COMMENTARY

Holistic Module Learning: A Revolution in Classroom Teaching

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"The freedom to make mistakes provides the best environment for creativity. Education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you know and what you don't."

– Anatole Franc

***Abstract**: Since Comenius invented the classroom teaching mode centuries ago, classroom learning has experienced a succession of dramatic modifications. China's educational progress is influenced more by traditional classroom teaching methods. Modern teaching methods place a greater emphasis on the role of students, as well as their experiences and lives. The ultimate goal of holistic module learning is to develop students' abilities to inquire and learn on their own, which necessitates a significant shift in teaching approaches. Teachers' primary role is to use available resources, establish optimum learning settings, and provide pupils with a variety of exploratory possibilities.*

***Keywords**: Holistic Module Learning, Classroom Teaching, Education Reform*

CLASSROOM learning, as a key component of school education, has undergone a series of major reforms since Comenius created the classroom teaching mode centuries ago. These reforms led to existing traditional teaching modes and modern teaching modes, both of which have significant influences on classroom learning, with the former focusing on teachers' role, teaching materials, and classrooms and the latter on students' role as well as their experience and life.

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Historically, traditional classroom teaching modes exert greater influences on China's educational development. They emphasize teacher's impartation of curriculum contents and make students passive recipients of knowledge; The teacher dominates the classroom, while students have no opportunity to exercise their creativity; Teachers' role is constrained in classroom and the lack of teacher-student interaction after class leads to the difficulty of establishing emotional bonds between them (Bian, 2014). There is much room for improvement in traditional teaching modes.

In recent 30 years, primary and secondary schools in China have undertaken numerous reforms, pointing to the drawbacks of traditional teaching modes and witnessed some successful cases in this regard. Jiangsu Yangsi Middle School proposed a teaching model named "learning before teaching with more practice in class", in which a time limit is set for teachers' lecturing in class and students' major role in classroom is emphasized. Jiangsu Donglu Middle School integrates teaching and learning plans in their teaching model, asking students to conduct self-directed learning based on the plans before class (Lin & Jia, 2006). Shandong Dulangkou Middle School established a self-directed learning model famous for its "three characteristics, three components and six links," which provide students with abundant opportunities for classroom presentations to strengthen their presentation, interpretation, and commentary skills (Xue, 2019). Shandong 271 Education Group has been implementing a major reform under the holistic module learning model (Zhao, 2019). All these attempts contribute to the improvement of China's basic education, by transforming people's educational outlook and teaching methods at basic education levels.

Among the above reforms, holistic module learning is the most radical one. Many successful cases have emerged in the implementation of this learning model, and the fruitful practice of Shandong 271 Education Group is the most representative. Under the holistic module learning model, students' learning contents are presented in modules based on major concepts of the subjects; There are clear learning objectives and challenging and fascinating learning tasks to accomplish in the reintegrated modules; A switch from fragmental to structured learning takes place to improve students' learning efficiency; According to new curriculum standards and subject requirements for knowledge, skills and values, all relevant resources are integrated to develop students' key competencies.

The supreme goal of holistic module learning is to cultivate students' ability of inquiry and self-directed learning, which induces a great change in teaching methods. From the perspective of student learning, students become the major actors in the classroom; Autonomous learning and cooperative learning in groups are encouraged; Knowledge acquisition is replaced by exploration of problem solutions. Moreover, teachers' role also undergoes fundamental changes under this learning model, from knowledge imparters to classroom organizers and task designers. Teachers' critical function is to make the best of available resources, build ideal learning environments, and

create diverse explorative opportunities for students to help them realize comprehensive development (Zhao, 2021).

Holistic module learning is a highly significant revolution in classroom teaching. In this issue, the theory and practice of the learning model are examined in three articles, Holistic Module Learning: An Experiment in Teaching Reform of Basic Education in China (Zhao, 2022), Effective Design and Implementation of Task-Driven Learning in High School Physics: Citing the Lesson on Composition and Resolution of Forces as a Case Study (Xu et al., 2022), and Application of Educational Technology in Holistic Module Learning: Citing the Practice of Shandong 271 Education Group as a Case Study (Sun, 2022).

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