



A Discussion on Educational Essays for Professional Development of Kindergarten Teachers

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Abstract: In China, the professionalization of kindergarten teachers is a requirement of educational reform, an inevitable trend of the times, and an important factor in the quality teaching in kindergarten education. Educational essays have an important role in the career development of teachers. The author holds that the importance of educational essays is reflected in the following aspects: it is a record of teachers' life, a summary of kindergarten teachers' education and teaching, a practice of kindergarten teachers' scientific research, and a reflection of kindergarten teachers' teaching practice. The paper advocates writing educational essays through the analysis of the above aspects. Writing educational essays to reflect and summarize the educational practice can improve teachers' career and promote the progress and prosperity of education.

Keywords: educational essays, kindergarten, teachers, career development

Introduction

Essay, also known as reflection or note, is a genre of prose. Many ancient Chinese writers are good at this it, including Liu Ji, Song Lian, the three Yuan brothers, Gui Youguang of the Tang-Song School, among others. In modern times, essay gradually became an independent genre of prose. Essay is a type of writing that reflects what one has seen and felt at any time, with a wide range of materials and a free form. The educational essay is an educational application document that reflects experiences, lessons, feelings and experiences in educational practice, or expresses one's own opinions and insights on problems in educational practice in the form of essays.

China's preschool education has made substantial leaps and bounds in recent decades, and is now moving toward the goal of "providing education for children" proposed at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. "The 14th Five-Year Plan of Action for the Development of Preschool Education clearly states that teachers should take Xi Jinping's thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era as the guiding ideology of preschool education development, and implement the new development concept from the new development stage. Teachers should take the universal, inclusive, safe and high-quality development of preschool education as a major task to improve the level of inclusive public services and common prosperity. Teachers should deepen their understanding and fully implement the Party's education policy, make the establishment of moral education a fundamental task by following the laws, gradually improve the guarantee mechanism, and strive to meet the public's expectations and aspirations for education. The realization of the above goals cannot be achieved without the improvement of the quality of kindergarten education, which is closely related to the level of professional competence of teachers.

As preschool education is an indispensable part of the national education system, teachers with high professionalism become a key part of the development of preschool education. Kindergarten teachers work on the frontline of preschool education; they intergrate their wisdom with daily teachings. Teachers often record their reflections and thoughts or experience after class, which is a good way to improve the development of teachers' professional competence. If teachers want to become qualified ones, they need to constantly reflect their teaching and learn from the experience.



Literature Review

1. Foreign research on educational essays

Foreign research on teachers' educational essays for career development has not formed a certain scale as in China. Vasily Aleksandrovich Sukhomlinsky (1918-1970), a Soviet educator, suggested in his "Advice to Teachers" that every teacher should keep an educational essay^[1]. Lawrence Stenhouse (1926—1982), a British educational thinker, first proposed that "teachers are researchers". In Stenhouse's view, the teacher as researcher means that teachers should achieve new understanding of problems through reflection on the basis of teaching practice^[2]. Canadian scholar Max Van Menen writes in his *Research on Lived Experience* that: a researcher who sees himself as an educational scholar must explore the meaning of education (in terms of reflection, presentation, writing, etc.) in a solid and sustained way if he wants to analyze children's lived experiences at an educational level, such as their reading, playing, classroom learning, etc. speaking, writing, etc.).^[3] Zhao Ke's "Teacher Writing Groups: an Important Form of Organization for Teacher Career Development in the United States" provides insight into the importance the United States places on the role of educational essay for teacher career development^[4].

(2) Domestic research on educational essays

Domestic research on educational essay can be basically summarized into three categories: the first one elaborates the value of educational essay for teachers' career development; the second one introduces suitable ways for teachers' educational essay; and the third one focuses on the misconceptions of teachers' educational essay practice and puts forward relevant suggestions. There are two categories of researchers: university scholars who have studied teachers' career development, and primary and secondary school teachers who keep on writing educational essays.

Roles of Educational Essays

A Record of Teachers' Life

There are many things for a child to do in each single day in the kindergarten: eating, sleeping, classes, games, activities, etc. A day in the kindergarten involves many aspects of life activities of children, and each one of them contains opportunities for children to develop and learn. Teachers train children to master basic life experiences, develop self-service skills and develop quality education to promote the harmonious development of children's bodies and minds. By writing educational essays, teachers record how they intersperse education in each event, so that children can learn and understand these skills and knowledge quickly before they can adapt to life practice. It lays a solid foundation for their future development.

In 2011, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China promulgated the *Kindergarten Education Guideline*, which states that the content of a series of educational activities in kindergartens should be chosen "in a way that is close to children's lives and helps to expand children's experiences and horizons". The organization of the kindergarten educational activities should "take into account the learning characteristics of children and the cognitive rules of children. The content of each field should be interconnected and interspersed with each other, focusing on comprehensive, interesting and active, and integrating education into life and games"^[5]. In kindergarten, a large part of the children's learning and educational activities are conducted through games. Therefore, the educational essays to record children's daily life is the process of exploring educational resources. Kindergarten teachers should improve the awareness of educational essays in daily activities, so that children can enjoy daily activities, and at the same time, teachers can improve the professionalism.

A Summary of Education and Teaching

Vasily Aleksandrovich Sukhomlinsky suggested to keep on writing education dairies. "I recommend every teacher to keep an educational diary. The educational diary is not some official document that imposes certain format requirements on it, but rather a personal and casual record that can be kept in the course of daily work. These records are a source of reflection and creativity. Dairies that are kept for 10, 20 or even 30 years in a row are a great asset."^[6] A kindergarten teacher who takes the initiative to identify problems, think about them, solve them and reflect them in the form of educational essays not only improves his teaching, but also enhances his career development.

Kindergarten teachers who write educational essays will accumulate a wealth of experience in education and teaching. They plan and design activities according to the characteristics of the children's age groups and provide activities that are suitable to them. Teachers are supposed to teach by rules and do not violate the characteristics of children's learning habits and the natural laws of physical and mental development. Teachers should take games as the main activity for children, combining both care and education. To promote individuality and all-round development, teachers should focus on children's characteristics and differences. The process of recording educational essays is a good form of summarizing educational theories, educational ideas, and educational methods. The process is beneficial to teachers' professional growth. Therefore, educational essays and teachers' professional growth are closely related and complementary.

The following essay is an example of educational essays written by a teacher from Xinmiao kindergarten in Nalintaohai town, Igingholo banner, Inner Mongolia.

May I serve you first and exchange your heart for friendship--The flea market activity of the middle class, kindergarten

In the afternoon of October 14, Xinmiao Kindergarten held a "Flea Market" volunteer service activity. In the afternoon, the entrance of Xinmiao Kindergarten was crowded with people and the sound of hawking was incessant. The "flea market" was opened with well preparation. This is not only an opportunity for children to be their own boss and do volunteer service, but also a vivid and creative social practice activity.

At the flea market, each stall owner came to the entrance of the kindergarten early and arranged the items in a neat and orderly way.

Don't look at them as kindergarten children, but they were very serious in doing business. The buyers were constantly walking in the crowd looking for their own beloved treasures. "My book for your puzzle, OK?" "This Ultraman 2 yuan will be sold to you" children in front of their own stalls were busy with their business. It is a pity that many unused items and books have been put on the shelf, but the flea market can make these items play a recycle role again, and at the same time children will have a sense of achievement.

The flea market was very lively with the sound of shouting, laughter and bargaining.

Of course, the success of the activity cannot be achieved without the active cooperation of the parents.

In the late afternoon, all the goods on the stalls were almost sold out, and parents and children returned with a full load.

In this activity, the children got an initial experience of market economy, learned how to separate currencies, learned how to sell and buy goods, and designed effective promotion banners. The activity cultivated the children's ability to do things with their hands, communicate and create, and also learned to serve others, allowing them to experience the joy of fair trade. The activity gives children a sense of financial management from an early age. At the same time, they also gain rich life experience and experience the joy of life.

A Way to Promote Scientific Research

Teachers have to follow the reform of kindergarten education and teaching. The level of kindergarten teachers' research plays an important role in improving teachers' professionalism and practice. Many kindergarten teachers feel difficult to write research project application and educational paper. The author believes that the source of scientific research papers is life and teaching. It is important to keep thinking and reflecting from teaching before doing research projects. Teachers should observe and research, which will lay the foundation of scientific research.

The following essay is written by a teacher from Xinmiao kindergarten in Nalintaohai town, Igingholo banner, Inner Mongolia.

Respect for children

There is a little boy in our class named Zhang Luyan, who is very naughty. Often a child would tell him off. "Sir, he's hitting me." "Madam, he snatched my ball." Therefore, we educated him many times. One day, he was reading a book with the other children. At first, when he was reading his book, he explained it to the children next to him, and they got along very well. A few minutes later, he suddenly grabbed the book from the child next to him, and no one knew what he wanted to do. I was about to reprimand him loudly, but then I thought, "No, let's see what he wants to do first. With that purpose in mind, I walked over to him and asked casually, "What are you doing?" He said, "Her book is broken, and I want to help her fix it." It was only when I heard what he said that I was enlightened. I encouraged him and helped him find the right way to solve the problem, and then I told him that when you want to help someone, you should ask first before you do it.

After this incident, I was glad that I had not criticized him according to my subjective judgment, which would not only have been useless, but also would have hurt the child's self-esteem. Therefore, as a kindergarten teacher, I must learn how to respect children. That is, we should not arbitrarily and subjectively criticize children, and we should not simply and rudely accuse them without knowing the reason. In this way, we can really promote the progress of young children and become a good teacher that children really like.

A Reflection of Teaching Practice.

When teachers teach in the classroom, there will inevitably be inadequacies and shortcomings. It is necessary for each teacher constantly reflect after class. It is not only to prevent similar problems from happening, but also to improve the efficiency of teachers' teaching. Writing educational essays can constantly summarize, sort out and reflect on teaching behavior, sum up lessons learned, clarify effective ways to solve problems, improving teaching methods, deepening education and teaching awareness, and promoting teachers' career development.

In order to promote teachers' career development and to be able to take the initiative to observe, record, reflect and accumulate in their teaching, kindergartens require teachers to write educational essays regularly. However, some of the educational essays submitted are not carefully written. Every teacher should follow "**Guidelines for Learning and Development of**

"Children Aged 3-6" and *"Kindergarten Education Guideline"* released by ministry of education. Teachers need to learn from advanced practices and transform their perceptions and actions regarding teaching and learning. If teachers can promote a learning and developmental calendar for children in their lives, they will increase their sense of professional accomplishment^[7].

In conclusion, the length of a teacher's career is a constant, but the breadth and depth of the professional life is a variable. Teachers can extend the breadth of their careers and continuously enrich the depth of their professional lives in various ways, and writing educational essays is one of the best ways to do so. The authors hope that kindergarten teachers can make effective use of the educational essay platform to actively and effectively reflect on teaching and learning, so that teachers' educational and teaching abilities and levels can be effectively improved.

Conclusion

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