

Is Success in Education Influenced More by the Student's Life and Training as a Child than by the Quality and Effectiveness of the Educational Program? An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT This article probes into the question that which factor, involving students' childhood settings and educational quality, more intensely influences educational success. Both of the factors are developed in detail, arriving at the conclusion that both play an essential role in educational achievements, and neither should be neglected.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the swift process of globalization, nations in the world are more and more aware of the significance of talents. Since talents should go through education, ways to achieve educational success are becoming a popular issue.

There have been various kinds of controversies that father and mother play different roles on children's educational achievements. Fathers' effect on children's education may be similar to mothers' (Lamb and Tamis 2004). Parents' influence is one of the most important factors in children's life. Since parents are weighed so much in education, it can be reasonably inferred that children's life should be considered as important in terms of educational success. Some latest research indicates that in order to promote the educational success, service-learning program should be adopted in universities and colleges first and then expanded to schools. Service learning means to combine curriculum-based learning with community service (Lake and Jones 2008), by which we can clearly judge that educational programs exert a significant impact on educational achievements.

2. STUDENTS' LIFE IS SIGNIFICANT FOR THE SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

2.1 As for children, their life is significant for educational success. A teacher's experience with a child who had emotional and behavioral problems in the regular classroom is described in

detail (Larson, 2006). Mike is the child who behaved negatively to the classroom. However, the teacher gradually and successfully changed the negative into positive via instilling guides named generosity, belonging, mastery, and independence into the child's life, by which the child made great progress in his school life.

2.2 As described in the above story, given that children are brought up in graceful life full of encouragement and care, it is most likely that they will be cultivated into a helpful learning habit which will improve their future study models. Good living surroundings may increase the possibility that children be provided with a fair learning environment in which they can learn under a proper guide and be influenced by other well-intentioned classmates, which can be strongly evidenced in Larson's story, "the other students also started to initiate conversations and interactions, assistance and received extra help in the areas of reading, writing, and math. The small group setting in the resource room helped him to feel more competent in school. Mike began to realize that there were many people who wanted him to succeed".

3. CHILDREN'S TRAINING POSES ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

3.1 Training children cannot be set aside either. From the perspective of language cognition, it could be easily claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be

carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and belief in your own capabilities for that activity. (Brown 2000). Provided that children have no knowledge in English language at all, then children could possibly be powered with self-esteem, self-confidence and belief, then success in cognitive or affective activity i.e. language acquisition would be a difficult goal to achieve. However, training could perfectly make up for this regret since children could be delivered the language knowledge by way of training, leading to the future success in schooling.

3.2 Private tutoring, one form of training, plays a significant role in educational success. It is found that families with the necessary resources are able to secure not only greater quantities but also better qualities of private tutoring (Bray 2006). Children receiving such tutoring are then able to perform better in school, and in the long run to improve their lifetime earnings. By contrast, children of low-income families who do not receive such benefits may not be able to keep up with their peers and may drop out of school at an earlier age. Private tutoring is an important component of training, through which, children can compensate for the knowledge that they failed to understand and better communicate with the tutor since private tutoring is often carried out in the form of small classes or groups. Admittedly, many disadvantages also exist in private tutoring, requiring that appropriate policies be made. It is argued that private supplementary tutoring deserves much more attention from policy makers and researchers (Bray 2006).

3.3 Furthermore, It was noted that all human beings have a need for phatic communication—defining oneself and finding acceptance in expressing that self in relation to valued others (Malinowski 1922). Personality development universally involves the growth of a person's concept of self, and reflection of self as seen in the interaction between self and others. If children live in a condition which can make them full of self-esteem and self-confidence, they will be highly motivated and well ready to accept the knowledge, hence success in education. Additionally, provided that children can receive good training such as violin, piano, sports and other skills so as to complement their schooling, they will most likely be more developed in their forthcoming career. In receipt of various training, children's view will be widely broadened, their

potential interest might be explored, they may be spotted out in terms of some talent, and then accept relatively more advanced and specialized education in order to fully dig out their potential. If children cannot receive various training, only learning the textbooks in schools, listening to the teachers' lectures regularly, they might be deeply rooted in some kind of learning model. Consequently, they develop their thoughts in the form of what teachers delivered and duplicate the common thinking ways, which will most likely define and constrain their individual development.

3.4 Take the language learning for example, imitation is an important way for children to acquire language abilities. The earliest stages of child language acquisition may manifest a good deal of surface imitation since the baby may not possess the necessary semantic categories to assign "meaning" to utterances. But as children perceive the importance of the semantic level of language, they attend to a greater extent to that meaningful semantic level—the deep structure of language. They engage in deep-structure imitation. In fact, the imitation of the deep structure of language can literally block their attention to the surface structure so that they become, on the face of it, poor imitators. (Brown 2000). Children are in possession of amazingly powerful imitation ability. In case that children receive no other related language training, only faced with their mothers and fathers, they will be trapped in the tons of parents' speaking, and language competence will be confined within family environment since they can merely imitate their parents, thus their power may be proved in vain. On the contrary, if they receive various kinds of language training and if they are exposed to different teachers with qualified language knowledge, they will be able to imitate languages from different people. As a result, their language proficiency will be at least higher than those confined to parents' environment.

4. EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CANNOT BE IGNORED

It is far away from success in education if people only shed light on students' life and training, letting alone effectiveness and quality of the educational program.

Effectiveness and quality of the educational program pose significant factor as to educational

success, absolutely no less important than learners' life and training as children.

4.1 Let's further take language learning as example. In order to achieve educational success, the educational department, based on the rules of learning and teaching, should design reasonable teaching syllabus for different subjects such as intensive English course, extensive English course, English listening, English writing and English speaking, etc. Only in this way, can people receive appropriate education and learn well, via which education may lead to success. It is argued that special attention is also needed in the design of courses to promote clarity of learner-content, learner-learner, and learner-instructor interactions (Rhea et al. 2007). The department should allocate different teaching hours considering various characteristics of courses and students' qualities, e.g. if students are poor in English reading and grammar, then the hours of intensive course should be increased in order to highlight the grammatical skills and reading strategies. If students are not good at listening and speaking, then the listening and speaking courses should be enhanced aiming to optimize students' language acquisition. Provided that university faculty deliver English knowledge to students regardless of their specific conditions, and arrange teaching hours without any theoretical basement, students' English language learning will definitely pose a serious problem.

4.2 Furthermore, the English department should also scientifically design the evaluation system. It is argued that Assessments are the cornerstone of these high-risk experiences (Yair 2007). Many respondents described the challenge posed by important assessments during their first year of study. They reported feeling trepidation and uncertainty before their exams since students consider the evaluation of academic achievements (assessment) as high-risk experiences. Students' achievement evaluation system should be carried out with neither bias nor improper haphazardness. Otherwise, students will be deeply impressed and will intensely be dissatisfied with the evaluation system. To evade such a negative picture, it is essential that evaluation system be properly established. For instance, if students can learn autonomously, not needing any force to stimulate them, the final exam may occupy the terminal score more and regular performance less. In contrast, on the condition

that students do not willingly learn by them and teachers have to assign tasks to force them to learn then the final examination should not be highly weighed and the regular performance should be more stressed. It is hard to imagine students can learn successfully in the evaluation system that excellent students may be poorly scored and vice versa. If the university has a shabby evaluation system, students, even if they received excellent training and living conditions were perfect in their childhood, they might fail since their learning performance could not be properly evaluated.

4.3 Finally, in order to gain success in education, the university should also recruit qualified teaching members. It is argued that "One of the best gifts you can give to the career and technical education field is ensuring its future by recruiting new teachers." "It's crucial that educators do their part to recruit the career and technical education teachers of the future," (Stewart 1999). Teacher recruitment needs to ponder over the differentiation of students, and then employ teachers of different kinds. If the university asks a research expert to teach freshmen basics in language, the expert may feel awkward and students may neither be satisfied nor highly motivated. Self-evidently, a new bachelor holder should not be assigned the task to instruct Ph.D. students.

5. CONCLUSION

In a word, the argument that success in education is influenced more by the student's life and training as a child than by the quality and effectiveness of the educational program does not hold water.

Students' life and training as children may greatly influence the educational success, however, it may be skeptical that it can exert more influence than educational program design. A good way to substantiate the success in education may be the combination between students' life and training as a child and quality and effectiveness of the educational program. Emphasis on either side may give rise to failure.

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