around students, but we can formulate strict discipline, which must be able to play a role in restricting students' behavior. Although corporal punishment of students is now prohibited, this does not mean that schools cannot formulate relevant discipline and punishment systems. The establishment of strict discipline and the adoption of punishment are all for students to develop good virtue, not to suppress students. Of course, teachers should be confident and rational when enforcing discipline. When students have mistakes in virtue, they should try their best to educate and persuade them in a gentle and loving way, so that students can know that the purpose of doing so is for students to better realize their mistakes and

form good moral qualities, instead of deliberately looking for trouble from students. In addition, psychological studies have confirmed that children's respect for rules is a natural process of growth. Therefore, as long as rules are well formulated and utilized to guide students to respect rules, students' virtue can also be cultivated to a certain extent.

In daily study and life, schools and teachers should formulate moral discipline before students enter the school in view of the possible moral mistakes of students. After the students enter the school, the head teacher of each class can, according to the specific situation of the class, let the students discuss the moral discipline that should be formulated in the class on the basis of the original discipline, and the teacher will prompt and record it. "In a sense, the best discipline should be the discipline that comes from the students' own needs. Only in this way can the consciousness of discipline be finally formed and the transcendence of discipline be achieved" (Wu, 2006, p. 149). Adopting this relatively democratic way to formulate discipline in one's own class can make students have more sense of participation and responsibility and form a sense of discipline. The contents of all these disciplines should include what students are encouraged to do, what students are forbidden to do, and what punishment or measures should be taken for violating discipline, so as to guide and restrict some behaviors of students. When students do what discipline advocates students to do, teachers can give praise and rewards. However, once the students violate the discipline in this respect, the teachers can punish the students according to the specific circumstances and the provisions of the discipline. Of course, punishment here does not refer to corporal punishment. For example, when students copy other people's homework or cheat in exams, it involves the issue of honesty. Teachers can hold class meetings on the theme of honesty, emphasize the importance of honesty, and explain the harm that loss of honesty may bring, such as being away from friends. In private, teachers can ask students why they plagiarize or cheat, and then select some homework content with thinking value to let students do it again. Once as punishment, the teacher will patiently teach and guide according to personal circumstances. Teachers can also let students who violate honesty help teachers correct their homework after class to observe whether there is plagiarism among students.

Arrange Diversified Practical Activities

The paper feels shallow at last. When carrying out moral education, if teachers blindly adopt reasoning methods, students will easily feel boring or even bored, which is not conducive to moral education. In moral education, the unity of knowledge and practice should be achieved. Schools should arrange practical activities suitable for primary and secondary school students to provide ways for moral practice to strengthen students' virtue. On the one hand, the school can combine with the current labor education to open up innovative moral education practice activities while maintaining the original labor practice activities in the school, such as tree planting, duty, cleaning, and other activities. Based on the different age stages of primary and secondary school students, the specific contents and forms of moral education practice activities carried out by schools should also be targeted. "The primary school stage is the stage of 'knowledge'. We should pay attention to the interest of moral education. The main goal is to cultivate students' interest in moral education content and basic cognition of moral education knowledge, and pay attention to students' understanding and experience of relevant moral education content" (Zhang, 2019, p. 82). Therefore, primary schools can carry out interesting practical activities, such as simulating adult professional activities, so that students can understand the moral qualities that adult work should possess and the hardships of adult work, and cultivate students' love and empathy. "The middle school stage is a stage of 'emotion' and 'action'. We should pay attention to the

cultivation of students' moral consciousness in knowledge and skills learning and practice, and combine the cultivation of their own quality with the moral requirements of the society" (Zhang, 2019, p. 82). Therefore, middle schools can diversify practical activities, such as arranging military training activities, so that students can hone their will in various activities, learn life skills, such as folding quilts and washing clothes, master some basic escape knowledge and skills, and experience to the importance of independent thinking and the ease of group cooperation. On the other hand, schools can arrange social practice activities suitable for different ages, such as voluntary service activities, memorial hall visits, farm work activities, etc., to further improve students' moral cognition and moral quality through these off-campus practice activities. In addition, schools can innovate sports games and arrange part of the time to hold moral education theme games in physical education classes, so as to combine learning with fun. In short, the school should achieve the unity of knowing and doing when carrying out moral education for students, and strengthen and internalize students' virtue through practice.

Conclusion

Moral education is still a matter that people attach great importance to today, and the problems existing in moral education, such as the single way of moral education, the emphasis on intellectual education and the neglect of moral education, should also be paid attention to. In order to better implement moral education in primary education, teachers and parents can learn from Comenius' thoughts of moral education and cultivate the main virtues of prudence, moderation, perseverance and integrity into primary school students as much as possible. Among them, schools should actively set a good example for students. To create a good campus environment, formulate a strict punishment system, pursue innovation at the same time, adopt diversified moral education methods that conform to the characteristics of students' age, carry out rich and colorful practical activities, and achieve the unity of knowledge and practice, so as to strengthen students' virtue and better promote students' all-round development.

References

- Comenius. (1984). *Great teaching theory* (pp. 25, 179, & 182-183). (R. G. Fu, Trans.). Beijing: People's Education Press.
- Wu, H. W. (2006). *Research on the value orientation of discipline practice in primary and secondary schools in contemporary China* (p. 149). Shanghai: East China Normal University.
- Zhang, F. C. (2019). Research on the cohesion of moral education activities in primary and secondary schools under the background of moral cultivation. *Curriculum, Textbooks, and Teaching Methods*, 39(6), 82.