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Influence of BMLT on Chinese primary and middle school teaching

QING Su-lan¹, WANG Hong-li²

(1. Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101;

2. Institute of Mental Development and Exploitation, Guizhou Normal University, Guiyang, Guizhou 550001, China)

Abstract: B. S. Bloom's Mastery Learning Theory has exerted great influence on teaching in Chinese primary and middle schools especially in junior middle schools since it was introduced to China in 1986. But the theory has its limitations while being practiced. It must be critically assimilated and weeded through the old to bring forth the new when we apply the theory. If so, it will promote competence education in our country.

Key words: Mastery Learning Theory; teaching in primary and middle schools; competence education

布鲁姆掌握学习理论对中国中小学教学的影响^{*}

卿素兰¹, 王洪礼²

(1 中国科学院 心理研究所, 北京 100101; 2 贵州师范大学 智能开发研究所, 贵州 贵阳 550001)

摘要:布鲁姆的掌握学习理论自 1986 年被介绍到我国以来, 对我国中小学特别是初中教学产生了较大影响, 但在实践运用中也有其局限性, 必须批判性和推陈出新地运用, 才能促进我国的素质教育。

关键词:掌握学习理论; 中小学教学; 素质教育

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1 Emergence of Bloom's Mastery Learning Theory (BMLT) and the Historical Background for its Introduction to China

Since the late 1960's, many countries over the world have turned the emphasis from higher education to foundational education to meet the needs of new tech-revolution. They lay stress on the reduction of the proportion of poor students and wide improvement of teaching quality. American educational psychologist, B. S. Bloom's Mastery Learning Theory and Strategy was founded on this background in 1968, Many countries such as America, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, etc, made use of the theory and

strategy, making a great deal of experiments in schools and achieving good effects. This kind of experiment has been extended to colleges and universities, even in the field of special education.

In the late 1970's, with the resuming of entrance examination system, the phenomena of pursuing unilaterally enrollment rate became more and more serious in China, In 1986, Chinese government put forward Compulsory Education Law of The People's Republic of China which rules that nine-year compulsory education should be practiced in China. How to rectify the phenomena of pursuing unilaterally enrollment rate, improve teaching quality widely and promote nine-year compulsory education was the hot-issue which our government and education circle

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were concerned about at that time. Exploring new teaching theories and modes of teaching was a realistic problem which our educators and educational psychologists faced. Professor Liu Fulian of East China Normal University invited Bloom to China to introduce his Mastery Learning Theory in 1986. The theory aims to face all students and improve teaching quality widely. It is suitable for our Compulsory Education.

2 Influence of BMLT on Chinese Primary and Middle School Teaching

Mastery Learning Theory and Teaching Strategy which is used in many regions in China can be seen as follows:

The teaching experiment in primary and middle schools, namely Aiming Teaching has been carried out step by step in many regions which encourages a drive of Aim Teaching in China. During a couple of years it has extended from few regions like Shanghai, Shandong, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Liaoning, etc to 29 provinces. Its experimental scale is large and good effect has been achieved. With our Quality Education put forward, Aiming Teaching has been developed into Experimental Research of Aim Leading Learning. Influence of BMLT on our primary and middle school teaching is shown as follows:

2.1 Offering us a new teaching concept to help improve teaching quality widely

Mastery Learning Theory is an optimistic theory of teaching and learning which believes that if only adequate study time and appropriate help are provided, 95 percent students can study every subject very well and make great achievements. This kind of optimistic theory fully believes in students' plasticity and potential ability. The theory has shaken the foundation of our traditional education idea that students' exam result is always normally distributed. It has exerted positive influence on the following aspects: instructors' recognizing of students' potential ability, building up the faith in improving quality widely and changing teaching idea.

2.2 Promoting our active exploration of improving modes of teaching and perfecting teaching process

Our instructors and researchers use Bloom's Mastery Learning Theory on the basis of the wide

Aim Teaching experiment and accept basic spirit and operating skill and technique of Mastery Learning's Theory idea and strategy. What's more, we have constructed various modes of Aim Teaching. According to their operating processes, these modes can be separated into four types:

·three segment mode: planning an aim, implementing the aim and aim feedback.

·four segment mode: planning an aim, presenting the aim, reaching the aim and aim feedback and checking

·five segment mode: planning an aim, presenting the aim, instructing the aim, test feedback and correcting and remedying.

·six segment mode: planning an aim, class teaching, the first checking test, correcting learning, the second checking test and reaching the aim

We can see from above that Aim Teaching experiment has promoted actively the exploration of improving our teaching modes, teaching skills and perfecting teaching process.

2.3 Promoting our exploration and research on teaching administration and assessing system

Aim Teaching has learnt the methodological idea from Mastery Learning. It looks on the teaching aim as both a starting point and an ending point of teaching activity. The purpose of Aim Teaching is not only to teach and learn for the aim, but also to administrate and assess for the aim. Therefore, it makes the whole teaching process into a scientific aim administration and assessment system and guarantees the order and validity of teaching. In The experiment districts, we have constructed a few administration systems and assessment systems such as Teaching Administration System of Aim Center brought forward by Shapingba District, Chongqing City and the Aim Classification Administration System which was put forward by subject group of the experiment research of improving widely teaching quality in the county, city, and town in Shandong province, consisting of making laggard students make progress, making the middling students perfected and making top students better and better.

2.4 Promoting emergence of Aim Leading Learning Experiments

During the Aim Teaching experiments, reser-

achers have found that Aim Teaching focuses on aim system of external control of students' conducts and it is not good for developing students' enthusiasm, initiative and creative spirit. Hence, the researchers who have engaged in the subject, The Reserch of Quality Education Aim Leading Learning System in Rural Village Middle Schools, One of the important educational science subjects from 1996-2000 in our country put forward Aim Leading Learning System and Five-loop Teaching Mode to offset the flaw of Aim Teaching. Five-loop Teaching Mode was divided into five loops: preparation, presentation, discussion practice, test and remedy. The teaching mode of Aim Leading Learning combines the teaching idea of leading and lightening and Bloom's Education Aim Classification, Mastery Learning Theory, with leading and lightending taking the lead and then performing five-loop teaching accorrding to the teaching aim. The mode focuses on turning external teaching aim system into students internal needs, namely, internal dynamic system to inspire students' achievement motive. Aim Teaching has been improved and perfected, because it can promote students' enthusiasm and initiative.

2.5 Raising the level of teachers and researchers in large numbers

Mastery Learning Theory provided the theoretical and teaching modes for reference for our primary and middle school teaching reform. At the same time, a large number of excellent teachers and researchers have been cultivated through the experiments and teaching reform. It makes teachers' research level improved.

3 Limitations of Mastery Learning Theory and Teaching Operating Mode in Practice

3.1 Aim Teaching can't really fulfil Quality Education

The important point of Mastery Learning Theory is knowledge-learning, namely, to pay close attention to learning in the field of cognition and lay stress on the mastery of knowledge. Since Aim Teaching based on MLT emphasizes training of knowledge quality, but neglects the cultivation of e-

motion quality, health quality, thinking quality and creative ability. However, knowledge quality is only a part of Quality Education, in some sense Aim Teaching faces all students, widely improves teaching quality, promotes traditional education, but it can't really fulfil Quality Education.

3.2 It is difficult to deal with the relationship between widely improving teaching quality and cultivating top students.

Aim Teaching based on Mastery Learning Theory is a teaching mode which combines class teaching and individual teaching and helps a majority of students study well. But because the correct feedback in the Aim Teaching mainly aims at middling students and laggard students and provides slow-learning students with enough time and help so as to reach the teaching aim, it can't ensure top students to get enough in the teaching, thus making them feel tired of learning, and reducing their study interest. This mode doesn't take top students and slow-learning students into consideration simultaneously, esp. it often neglects top students' development.

3.3 Higher demands on the teachers quality in Aim Teaching

Only through the teaching practice of the teachers can the value of any teaching theory and mode be shown, and only through the rational digestion and absorption of the essence of educational theory and the creative use of it in teaching by the teachers can the effects be achieved.

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