

# The Influence of Educational Philosophy on the Class Management of Primary Schools in Shanghai

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**Abstract:** Starting from the four educational philosophies of essentialism, eternity, progressivism and social reconstruction, and taking the classroom management of Shanghai primary school as the research object, this paper makes an in-depth and detailed analysis and Exploration on the choice of educators' educational philosophy. Based on the research results, the author puts forward some suggestions on the application of educational philosophy in classroom management practice, and points out the limitations of current application and possible research directions in the future, in order to further promote the effective combination of educational philosophy and classroom teaching activities and promote the innovation and development of classroom management.

**Keywords:** Classroom management; Essentialism; Perennialism; Progressivism and social reconstructionism

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Education is crucial to one's life, to future success, and determines the range of opportunities available. Individuals can gain various benefits from education, including the enhancement of thinking and cognitive processes. For China's primary education, 35% of the total enrollment rate takes five years and 65% takes six years. The Shanghai Municipal Education Commission is the local education regulatory body. Shanghai ranked first in the OECD International Student Assessment Program (PISA) in 2009 and 2012. Pisa is a global survey of the academic performance of 15-year-old students. Local students, including migrant children, scored higher in every subject than students from other countries. According to the report, public schools in Shanghai have the highest quality of education in the world.

## 2. The influence of educational philosophy on class management

Educational philosophy includes essentialism, multinomialism, progressivism and social reconstruction.

### 2.1 Essentialism

The essentialism movement in education began with William C. Bagley<sup>[1]</sup>. It aims to draw the attention of education authorities to classroom teachers. Opponents reject any and all of the educational techniques that essentialism insists on. Supporters of essentialism believe that school standards are declining as educational opportunities become more accessible, and they also believe that curricula should focus on themes.

In the general term of "essentialism", education aims to convey the most basic or basic academic information, skills and character development to all students. Essentialists believe that students should be taught traditional moral values and characteristics, such as respect for authority, perseverance, devotion to duty, care for others, and the practical and intelligent knowledge needed to become model citizens. Mathematics, natural science, history, foreign language and literature are the subjects in the element curriculum, as are history and geography. Essentialism in the classroom requires teachers to have a higher education in all aspects of academic topics, but this is not always the case. Art and Social Sciences, sometimes referred to as "soft science", are not considered essential in essentialism. In addition, in the essentialism class, students' interests are not taken into account. Educators who take essentialism as their philosophy may think that these young people are often interested in areas they are not initially interested in, making them aware that key topics have become the responsibility of teachers. Teachers who believe in essentialism seek to become an example of moral behavior in the classroom.

### 2.2 Multinomialism

In accordance with the idea that the relevance of individual works transcends time, perennialism is an educational ideology<sup>[2]</sup>. Perennial education aims to cultivate students' rational thinking and critical thinking ability. Schools adhering to the concept of lifelong education seek to provide a highly organized and disciplined environment to encourage students to pursue knowledge all their life. In the view of the perennial school, education should reflect a coordinated effort to enable students to understand these ideas, guide their thinking process, and appreciate and understand the great literary works of eternal value and timeless written by the greatest thinkers in history. The mastery of disciplines and the development of critical thinking are very important to perennial scholars. Therefore, in the context of lifelong education, the philosophy of lifelong education can be summed up in one sentence, "the more things change, the more they remain unchanged." Nevertheless, one must master skills one by one as usual. Junior students are taught to read, write, speak and listen, which prepares them for higher levels of literature, history and philosophy throughout the school system. The perennial school opposes forcing students to absorb a large amount of irrelevant information in a short time, and suggests using their methods in school to effectively teach students concepts and explain their meaning. Multinomialism is also a form of Teacher centered classroom management. In this mode, teachers can ignore students' interests or previous experience. In order to

train students' thinking, they adopt teaching methods and strategies that are considered to be the most effective and tested. This course is universal and based on the philosophy of eternity, that is, all people have the same basic essence. This group emphasizes that there is no need to teach students materials that may be outdated or wrong in the near future. The perennial curriculum tends to limit students' ability to express their uniqueness and flexibility in terms of interests, so as to provide them with a comprehensive and universally applicable knowledge base. Usually, in this type of educational philosophy, students will develop good logical thinking when studying literature and psychology at an early stage.

### **2.3 Progressivism**

For progressives, education is incomplete if it does not include elements such as personality, progress and change<sup>[3]</sup>. Progressives believe that students learn best when they are immersed in situations related to themselves. Therefore, the curriculum is built around students' needs, experience, interests and abilities. Progressive teachers try to make education more interesting and beneficial to students by designing courses that stimulate curiosity. In progressive schools, students are encouraged to study actively. The interaction between students enables them to learn social skills such as cooperation and tolerance. In addition, the way students deal with problems in the classroom is similar to the way they deal with daily life outside the classroom. Educators who advocate progressivism believe that education should be real and pleasant, and children should actively participate in their own development. In the progressive classroom, students should be encouraged to learn from immersive and collaborative experience. While helping students discover their academic and extracurricular interests, educators also lay the foundation for future success in and outside the classroom.

Another idea of progressivism is the need for interdisciplinary education. Using integrated courses in a progressive classroom helps students learn by connecting concepts and ideas across many academic boundaries. When students apply knowledge from one topic to another, they will deepen their understanding of a concept by observing its use in the real world. In order to solve this problem, people have turned from traditional textbooks to a series of learning materials.

### **2.4 Social reconstruction in classroom management**

School based problem-solving philosophy believes that school is a tool to solve social challenges. Social reformers say schools should offer courses to train future leaders because all leaders are the product of educational institutions. Reconstructionists not only hope to cultivate a new generation of problem solvers, but also hope to find and solve the important problems of today's society. Reconstructionism, rather than an educational philosophy, can be regarded as a social treatment measure trying to establish a more objective social order. In the eyes of social reconstruction theorists, classes are transformed into a stage where they can seek positive and quantitative social growth. In the class of reconstructionism, teachers encourage students to talk about moral issues and help students understand the consequences of their actions by guiding students to discuss moral issues. Students choose their own goals and social goals, and then work with their tutors to design an action plan to achieve world change.

The educational method of social reconstruction is mainly based on the "student-centered" classroom. It also encourages children to participate in extracurricular activities and volunteer in the community. The best aspect of this attitude is to encourage students to study independently. When students start their college career, they will acquire the necessary survival skills. Social reconstruction is a powerful concept because it attaches great importance to curriculum improvement, encourages students to actively participate in learning and advocates social change. As a social reformer, a teacher should consider students when choosing his or her teaching methods.

Conclusion: This study aims to understand the impact of educational ideas on class management in primary schools in Shanghai. The independent variable is the educational idea, and the dependent variable is classroom management. Every educator will have his own educational concept, and educators will be affected by different factors due to individual differences. Therefore, every educator will produce different educational philosophy according to the individual differences of the elements of rational choice theory. These educational philosophy can be divided into four types: essentialism, eternity, progressivism and social reconstruction. As discussed, different types of educational ideas have different degrees of classroom management. Therefore, rational choice theory is used to explain the relationship between educational philosophy and classroom management, and forms a conceptual framework.

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