

The Characteristics, Value and Enlightenment of Interest Teaching—Based on the Investigation of Comenius

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Comenius emphasized the importance of interest many times in the Great Teaching Theory. In his opinion, forcing children to learn is to persecute children. The correct method is to take interest teaching method, that is, to take a variety of means to stimulate students' desire for knowledge and study, stimulate students' interest and passion in learning. Comenius' interest teaching method has an inspiration to today's primary school education teaching: in the teaching process teachers should pay attention to step-by-step proceeding, and keep order, create teaching situation and subtly set suspense, use multi-sensory teaching to stimulate students' desire for study, and use language arts to spread love and warmth.

Keywords: Comenius, great teaching theory, interest in teaching

“Interest” is a kind of psychological phenomenon that everyone has. It widely exists in the real life such as study and work. From the perspective of the development of educational thought, taking the principle of interest as an important principle of teaching and education, it is the consensus of many educators in modern and contemporary times, and it has experienced a gradual development and improvement process (Guo, 2012). In recent years, interest teaching has gradually become a hot topic of social discussion. The Outline of Education Planning also puts forward the requirements of cultivating students' interest in learning. In his Theory of Great Teaching, Comenius also explicitly mentioned that interest can make students to stay in a happy and bright teaching environment, which shows the importance of interest teaching. “People are most easily formed in the early years, except at this age they cannot be formed properly” (Comenius, 2001, p. 29). Primary school is an important stage for pupils' physical and mental development (Luo, 2021). Primary school learning is an important stage in students' learning life to lay the groundwork for subsequent learning (Chen, 2022). And in this important stage, the students just have many characteristics, they have a strong curiosity, every day in their mind there are one hundred thousand whys, they are very interested in everything in the world, as if all the time they are full of infinite vitality. Therefore, primary education needs to grasp these characteristics of primary school students, pay attention to the interest of teaching, the curiosity of primary school students to guide the curriculum teaching.

Acknowledgement: This paper is funded by Huzhou University education teaching reform project in 2019 “The Chinese History and Culture and the Education Reform of Bilingual Teaching Research” (JGJX1910), in 2019 in Huzhou University party construction and ideological and political work research project “Understanding the System to Achieve Use' thoughts in modern heritage and development of higher normal education research” achievements.

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Pay Attention to Step-by-Step Proceeding, and Maintain Orderly

Comenius said, “We know by investigation that the principle that really sustains the structure of our world, down to its nuances, is nothing but order” (Comenius, 2001, p. 60). Order, he argued, was the soul of things (Comenius, 2001, p. 60). Only by taking steps in the teaching process can students keep up with the teachers, become hopeful and confident in the course, and thus develop interest and ultimately gain a lot. When teachers teach a class, they should first teach the simplest principles so that students can have a concept in their mind. Then, teachers show the students rules and examples to make the concept concrete in their minds. The subject can then be taught systematically, with exceptions and irregularities, to make the body of knowledge in the student’s mind more complete. For example, when the teacher teaches how to make a noun plural, he first tells the students that plural is corresponding to singular, which means two or more countable nouns, so that the students can have the concept of plural in their mind. Then, the teacher shows the students the general rules and examples, so that the concept in the students’ mind is concrete, and students have a point of attachment. Then, the teacher teaches the exceptions to the general rule, which are irregular variations. In this way, the subject of pluralizing nouns is presented in a systematic and orderly way in the students’ minds. According to Comenius, students should first learn to understand things, and then remember them (Comenius, 2001, p. 83). For example, when teachers teach “Preliminary understanding of fractions”, they first explain vividly what fractions represent through some examples of equal distribution, and then tell students to divide the unit “1” into several equal fractions. The number representing one or more equal fractions is called fractions. When the students understand the concept of fractions through the matting before, then teachers explain the numerator, denominator, score line of these concepts, and let the students remember them. It is easier for students to memorize the concepts by understanding them first and then memorizing them. It can also make the knowledge points stay in their minds for a longer time. Comenius also believed that students should study practical things first to prepare their minds for more abstract ideas (Comenius, 2001, p. 223). In elementary school math, for example, whole numbers were studied first, then fractions, and finally decimals, because integers and fractions are supported by concrete things and can be found in practice, while decimals are separated from concrete things and cannot be found in practice. Therefore, after learning about integers and fractions, the mind is ready to accept abstract decimals more easily. With things row upon row, if it can always maintain its order, it will always be strong, appear indestructible state. But when it starts to become disorderly, it will be vulnerable, there is the possibility of toppling at any time. Teaching needs to be organized in order to get twice the result with half the effort, and if not, it will get half the result with twice the effort.

Create the Teaching Situation, Cleverly Set Suspense

Primary school students can only concentrate on 20-30 minutes of continuous attention, and they still focus on inadvertence. They prefer specific and interesting plots rather than dull and tasteless knowledge. If a class is just about knowledge, pupils will soon be distracted, fantasize, and even start to look around in the seat, and classmates talk in small voice, the whole class will become very chaotic. Comenius once stressed that intuition can make abstract knowledge more specific, flexible, and easy to accept, and situational teaching method can just help students integrate into the classroom situation, in the classroom situation to intuitively and happily acquire knowledge. Therefore, teachers can create teaching situations to make students focus on attention. Situational teaching is a teaching method in which the instructor designs and constructs scenes, teaches knowledge in the

scenes, and stimulates the emotions of the students, so as to make the students form a knowledge frame in their minds (Li, 2019).

According to Comenius, in order to attract students' attention, teachers can follow the following principles: "Suppose, when starting any new subject, he places it in front of the students in an engaging way, or asks them questions, so as to arouse their interest." "If we unrelentingly expose the student's ignorance of the subject, he will be filled with the desire to master it, to understand it thoroughly" (Comenius, 2001, p. 126). In the beginning of the classroom teaching link, the teacher can tell the story content directly, use the vivid image and interesting story plot to create a simple teaching situation, attract the students' attention, after setting the suspense to the question, to promote its corresponding knowledge exploration activities as teaching rhythm (Liu, 2022). For example, the teacher told a story in the beginning of the teaching of Position and Direction: "One day, Bear senior and Bear junior wanted to go to the forest to find a little squirrel hopping and hopping. But Bouncy and Bouncy moved to a new house, to the northeast corner of the forest. Bear senior and Bear junior don't know which way northeast is. They can't find their friends. They are so worried that they cried." The vivid images of Bear senior and Bear junior and the interesting plot of finding a friend in the story attracted the students' attention and stimulated their interest. Then the teacher said to the students: "At this time, Bald guy Qiang passing, he told Bear senior and Bear junior how to find the northeast direction, in the end, the friends finally met, and played together happily. Do you want to know how Bald guy Qiang teaches Bear senior and Bear junior?" The teacher used suspense to make the students have questions and strong interest in learning, then began to explain the content of the lesson. In addition to the teaching situation of the new knowledge class, the teaching situation can also be created in the exercise class.

In exercise class, teachers can use vivid story images and interesting story plots based on knowledge points to create simple teaching situations to attract students' attention, and then ask questions by setting suspense to consolidate knowledge points and examine students' knowledge points absorption. For example, the teacher in the "position and direction" exercise classroom teaching, tells a story: "This day, Bear senior and Bear junior wanted to find Tu Tu to play, but found that Tu Tu's home was shaved off, they decided to get even with bald strong." The vivid story image and interesting story plot in the story attracted the attention of the students, at this time, the teacher said to the students: "On the forest map, the houses of Bear senior and Bear junior are in the middle of the forest, the house of King Gigi is above the houses of Bear senior and Bear junior, the house of Bald guy Qiang is below the houses of Bear senior and Bear junior, the house of Tu Tu is on the left of the houses of Bear senior and Bear junior, and the house of Turnip Head is on the right of the houses of Bear senior and Bear junior. So, in what direction should they go to find Bald guy Qiang?" The questions were asked, and the students' love for Bear senior and Bear junior and their eagerness to help them stimulated their desire to answer and helped them reinforce the knowledge points.

Use Multi-sensory Teaching and Stimulate Students' Desire to Study

According to Comenius, "all knowledge begins with the perception of the senses" (Comenius, 2001, p. 97) and "the beginning of knowledge must always come from the senses" (Comenius, 2001, p. 141). Thus it can be seen that the use of the senses plays a crucial role in the process of teaching. He also stressed that in order to stimulate students' desire to study, they can be shown pictures or videos of the things they should learn in class, a globe, a map, a triangle, etc., and the use of scientific instruments such as magnifying glasses and microscopes. In other words, in order to stimulate students' interest in learning, teachers should make more use of intuitive

teaching aids for classroom guidance and sensory teaching. For example, in the lesson “Rotation”, the teacher took out a windmill and a top to demonstrate rotation to the students. This is the use of visual sensory teaching, which arouses the students’ curiosity about the concept of rotation. For example, in the lesson “Moonlight Song”, the teacher played “Moonlight Song” at the beginning, which is the use of auditory sense teaching, causing students to be curious about how this famous song is composed. For some knowledge points with strong abstractness, teachers can use Internet technology to search for relevant learning materials, and show their abstract relationships through specific materials in the form of photos, videos and so on (Liu, 2022). For example, in the lesson “Understanding Decimals”, in order to let students understand why three decimeters can be converted into 0.3 meters, the teacher showed a one-meter-long line-segment evenly divided into 10 parts on the multimedia for teaching. Sensory teaching was used to transform the abstraction into concrete, which was conducive to students’ understanding.

Comenius also mentioned that “if an object can make an impression on several senses at the same time, it should contact with several senses” (Comenius, 2001, p. 141). It can be seen that the combined use of multiple senses can improve learning efficiency and make students more impressed. Multi-sensory concept was applied in the teaching process, namely, in the teaching to mobilize students’ various senses and at the same time, to let the student participate in the teaching activities of various senses, to help the student with the absorption of a variety of sensory ways things or facts, experience, perception, facilitate successful experience, stimulating learning motivation, to strengthen learning drive, their interest in learning. Thus all-round development of potential can be achieved, and a more comprehensive and profound understanding of things is obtained (Xu, 2012). For example, in the seed pregnant with new life in a class, the teacher sent every team some seeds, introduced the anatomy of the seed internal structure in the multimedia broadcast video, asked students themselves to dissect seeds, and to observe various parts of the seeds, then take a broadcast video of the seeds germination, which causes students’ curiosity, as homework for students to observe the changes of seeds germination. This example makes full use of visual, auditory, tactile, dynamic perception, and other senses, so that students can observe the internal structure and growth process of seeds, gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of seeds, and generate a strong interest in learning, and are active, relaxed, and happy to participate in seed observation activities. For example, in the lesson “Comparing Different Soils”, the teacher prepared sandy soil, clay soil, and loam soil for each group to observe. First, they looked through the naked eye and a magnifying glass, then they fanned and smelled through their nose, and then they twisted and felt through their fingers. The teacher asked the students to think about the differences between the three parts of soil, which is the grittiest, which is the most finely grained, and which is the most slimy. This example made full use of the senses such as vision, touch, and smell, so that students could observe different kinds of soil, gain a more comprehensive and profound understanding of soil, and develop a strong interest in soil learning. Games are a comprehensive application of multi-sensory teaching. Teachers add games into the classroom, which combines teaching with fun and learning with fun. For example, the teacher in the “Graphics Translation” a class, carried out the “match numbers” game, translation of a match, so that “68” into the largest number. In the fun game, the students felt the joy of doing it themselves, but also deeply understood the concept of “translation”. For example, the teacher arranged numbers for each student in the lesson of “Addition within 20”, and then carried out the game of “Shouting number group”. Teachers let the children in the fun game, personally understand what they have learned, but also lit up their enthusiasm for learning. For example, the pronunciation of the word “tiptoe” is

very important, but the students always forget, so the teacher carried out a “look for” game in class: let a student find paper the teacher has hid, the students on the seat are reading “tiptoe”, with the students looking for the distance with the paper and increase the volume. This game let the students firmly remember the pronunciation of “tiptoe” in an interesting way. As Comenius said,

Instruction should always be combined with amusement, so that they are willing to learn the serious things which will be of real use to them later, so that their minds can always be induced to develop in the intended way. (Comenius, 2001, p. 216)

Multi-sensory teaching helps students to maintain and improve their interest in learning, and strengthens their knowledge and understanding of theoretical knowledge. At the same time, the stimulation and cross-application of multiple senses also improve students’ ability to acquire knowledge from multiple senses (Cao, 2017). Teachers should not only “give them fish”, but also “teach people to fish”. We should not only teach students theoretical knowledge, but also teach students the way of perception, help students master the method of learning, improve the ability of learning, so as to improve the efficiency of teaching. Multi-sensory teaching is important, but can’t mobilize students’ various senses, which is simply considered as the accumulation of a variety of senses, mix, and must be combined with the specific teaching content, teaching situation, at the same time the actual situation of students must also be considered with different grades, different classes, even to selectively use multi-sensory teaching strategies (Cao, 2017).

Use Language Arts to Spread Love and Warmth

“If we wish to interest our students,” Comenius emphasized, “we must make sure that everything, no matter how serious, is put before them in a friendly and inviting way” (Comenius, 2001, p. 94). In his opinion, if the teacher is gentle and does not treat his students in a rude way, but with kind sentiments and words, the students will not be distant from them, but will irresistibly approach and want to touch them; If the teachers are kind to the students, they will be easily praised by the students, and the students will be willing and active to go to school. Teachers’ bad attitude towards students (especially those with low grades) will affect students’ psychological state in the process of interpersonal communication in the future, which will reduce students’ interpersonal skills. The reason is that a person will spend a long time in school, which takes up nearly 20% of his life. Student period is exactly the critical period of physical and mental development, in this critical period, students will form their own three views, and will also form their own set of principles of interpersonal communication. In this critical period, the teacher is the main role that profoundly affects the formation of students’ personality, and the teacher’s attitude towards students is the main factor that profoundly affects the formation of students’ personality. Therefore, teachers should be gentle, kind, responsible, respectful, and understandable to each student. Mr. Matthew in “Spring of Cattle Class” is a teacher who treats all students equally. He respects and understands every “problematic student”, and changes their lost hearts with good medicine such as love and tolerance, so that those children who are considered the “bottom of the pond” can finally dance on the clouds. The theme throughout the movie is that every child is pure and innocent, and should be wrapped with love, gentleness, tolerance, and understanding, and should be treated as a treasure in the world. This shows that teachers should treat every student (regardless of character and achievement) with love, gentleness, and understanding, and should find the shining points of every student, rather than using a serious expression and strict attitude, and scold students when they make mistakes.

Comenius said, "If explanations can be tempered with humor, or at least with a less serious tone...Pleasure and usefulness become one." (Comenius, 2001, p. 94). Teaching humor can make the students inspired in laughter, grasp knowledge, and grow wisdom in pleasure. Good use of this artistic means can effectively stimulate students' interest in learning, make classroom atmosphere active, focus students' attention, form harmonious relationship between teachers and students, open students' minds, and cultivate students' creative thinking ability (Wang, 2005). For example, many primary school students do not like math class, because they think math is boring, boring, and difficult to understand, making them tired. If the math teacher uses funny and humorous language in the class, it will improve students' interest in learning and increase their desire to learn. In this way, mathematics teaching is no longer in the lifeless mechanical instillation of knowledge, but in the laughter of the active harvest of knowledge. For example, in the study of "preliminary understanding of the score", the teacher said to the students "students, I prepared for you the Mid-Autumn Festival gift, but the teacher is stingy", took out a small moon cake, (the students burst into laughter), and said "you say how much each of you can share?" (students answer) "Can you use a mathematical method to express the amount that can be divided for each person?" With the humorous prologue of this class, all of a sudden, the atmosphere of the class comes alive, so that students are full of curiosity about the content of this class to learn, and their interest is stimulated. Even in the criticism situation, teachers can also take a humorous way, for example, there are students in the class to play pen, leading to the "ga zi zi" sound, the teacher said to him: "we do not need accompaniment in this class ah, the next music class you play well!" This example is used to criticize the students' behavior of playing with a pen in class in a mocking way. It does not hurt students' self-esteem, but also plays a role of reminding, and can activate classroom atmosphere.

According to Comenius, "If they compliment the students on the beauty, pleasure, and ease of their work at the time, if they compliment the hard-working students from time to time...It is easy for them to get in their good graces" (Comenius, 2001, p. 93). He stressed the role of praise in stimulating students' desire to study. Praise and encouragement are the catalyst for students' growth and also the source of motivation for students to learn. If the teacher can dig out a little bit of merit from time to time in students' daily or study, and encourage and praise in time, it can promote students' growth, promote students' learning, make students full of energy and enthusiasm for learning. When a student answers a question correctly, the teacher can say: "You are really good, you answer quickly and accurately!" The student answers the question incorrectly, the teacher can say: "Although you answer is not quite right, yet you are dare to speak, you are really a brave man!" When the student can't answer clearly, the teacher can say: "It doesn't matter, it's great that you have the courage to answer! Don't worry. Sit down and think about it. It will come to you." When a student asks a question, the teacher can say, "You did a good job. Asking questions means you paid attention to the class." Even if a student makes a mistake, the teacher can teach by praising him or her. In the story "Four Pieces of Candy", Mr. Tao Xingzhi identified four shining points of beating a student and praised them. After each shining point, he gave the student a piece of candy. After giving the four candies, the conversation ended, and the student deeply realized his mistake. It turned out that appreciation was more motivating than criticism.

According to Comenius, the use of dialogue, or conversation, can lead students to scramble for answers and can be used to explain difficult questions. The form of conversation stimulates and preserves memory, and the altercation of questions and answers, the variety of forms of expression, the possible reference to interesting dialogue, and even the change of characters not only counteracts any aversion to the subject, but arouses a thirst for further knowledge (Comenius, 2001, p. 131). Dialogue teaching is a kind of teaching that transcends "it" (the

world) and “you” (the world) to establish a spiritual encounter relationship, that is, between teachers and students in the thinking of the mutual turn, the mutual response of the soul of the teaching (Zhu, 2003). In the classroom, the teacher and the student carry on the dialogue, the good guidance, the inspiration induction, the student’s mind is gradually directed to the expected goal, the teacher promotes them to carry out the corresponding knowledge exploration activity along with the teaching rhythm. The wisdom of teaching is revealed between the questions and answers. There is a little competition between students competing for answers, which adds a little tension and excitement to the class. Interesting dialogue, interlocking questions and answers, stimulate students’ nerves, promote students’ input, and promote students’ memory. For example, at the beginning of the lesson “Understanding the quadrilateral”, the teacher asked the students: “Students, please look at our classroom, what shapes can you find?” The students answered a lot of shapes. Then, the teacher praised the students, and then introduced the topic: “There are many, many kinds of graphics in our classroom, so today we will learn a new graphics—quadrilateral!” Then, on the multimedia a lot of graphics are displayed, the teacher asked: “students, in the following which do you think is a quadrilateral?” The students answered. The teacher showed the quadrilateral on the multimedia and asked the students: “Look at these quadrilateral carefully, do you find any characteristics of them?” This brings us to the focus of this lesson—the characteristics of the quadrilateral. Comenius praised the teaching of dialogue as “a much stronger impression can be produced by teaching it in this way” (Comenius, 2001, p. 131). Teaching through dialogue is more conducive to students’ memory than teaching through teachers’ one-way indoctrination, and students tend to be impressed by the knowledge points in the dialogue. Because most of the communication between students in life is through conversation, the use of dialogue teaching in class is easy to guide students to actively acquire knowledge and promote students to express their opinions fluently and seriously in class.

Primary school stage is the foundation of learning in a person’s life. If in this stage, students have an aversion to learning, it is likely to lead to a negative attitude towards his later learning. Therefore, in this important stage of foundation, teachers need to take correct and effective teaching means to stimulate students’ desire for knowledge and study, and students’ interest and passion in learning.

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