

Practice and Exploration of High-Quality Development of Teacher Ethics Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Context of the New Era

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Abstract: It was emphasized that “only with high-quality teachers will there be high-quality education.” In the new stage of development, China’s basic education shoulders the heavy responsibility of the times, and there is an urgent need to comprehensively promote the construction of high-quality teachers at the new historical starting point. Teacher ethics is directly related to the quality of students’ character and comprehensive development and is also an inevitable requirement for promoting the construction of high-quality teachers. The current school-based construction of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools is characterized by incomplete planning, single content, insufficient assessment and feedback, inadequate integration of resources, and deficient incentives and ongoing support^[1]. In this regard, it is necessary to establish standards of teacher ethics, implement teacher ethics education, and keep the bottom line of teacher ethics in order to realize the high-quality development of teacher ethics education.

Keywords: Primary and secondary schools; Teacher ethics education; High-quality development; Practical difficulties

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1. Basic situation of the research

This thematic research was carried out in Shantou, Chaozhou, Jieyang, and Meizhou in the form of listening to reports, reviewing information, group interviews, questionnaires, etc. The questionnaires and interview notes were collated and analyzed to find out the basic situation of the construction of teacher ethics education in the eastern part of Guangdong Province, to discover the problems of teacher ethics education in various places, and to analyze the factors that restrict the effectiveness of moral education in schools. The content of the research centers on the significance of the construction of teacher ethics education, the current situation, problems and causes of the construction of teacher ethics education, the study of the long-term mechanism of the construction of teacher ethics education, etc. It also focuses on the mechanisms that should be established

for the construction of teacher ethics education, including the cultivation and training mechanism, the integrity commitment mechanism, the incentive and motivation mechanism, the role model demonstration mechanism, the supervision and monitoring mechanism, the assessment and evaluation mechanism, and the competition mechanism, etc. The aim is to collect and sort out the problems found in the thematic research in a timely manner, to form a research report, and to promote the transformation of the research results into practical measures to improve the construction of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools.

2. Importance of strengthening teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools

Teacher ethics education is the basic need to implement moral governance in schools. The primary task of education is to cultivate moral character, adhere to the people-oriented principle, and regard cultivating character and shaping personality as the core of the entire educational undertaking. The teaching force is the core force for realizing moral education and school governance, as well as the key to promoting the realization of quality education, and the guide to lead the development of students. Therefore, strengthening teachers' professional ethics and teaching style is the key to the implementation of moral education in schools. By improving teachers' own professional quality and ethics, they can effectively drive students to adhere to the basic moral norms and improve their moral level. Therefore, strengthening teachers' professional ethics and teaching style is an important mission of the school, but also the main responsibility of teachers.

Other than that, teacher ethics education is a key factor in realizing the goal of running schools. In order to realize the modernization of the country, we need to rely on hundreds of millions of high-quality innovative talents, which requires corresponding efforts. One of the important points is to establish good teacher ethics and build a team of teachers with excellent performance and firm ideology. Teachers' morality is not illusory, it is closely related to teachers' ideological and moral concepts, work attitude, and so on, and is directly displayed in the teaching process. To cultivate high-quality innovative talents, the requirements of teacher ethics must be more stringent, always keep pace with the times, and grasp regularity.

On top of that, teacher ethics education is the core means to strengthen the school spirit of school discipline. For a long time, although many schools integrated teacher ethics construction into the school's development plan, they only put the energy and focus on teaching, research, academic construction, and other "hard" indicators. Intentionally or unintentionally, teacher ethics education as a dispensable "soft indicator" is ignored. Such an assessment system of "talent over morals" will inevitably lead to young teachers emphasizing the scientific research and professional level, ignoring professional moral cultivation. School incentive policy is mainly for teaching and research, and the incentive policy for teacher ethics education is still very lacking. Although some schools have formulated teacher moral education incentive policies, the effects of rewards and punishments are greatly reduced due to tendencies such as focusing on spiritual rewards over material rewards, and on praise over criticism.

3. Current situation of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools in the eastern Guangdong region

In the previous period, we carried out research through visits, talks, literature reviews, and online questionnaires to understand and grasp the current situation of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools in the eastern part of Guangdong Province. A total of 3085 valid questionnaires were collected and the results of the survey showed that although the overall situation was good, it also revealed some problems in the

construction of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools. 100% of the interviewees said that teacher ethics education has an effect on the enhancement of the level of teacher ethics; 80% of the interviewees said that the effectiveness of teacher ethics education is not yet satisfactory, and there is a gap between the requirements of the policy and system. It can be seen that primary and secondary schools generally attach great importance to teacher ethics education, and gradually improve it in key aspects such as party building leadership, implementation path, system construction, and personnel team. However, there is still a need to strengthen coordination and guidance for the construction of “key groups” and other aspects of the team, to increase support for the construction of teacher ethics education, and to further improve the relevant systems and policies, in order to promote greater achievement in the construction of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools ^[2].

3.1. Characteristic highlights of the high-quality development of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools at the present stage

3.1.1. Party building leadership

The grassroots party organizations of primary and secondary schools, as the organizational carrier that undertakes the important task of building teacher ethics education in schools, give full play to the political, organizational, and institutional advantages of party building leadership, stimulate the teachers’ subjective consciousness, guide the majority of teachers to build their parties, schools, and souls on morality, and continue to promote the construction of teacher ethics education to make new progress in the comprehensive implementation of the party’s education policy and the fundamental task of establishing morality in the education of people. The main paths to realize the party’s leadership in teacher ethics education are as follows:

- (1) Clarifying the responsibility of the party organization: Schools clarify the leadership position of the party organization in teacher ethics education, and closely integrate party building work with the construction of teacher ethics. A special party committee or party branch is set up to take charge of the organization and guidance of teacher ethics education, formulate corresponding work plans and policy measures, and ensure that party building plays a leading role in teacher ethics education.
- (2) Strengthening the construction of party member teachers: Strengthening the ideological and political education of party member teachers improves the cultivation of teacher ethics and teaching levels. Party member teachers are encouraged to participate in activities such as teacher ethics selection, teacher ethics training, and teacher ethics assessment to motivate them to play a pioneering and exemplary role and drive other teachers to improve together.
- (3) Developing specific implementation paths: The objectives and contents of teacher ethics education are defined and relevant educational programs and training plans are formulated. Teacher ethics education activities are carried out within the school, such as organizing teacher ethics lectures, seminars, teaching observation, etc., and strengthening the care and assistance for teachers’ parties guidance and personal growth.
- (4) Improving the system of teacher ethics education: The evaluation and incentive mechanisms for teachers’ ethics are established and improved, and teachers’ ethical performance is incorporated into the important indexes of performance appraisal and promotion assessment. Further actions include strengthening the supervision and management of teachers, establishing a feedback mechanism, correcting teachers’ bad behavior in time, and guaranteeing the smooth progress of the construction of teacher ethics.
- (5) Strengthening the construction of resources for teacher ethics education: A resource bank for teacher ethics education is established, relevant teaching materials, cases, and teaching resources are collected

and organized, and teachers are provided with learning and reference materials. Teachers are also encouraged to participate in the research of teacher ethics and innovation in educational practice, so as to form a favorable environment for teacher growth.

3.1.2. Construction of “key groups”

The joint efforts of “key groups”^[3] such as school principals, members of the leadership team, excellent teachers, party members, classroom teachers, and teachers of ideology and political science can promote the achievement of greater results in teacher ethics education, cultivate more teachers with good morals and excellent teaching, and contribute to the cultivation of socialist builders and successors with all-round development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics. It is mainly reflected in the following aspects.

First of all, school principals, as the leaders of teacher moral and ethical development in schools, assume the important role of “moral leadership.” Principals should establish correct moral values, set an example, and become role models for teachers. They should pay active attention to the moral construction of teachers, emphasize teachers’ professional ethics and educational responsibility, and promote the establishment of sound evaluation and incentive mechanisms of teachers’ morality in schools, so as to provide teachers with a better environment and support for their development. Secondly, the members of the leadership team should play an important role in promoting and coordinating the construction of teachers’ morality in schools. They should work together to formulate development plans and goals for teacher ethics construction, clarify the division of responsibilities, strengthen the management and cultivation of the teaching force, and provide the necessary training and guidance in order to improve the moral cultivation and educational level of teachers. Plus, outstanding teachers, as the backbone of the school’s teacher ethics construction, play the role of modeling and leading. They should inspire and influence other teachers with their high teacher ethics and professionalism, and convey good educational values and teaching concepts. Schools should strengthen the cultivation and commendation of excellent teachers, provide them with more opportunities to demonstrate and maximize their talents, and encourage them to become role models for other teachers to learn from. At the same time, party member teachers, as an important force in the construction of school teachers’ morality and ethical behavior, should play the leading role in the party organization. Party member teachers should take the Party Constitution and Party discipline as the guideline, take the lead in abiding by the professional ethics of teachers, and motivate other teachers to better fulfill their duties. Schools should strengthen the party education and party building work of party members, improve their ideological awareness and political quality, and promote the ideological and moral cultivation and teaching level of party members. In addition, classroom teachers and teachers of ideology and political science also constitute the “key groups” of the school’s teacher ethics and morality construction. Class teachers are responsible for the ideological education and management of students in their daily work, and they should play a leading and modeling role in guiding students to establish correct values and behavioral norms. Ideology and political science teachers are responsible for cultivating students’ ideological and moral qualities in the classroom, and they should emphasize the introduction of teaching content and practical guidance to help students understand and apply moral norms.

3.2. Practical dilemmas of the high-quality development of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools at the present stage

At this stage, the high-quality development of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools is facing many difficulties, the most typical of which is the problems encountered in the school-based construction, which are specifically reflected in the following aspects.

- (1) Lack of comprehensive teacher ethics education planning: Some schools lack systematic and holistic planning in teacher ethics education, and teacher ethics education activities are often fragmented and temporary, lacking long-term and continuous educational effects. The lack of comprehensive planning of teacher ethics education can easily lead to the one-sidedness and superficiality of teacher ethics education.
- (2) Single content in teacher ethics education: Some schools focus on simple moral indoctrination in teacher ethics education, lacking teachers' moral connotation of in-depth excavation. Teachers' moral education should include content such as professional ethics, educational ethics, teaching responsibility, educational thinking, and other aspects, in order to promote the improvement of the overall quality of teachers.
- (3) Lack of effective evaluation and feedback mechanisms: The effectiveness of teacher ethics education often needs to be monitored and improved through evaluation and feedback. However, some schools lack scientific and effective evaluation and feedback mechanisms in teacher ethics education, which makes it impossible to promptly understand teachers' performance and improvement needs, and difficult to improve the effectiveness of teacher ethics education.
- (4) Lack of integration and sharing of teacher ethics education resources: The lack of integration and sharing of resources in teacher ethics education in some schools has led to a single content and form of activities in teacher ethics education, failing to meet the diversified needs of teachers in schools. The integration and sharing of resources should be strengthened, and external experts, educational institutions, and other resources should be fully utilized to enrich the forms and contents of teacher ethics education.
- (5) Lack of effective incentive mechanism and continuous support: The effects of teacher ethics education often need to be consolidated and developed through incentives and continuous support. Some schools lack an effective incentive mechanism in teacher ethics education to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and initiative. At the same time, ongoing support and training are also important safeguards for teacher ethics education, but some schools have neglected this issue.

In summary, there are problems in the school-based construction of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools, such as incomplete planning, single content, insufficient assessment and feedback, inadequate integration of resources, and deficient incentive mechanisms and continuous support. To solve these problems, it is necessary for schools to strengthen the attention and research on teacher ethics education, establish an ideal teacher ethics education management system, strengthen the planning, resource integration, and assessment and feedback of teacher ethics education, and at the same time emphasize the incentive mechanism and continuous support, so as to improve the level of school-based construction of teacher ethics education^[4].

4. Improvement paths of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools

4.1. Establishing the standards of teacher ethics

Teachers' ethics education system construction in primary and secondary schools should be changed from passive to active development mode, and it is also the key link to put the construction of teachers' ethics education in schools into practice.

On the one hand, schools should take themselves as the core and design a program for building teacher ethics in primary and secondary schools according to the actual situation. It is necessary to stop relying too

much on managerial thinking, and to formulate a relevant system for teacher ethics education in schools based on teacher ethics diagnosis in accordance with the school's philosophy, development plan, and campus culture. In the process of developing and revising the system, schools should cooperate fully with higher education management departments and experts in teacher ethics education to solve problems in the design process. At the same time, front-line teachers should be given the right to participate in the development and revision of the system, and their opinions and suggestions should be heard to the greatest extent possible.

On the other hand, the implementation of teacher ethics education construction in schools not only relies on the school's educational and teaching organization, but is also closely related to the regional teacher professional development organization. Through the establishment of a school teacher ethics community, the construction of teacher ethics education is integrated into daily teaching and school management, and a specific course of action is formed. Firstly, a community of mutual assistance in teacher ethics can be established by relying on the school's grassroots party organization to promote the organic integration of the school's teacher ethics education construction and party building work, and to give full play to the role of the grassroots party branch in organizational leadership and supervision and promotion. Secondly, a teacher ethics management team should be established with the principal as the leader, "key groups" as the main body, and teacher ethics experts and representatives of teachers in the school, which is responsible for the top-level design and process management of the construction of teacher ethics in the school. Lastly, teacher ethics can be integrated into daily teaching, subject teaching, and research and thematic activities by relying on the school's subject teaching and research groups, grade-level groups, and mentor workshops.

4.2. Implementing teacher ethics education

If a country wants to develop, it must have noble teachers and great talents. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee attaches great importance to the work of education, and puts education in the strategic position of priority development. On April 29, 2021, the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress decided to amend the Education Law. Among them, the first paragraph of Article 4 was amended to read, "Education is the foundation of socialist modernization, and is of decisive significance in improving the people's comprehensive quality, promoting the all-round development of human beings, enhancing the vitality of innovation and creativity of the Chinese nation, and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and the state guarantees that priority be given to the development of education."

Teachers serve as role models for students. As teachers, their professional characteristics determine that they must have high moral character. Qualified teachers should first be morally qualified people, and excellent teachers should first educate people with virtue and establish themselves with virtue, becoming role models for students to learn from. In the new era, students and parents have higher expectations of teachers. Teachers must deeply realize that society's demand for teachers' ethics is a powerful motivation for teachers to continuously improve their own development, and they should sincerely become the guides for students' growth and have immense love for their own careers. Teachers' vocation is to teach and establish virtue, not only imparting knowledge and answering questions, but also cultivating students' personalities and shaping their souls with inner strength. Loyalty and love for the cause of education are first reflected in the care for students. Respecting, loving, protecting, and caring for students are teachers' social responsibilities and the professional emotions teachers should have ^[5]. Only by caring for students will teachers spare no effort to improve their professional competence, constantly standardize their words and actions, and work towards the goal of "learning to be a teacher and being a model."

4.3. Keeping the bottom line of teacher ethics

Firstly, it is important to emphasize moral education and enhance teachers' moral quality through education and teaching. The guidance of new and young teachers should be strengthened, and the old-for-new mechanism should be used to play the role of teacher training, so that they can familiarize themselves with the laws of education as soon as possible, master the teaching methods, and cultivate noble moral sentiments in the practice of training students. Teacher ethics education should be carried out throughout the entire process of teacher training and teachers' careers. Teacher trainees must take courses on teacher ethics education, and vocational teacher training should ensure that each academic year includes thematic education on teacher ethics.

It is also necessary to emphasize the shaping of exemplary teachers, and continue to carry out activities to select and publicize outstanding teachers. Multi-level selection and publicity activities are carried out for outstanding teachers, creating an atmosphere in which there are role models in schools and models around them, and where everyone can learn from and emulate them. Teachers who are "models of the times," national models of teaching and educating, national mentors, and the most beautiful teachers are invited to give lectures on teacher ethics. Schools around the world are encouraged to take the form of practical reflection, situational teaching, and other forms of inviting front-line outstanding teachers into the classroom, using real people and events to explain the connotation of teacher ethics.

Additionally, it is imperative to emphasize the establishment of virtue in accordance with regulations, and strengthen teachers' education on teacher ethics and discipline. Focusing on the study of the Teachers' Law of the People's Republic of China and the series of documents on the Ten Guidelines for Teachers' Professional Behavior in the New Era, we will improve the rule of law literacy and awareness of rules among all teachers, and enhance their ability to teach according to the law and standardize their teaching. We need to strengthen awareness education, guide the majority of teachers to always self-reflect and self-motivate, and adhere to the bottom line of teacher ethics^[6].

In the context of the new era, the high-quality development of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools is an important task in education. Through practice and exploration, we deeply realize that the implementation of teacher ethics education in primary and secondary schools aims not only to cultivate excellent teachers, but is also a key link in cultivating newcomers of the times who will take up the great responsibility of national rejuvenation. In this process, we must adhere to the original intention, inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and cultivate students' correct values and healthy mental qualities. At the same time, the high-quality development of teacher education requires the common concern and support of the whole society to form a synergy and cooperate to realize the goal of teacher education in primary and secondary schools. Only in this way can we contribute to the building of a harmonious socialist society and the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, so that every student can become a new socialist man with ideals, morals, culture, and discipline, and create a bright educational future.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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