

ARTICLE

Principles of the Educational Reform in China

Qu Shufang Tong Wooi Chow

School of Business, Malaysia University of Science and Technology, Malaysia, 47810

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 14 July 2025

Accepted: 10 December 2025

Published Online: 30 December 2025

Keywords:

principles

educational reform

quality

ABSTRACT

The principles of the educational reform which come from the theories and the practice of the educational reform in China has fundamental importance. The principles are the ideas, thoughts and theories of the country and may borrow from other countries. The principles can make the educational reform successful, so a lot of educators and specialists on education are working hard on the principles. We hope the educational reform will succeed due to the principles, therefore this article shows some secrets and requirements of the principles of the educational reform in China.

I. Introduction:

The principles of the educational reform in China come from the social practice and the hard work of the educators, specialists on education and teachers in China. These principles can show the requirements of the society and the interests, desires and requirements of the students in this country. We are very concerned about the principles which can surely have fundamental success in educational field. These principles are the base of the educational reform. Where do the principles come from? They come from many ideas, thoughts and theories of China and the other countries. All the achievements are the success of the society and the world.

Why is educational reform necessary? What are its purposes and significance? By answering these questions, the significance of this educational reform becomes clear.

The impetus for educational reform stems from the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution in China and the evolving social landscape, marking a significant transformation following political and economic reforms. With political and economic reforms underway, educational reform was also inevitable, with the primary goal of enhancing educational quality and advancing the country's educational endeavors. This reform has had a profound impact, starting with Deng Xiaoping's decision to restore the college entrance examination system and continuing to the present day.

Quality education emerged in the early stages of educational reform, which was crucial to its success. It addressed both theoretical and developmental issues, leading to the success of the educational reform. The criticism of exam-oriented education led to the emergence of quality education, which is a rejection of the former. Society is always evolving and advancing. People's social practices

*Corresponding Author:

Qu Shufang, female, born on October 12, 1972, is a first-class teacher and a doctoral candidate. Her research interests include principles of education, educational psychology, teacher development, education for poor students, English teaching, etc

are becoming increasingly sophisticated, with the goal of fostering all-round development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor. The primary focus is on moral education, followed by intellectual education, while also paying attention to aesthetic and labor education.

Due to the reform of political and economic systems, educational reforms have also been inevitable. This reform has not only changed the system, such as the emergence of numerous private schools, but also transformed methods, such as the introduction of quality education requirements. Teaching methods have been improved, with a greater emphasis on students learning status and interest cultivation, and the introduction of research-based learning methods. In addition to traditional rote teaching methods, many heuristic teaching methods have been adopted, such as focusing on generating questions in class. Teaching methods across all subjects have been enhanced, leading to the success of educational reforms. In terms of educational management, competitive management methods have been introduced, and a distribution system based on performance and merit has been implemented, which has boosted teachers' enthusiasm and creativity.

II. Literature review

The principles of educational reform in China have deep social and historical roots. These principles also originate from ancient Chinese society, such as the practical theories of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, and Confucius's teachings of teaching according to individual aptitude and education for all, which continue to play a crucial role today. These ancient educational theories form the foundation of these modern educational principles, shaped by the country's socialist historical system.

The goal of education is to promote social development and create a better life. (Cheng, 2025) Schools should update their educational philosophies, shifting from traditional exam-oriented education to quality education, focusing on the all-round development of students and emphasizing personalized growth. (Wang, 2025) By aligning with students' interests and abilities, schools aim to stimulate their enthusiasm and initiative in learning, promoting their physical and mental health and all-round development, thus laying a solid foundation for cultivating high-quality talents who excel in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor skills. (Song, Li, 2025) Quality education emphasizes the cultivation of students' innovative spirit and practical abilities, aiming to nurture individuals with unique personalities and comprehensive qualities. (Tan, 2025)

As society develops and educational philosophies evolve, traditional knowledge-based education is increasingly unable to meet the demands of the modern era. The educational philosophy is gradually shifting from a focus on imparting knowledge to promoting all-round development. The core of this shift lies in cultivating students' moral and ethical qualities and their understanding of social responsibility, guiding them to develop a scientific worldview, outlook on life, and values. (Xu, 2025) The essence of quality education is personalized education. Personalized education is the direction for the advancement of the education sector, emphasizing the cultivation of students' individual traits and interests to promote their comprehensive growth. Implementing personalized education helps to stimulate students' interest, unlock their potential, and ensure that each student achieves comprehensive, harmonious, and sustainable development, thereby nurturing innovative talents for society. (Li, Tian, 2025)

What is the fundamental purpose of education? Why is it important to return to this core purpose? What does this return reveal? It reveals that some educators are puzzled by the question 'Why do we need education?' They seek clarity on these fundamental questions: what kind of people should education cultivate, for whom does education serve, and how can it serve them? These questions aim to address the root issues of education.

Teachers should act as facilitators, not mere knowledge dispensers. They should help students develop good learning habits and master effective learning methods, laying a solid foundation for their lifelong development. Teachers should focus on the individual development of students. The student-centered educational philosophy respects students' personalities and interests, encouraging them to choose learning content and development paths based on their own interests. A variety of teaching models are adopted to provide platforms for students to showcase themselves and develop their specialties, ensuring that each student's unique qualities can be nurtured. This approach allows students to gain emotional value and satisfaction while acquiring knowledge. The evaluation system under the student-centered educational philosophy emphasizes that evaluations should serve the comprehensive development of students, shifting the primary function of evaluation to promoting students' progress and improvement. This means that evaluation is not just a simple assessment of students' learning outcomes but should be a dynamic and ongoing process aimed at identifying students' strengths and weaknesses and providing targeted guidance and suggestions to help them continuously improve. (Peng, 2025)

III. Background:

The growth of students is a process, and the role of teachers is also evident. The quality of education ensures the order of education, and no aspect of educational work can be overlooked. Some believe that educational philosophies are difficult to implement, but in reality, it has been proven that even the most lofty and unrealistic educational philosophies can be realized and succeed. Educational philosophies guide educational practices, making them purposeful and rapid. China's educational reforms have embraced numerous educational philosophies, which are rooted in the Chinese context, reflecting Chinese characteristics and tailored to China's national conditions. Of course, these philosophies may also be influenced by foreign educational theories, such as the theory of all-round development, proposed by Marx. By adopting and introducing these theories, the goal is to enhance the quality of education in China.

Why is it necessary to update educational philosophies to keep pace with the times? I believe that updating these philosophies represents progress, development, and success. Updating educational philosophies indicates that society needs to evolve, and can these philosophies indeed drive social progress? Yes, they can. Where do these educational philosophies come from? They are developed by educators, experts, and teachers. These philosophies stem from practical explorations and theoretical research. They are highly valuable and serve as a guiding force. Educational philosophies are both guiding principles and theories that guide educational practices. Where do these philosophies originate? Generally, they are the contributions of educators. Many of these philosophies are derived from extensive reading and practical experience. These philosophies are innovative and creative, reflecting people's intelligence, diligence, and hard work. They embody the integration of theory and practice, the result of social development, and the advancement of educational practices. When these philosophies are fully realized, the educational mission is accomplished. These guiding principles are invaluable; without them, educational efforts would not succeed. They serve as clear and practical guides for educational practices.

Can the educational reform succeed? The answer is yes, it will. We have already achieved significant success, and this time it will be successful again. We have also studied foreign educational theories and practices, which are crucial for China's educational development. These advanced foreign educational theories have inspired our thinking and guided our progress, ensuring the success of the educational reform. The success of this reform is due

to the correctness of its theoretical and practical approaches. The impact of this educational reform is profound. The changes and advancements in teaching methods are key to the success of the reform. The rapid progress in the 1990s can be attributed to the introduction of foreign educational theories and practices.

IV. Principles:

1. Questions about training objectives and direction of running schools:

What kind of people should be cultivated? How should they be cultivated? For whom are they being cultivated? These questions are among the most significant educational principles, addressing the core objectives of education. Solving these fundamental issues is crucial. There are numerous discussions on educational work, and this definition makes educational efforts more purposeful and practical. Cultivating builders and successors for the socialist cause, which means nurturing socialist citizens and social individuals, is a critical task. This definition underscores the importance, urgency, challenges, and complexities of student cultivation. We believe that these goals are challenging, but they can be achieved in China's environment. The principles concerning the objectives of cultivation include: cultivating builders and successors for the socialist cause, providing education that satisfies the people, and promoting comprehensive and individualized development.

Concerning moral education, many people have shown significant interest, leading to the concept of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent. Many believe that moral education is crucial, as a person's moral character significantly influences their future prospects. Moreover, it is believed that once a person's moral character is established, they are more likely to succeed in life. Moral education is highly regarded, and together with quality education, it has become a primary focus in primary and secondary schools, as well as universities.

2. Issues related to equity in education:

Regarding educational equity, the principles include: equitable and high-quality education. Educational equity does not conflict with educational efficiency. When educational equity is achieved, educational efficiency naturally follows. Without educational efficiency, achieving educational equity is impossible. In recent years, there have been issues in discussions about educational equity and efficiency, with some believing that efficiency means there is no equity, and equity means there is no efficiency. However, these views are incorrect. Education without dis-

crimination is a form of fair education, and education for all is a form of fair education. When education is for all, educational efficiency naturally improves. The era of mass education differs from the elite era; in the mass education era, everyone has the opportunity and right to education. This is due to social development, which has reached a point where everyone has the opportunity to receive education. Everyone can have the chance to succeed, and the ideal of the free and comprehensive development of individuals can be realized. The educational ideals of Marx and others were also realized in this mass era. For example, the theory of all-round development, including moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor development. These educational concepts serve as guiding principles and are therefore very important theories.

Balanced development is a crucial educational principle, but we believe that this balance must be of high quality and should not stifle others' growth. There are differences among individuals, and I believe these differences contribute to social stratification, which is both normal and justified. People are inherently different, and a uniform standard of one hundred percent can stifle the development of outstanding students, push some students too hard, and eliminate their unique talents and interests. Therefore, the one-size-fits-all approach has been widely criticized. This exam-oriented education system goes against human nature and human rights, and thus is not a viable approach.

3. Related education quality issues:

Quality education has always been a priority, and the quality of education has consistently been a focal point of concern. How to measure educational quality? We believe that examination scores are an indicator of educational quality. While focusing solely on scores is not entirely accurate, examination scores are a relatively straightforward method to assess the quality of education. I do not understand why there is opposition to examinations. I support examinations, as they are effective for students. For example, college entrance examination results are one of the key indicators of the quality of high school education. Is an examination equivalent to exam-oriented education? In fact, exams are inevitable. Does having exams equate to exam-oriented education? Not exactly. Examinations are part of the teaching process and a component of the educational system. How to measure educational quality and how to improve educational evaluation? Research in these areas has largely settled, indicating that exams cannot be abolished. Exams are effective and appropriate methods. Measuring educational quality through examination scores is one of the correct approaches.

4. Questions relating to teaching methods:

Research on teaching methods has been well conducted, and there is a wealth of experience. For instance, the requirement to cater to all students addresses the issue of educational equity. The practice of loving students also prohibits the arbitrary use of corporal punishment. These conclusions are valid, reflecting the progress in education and the basic principles that should be followed. As teachers, it is essential to love their students, which is the bare minimum of professional ethics. These educational philosophies define and standardize educational practices, guiding the policies and specific approaches of educational institutions. It's also a guiding principle, so it's very useful.

Innovation is not only a teaching method but also a specific approach. Without innovation, society cannot progress. The rote learning method is insufficient; it is only suitable for some students. Each person is suited to different teaching methods, and new methods need to be developed. For society to remain innovative, it must embrace innovation.

V. Conclusions:

Educational philosophy must not be wrong; anything that is wrong will certainly have a detrimental effect. If people misunderstand the nature of educational work, they are likely to propose flawed educational philosophies, which is very concerning. I believe that these guiding principles of educational philosophy are essential; otherwise, the educational work would not be ideal. A lack of educational philosophy is unacceptable, and it is through the correct educational philosophies that progress can be made. Educational philosophy is also an educational theory and thought, and it is the result of many people's wisdom and efforts. After reading numerous books and teaching many students, some educational philosophies emerge. The educational philosophies of educators are all developed this way, and the combination of theory and practice has produced many educational philosophies.

Theory must be grounded in practice, and educational theory must be integrated with educational practice. Teacher candidates must engage in practical training; otherwise, the integration of theory and practice cannot be achieved. Becoming an educator is not a simple task; an educator cannot afford to lack frontline experience or theoretical exploration. Currently, Zhejiang Province and the entire country place significant emphasis on frontline practice, but they often overlook the importance of theoretical research and neglect the writing of educational papers. I believe this situation is very concerning. Practice

without theory is immature and slow to progress. This is also problematic. Frontline teachers must read frequently to integrate theory with practice and stay current. Teachers must also learn to develop themselves over their careers, which requires continuous reading and learning. Writing papers is not difficult; as long as one reads regularly and thinks about issues, these papers can be produced. Teachers who do not write papers are incomplete.

Why are there so many educational philosophies in China? This highlights the unique nature of our educational system and reflects the progress of our education. While Dewey and others have had a significant global impact, ancient Chinese society also had numerous educational ideas that remain relevant today. These profound educational philosophies can greatly guide educational practices. We look forward to the emergence of more educational philosophies that will significantly promote and assist educational reforms. With the efforts of these educators, more and better educational philosophies will continue to emerge, aiming to enhance the quality of education in China.

References:

[1] Cheng, X.Y. (2025). The Application of Life Situations in Practical Reading and Communication Teaching in Primary School Chinese. *Teacher's Horizon*, (18), 10-12.

[2] Li, C.H. & Tian, Z. (2025). Rural Primary School After-School Services from the Perspective of Personalized Education: Issues, Causes, and Countermeasures. *Modern Primary and Secondary Education*, 41(06), 83-87+94.
doi:10.16165/j.cnki.22-1096/g4.2025.06.016.

[3] Peng, Y. (2025). A Brief Discussion on the Innovative Path of Student-Centered Chinese Language Classroom in Rural Junior High Schools. *Secondary School Curriculum Guidance*, (18), 51-53.

[4] Song, M.Y. & Li, Y.R. (2025). Inheritance and Innovation: Transformation and Upgrading of Talent Cultivation Models from the Perspective of Sports and Education Integration. In *The Fourth Shaanxi Provincial Sports Science Paper (Abstract) Collection — School Sports (Special Report)* (pp.235-240). School of Physical Education, Shaanxi Normal University.

[5] Tan, L.N. (2025). The Internal Logic, Development Challenges, and Promotion Path of High-Quality School Physical Education in the Context of a Strong Education Nation. In *The Fourth Shaanxi Provincial Sports Science Paper (Abstract) Collection — School Physical Education (Special Report)* (pp.292-297). Jilin Sport University.

[6] Wang, Y.H. (2025). A Brief Discussion on How High School Principals Can Promote Deep Classroom Teaching under the New College Entrance Examination System. *Famous Teachers Online (Chinese and English)*, 11(18), 96-98.

[7] Xu, J.J. (2025). Research on Effective Approaches to Integrating Ideological and Political Education into High School Chinese Language Teaching. *Chinese Language Teaching Communications · D Journal (Academic Journal)*, 06, 32-34. doi:10.13525/j.cnki.bclt.202506010.