

Evidenced-based Educational Reform Supported by Education Quality Monitoring: China's Exploration and Experience

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“Every child should have the opportunity to receive a quality education.”

–Bill Frist

IN China's educational community, there is a consensus that any decision-making or advance in reform must be based on scientific evidence. It has been realized that the traditional instruction modalities that draw on educators' personal experience have become ineffective in accomplishing better education in the new era. In this context, China's educational administrators have been committed to constructing an evidence-based system to enable reform in education.

In the *Construction and Application of Regional Education Quality Monitoring Databases: A Case Study of Suzhou's Education Quality Monitoring* in this issue of the journal (Shen & Luo, 2022), Suzhou's education quality monitoring (EQM) research team presents their city's experiences in developing EQM databases. Suzhou, a city with a high level of socio-economic development, has made successful experiments in evidence-based educational reform. It has created a citywide EQM system, which can provide comprehensive evaluation of student academic performance as well as useful information about school operation, teachers' instruction behavior, students' learning behavior, and home education, etc. As a result, ample data are available for systematic analyses of teaching and learning processes and

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outcomes. Technically, Suzhou's EQM system has incorporated big data analytics and AI assessment technologies; it also enables longitudinal research on student long-term development. Such educational database design is original and cutting-edge in China.

The significance of Suzhou's exploration in EQM database construction is remarkable. First, there are big gaps in social development level among regions in China. Attitudes towards evidence-based educational reform vary in different areas. It necessitates pioneers and successful stories from relatively developed regions which can serve as role models for less developed ones by sharing valuable experience. Suzhou proves to be a good example in this regard. Second, Suzhou's practice provides a useful reference for global evidence-based educational reform. Its EQM database architecture is top-notch in operational procedure and technological application, and has many advantages in supporting educational decision-making and practice. Although each country has its own national circumstances and educational conditions, we believe that Suzhou's technical innovation in EQM can go beyond regional and national boundaries and has the potential of universal application. Third, Suzhou's evidence-based educational reform focuses on issues of Chinese features. Chinese society tends to overemphasize student academic achievements. This has caused a series of problems, but also offers a chance to achieve the breakthrough in educational reform. For its regional EQM, Suzhou has established a complete feature database system focused on student academic performance, which is a reasonable and effective strategy under China's circumstances. This pathway can not only assist in responding to the most pronounced and critical issues, but also ignite a larger scale of educational reform and make it a successful change.

As the evidence-based educational reform is still in its infancy in China, the exploration in this area, including Suzhou's, is undergoing progressive improvement. Despite the remarkable achievements that have been made in Suzhou's EQM, there is still room for improvement in obtaining more reliable and robust evidence. We believe that over time, with the continuous efforts of researchers and practitioners, China's, including Suzhou's, educational reform based on empirical evidence will surely generate more salient results and provide valuable insights to its counterparts worldwide.

References

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