



Research on the Dilemmas and Breakthrough Paths of Two-Way Bridging between Kindergarten and Primary School from the Perspective of Collaborative Education

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Abstract: The transition from early childhood education to compulsory education is a critical link that profoundly impacts children's physical and mental development. The concept of "two-way bridging" aims to overcome the limitations of the traditional one-sided approach and promote collaborative education between kindergartens and primary schools. From the perspective of synergy theory, this study employs questionnaires and in-depth interviews to systematically analyze the main dilemmas in the current two-way bridging process across four subsystems: curriculum, teachers, parents, and policy. The findings reveal that issues such as a disjointed curriculum system, lack of teacher collaboration mechanisms, prominent parental educational anxiety, and weak policy implementation significantly hinder effective two-way bridging. Based on these results, the paper constructs a "four-in-one" collaborative path involving curriculum co-development, teacher collaboration, parental guidance, and policy optimization. This framework aims to promote a scientific kindergarten-primary school transition and provide theoretical and practical guidance for ensuring a smooth transition for children.

Keywords: Collaborative Education, Kindergarten-Primary School Transition, Two-Way Bridging; Curriculum Development

Introduction

I. Introduction

The transition from kindergarten to primary school is a significant turning point in a child's educational development. It not only relates to whether children can successfully adapt to primary school learning and life but also has a profound impact on their long-term learning interest, social development, and mental health. For a long time, China's kindergarten-primary school transition work has exhibited a distinct "one-sided" tendency, where kindergartens actively adapt to primary schools, while primary schools lack corresponding transition awareness and action, leading to disconnections in the transition process. This one-sided bridging model fails to truly meet the continuous needs of child development and may even increase children's learning burden and psychological pressure due to the "academification" tendency (overly academic focus in kindergarten) [1].

In 2021, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guidance on Vigorously Promoting the Scientific Transition between Kindergarten and Primary School," explicitly proposing the concept of "two-way bridging" at the national policy level for the first time, emphasizing that kindergartens and primary schools should share responsibility and collaboratively promote scientific transition [2]. The introduction of this policy provides clear direction and support for the reform of transition work. However, at the practical level, two-way bridging still faces many challenges. There is an urgent need to deeply analyze the root causes of its dilemmas from a systematic and collaborative perspective and propose feasible breakthrough paths. Based on the perspective of synergy theory and combined with empirical survey data, this paper aims to construct a multi-agent, multi-system collaborative implementation framework for kindergarten-primary school transition to provide theoretical support and practical reference for promoting scientific bridging.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Domestic Research Status

Domestic research has evolved from an initial focus on kindergartens' unilateral "school readiness" preparation to embracing the concept of "two-way bridging," which acknowledges the shared responsibility between kindergartens and primary schools. Scholars such as Li Zhaojun and Li Lin (2022) have advocated for a new model of interaction between "prepared children" and "prepared schools," emphasizing children's agency and developmental continuity [2]. Existing studies using questionnaires and case analyses have identified issues such as curriculum disconnections and insufficient teacher collaboration. Researchers like Chen Yali (2023) have proposed solutions through symbiosis theory [4]. However, the field still requires more systematic empirical research and operational mechanisms to establish sustainable collaborative frameworks.

2.2 International Research Status

Internationally, significant advancements have been made in kindergarten-primary school transition research. Countries such as Finland, the United States, and Japan have developed comprehensive approaches through policy integration and curriculum coherence. Finland's "continuous learning path" concept ensures curricular continuity between preschool and early primary education [3]. The United States' P-3 model creates a unified educational framework from kindergarten through third grade. Japan's reforms emphasize two-way collaboration through play-based curriculum design and teacher cooperation [5]. These approaches consistently highlight the crucial role of parent and community involvement, as



demonstrated by Australia's Transition to School Program, collectively forming an ecosystem that supports children's development through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to comprehensively analyze the dilemmas and paths of two-way bridging between kindergarten and primary school.

3.2 Data Collection

A total of 300 teachers (150 kindergarten teachers and 150 primary school teachers) from various regions in China were selected through stratified random sampling. Demographic distribution included urban and rural areas to ensure representativeness. In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 teachers and 20 parents to gather detailed insights into their experiences and perspectives.

3.3 Analytical Methods

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis with SPSS software. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes.

IV. Realistic Dilemmas of Two-Way Kindergarten-Primary School Bridging

4.1 Disjointed Curriculum System, Lack of Continuity

Currently, significant disconnections exist in the objectives, content, and assessment of the transition curriculum. Kindergarten curriculum is play-based, focusing on children's life experiences and social development, while primary school curriculum emphasizes the systematicness of subject knowledge and discipline, representing fundamental differences in educational philosophy and implementation methods. This disparity creates immense adaptation pressure for children during the transition, often leading to decreased learning interest and loss of confidence.

Survey data shows that over 50% of teachers believe it is necessary to teach Pinyin, Chinese characters, and basic arithmetic in the senior kindergarten year, reflecting the persistent prevalence of the "academification" tendency. Despite repeated policy prohibitions against kindergarten advanced teaching, many kindergartens still resort to forms like "advanced senior classes" or summer intensive courses to covertly teach knowledge, influenced by parental anxiety and academic advancement pressure. This misalignment and repetition of curriculum content not only violates children's physical and mental development laws but also exacerbates educational inequality. Furthermore, the inconsistency in curriculum evaluation systems further weakens the effectiveness of bridging. Kindergartens mostly use process evaluation, focusing on children's behavioral performance and emotional attitudes, while primary schools tend towards outcome evaluation, primarily measured by exam scores. This difference in evaluation methods makes it difficult to provide comprehensive and continuous attention and support for children's development.

4.2 Lack of Teacher Collaboration Mechanism, Poor Communication

Teachers are the core executors of transition work, and their level of collaboration directly affects its effectiveness. However, reality shows a lack of effective communication platforms and cooperation mechanisms between kindergarten and primary school teachers. Questionnaire data indicates that only about 10% of kindergarten and primary school teachers report frequent cross-stage communication, while over half only "occasionally communicate," and nearly 20% almost never communicate. This low frequency of interaction makes it difficult for both sides to truly understand each other's educational goals and children's development needs.

Primary school teachers particularly lack a sense of agency in the transition. Many believe transition work is the kindergarten's responsibility, and they only need to receive children who already possess certain knowledge and behavioral habits. This misconception leads to a lack of targeted teaching adjustments in the primary school adaptation phase, for example, still using traditional lecture-based teaching, neglecting children's transitional needs in attention, behavioral norms, etc. Additionally, the separation of pre-service training and in-service training further exacerbates difficulties in teacher collaboration. Preschool education and primary school education belong to different majors in teacher training, with independent curriculum and practicum content, leaving teachers lacking a deep understanding of

adjacent stages. In-service training is also mostly conducted by stage, lacking cross-stage joint teaching research activities, making it difficult to form an effective collaborative atmosphere.

4.3 Prominent Parental Educational Anxiety, Biased Views

As significant influencers of child development, parents' educational views and behaviors are directly related to the effectiveness of the transition. Surveys find that parents generally exhibit serious educational anxiety, especially an excessive focus on children's academic abilities. Data shows nearly 30% of parents choose to enroll their children in off-campus transition classes to learn primary school knowledge in advance; over 95% believe the transition curriculum should include subject knowledge, while paying relatively less attention to social and emotional development. This "knowledge-based" tendency not only increases children's learning burden but also neglects the holistic and staged nature of their physical and mental development.

Parents have a clear regarding their role in the transition. Many parents completely shift the educational responsibility to schools and tutoring institutions, believing teachers should bear the main transition work, while they only need to provide material support and supervise learning. This dependent psychology prevents parents from fully playing their role in children's emotional support and habit cultivation. Furthermore, parents' channels for obtaining information are diverse but chaotic, often relying more on peer recommendations, online platforms, and other non-official sources rather than professional policy interpretations and educational guidance. This information asymmetry further intensifies their anxiety and the blindness of their educational actions.

4.4 Weak Policy Implementation, Insufficient Detailed Measures

In recent years, the national level has successively issued a series of policy documents to promote the transition, such as the "Guide to Learning and Development for Children Aged 3-6" and the "Guidance on Vigorously Promoting the Scientific Transition between Kindergarten and Primary School," providing directional guidance for two-way bridging. However, during local implementation, these policies often face problems of unclear interpretation and poor execution. Many teachers and parents report that policy content is too macro, lacking specific operational guidelines and evaluation standards, making effective implementation difficult in practice.

The lack of policy coordination and complementarity is also a prominent issue. Kindergartens and primary schools belong to different educational stages and management systems, and their policy formulation and implementation often operate independently, lacking overall coordination. For example, kindergartens emphasize "de-academification," while primary schools require "zero-starting point teaching," but against the realistic background of varying levels of children's knowledge reserves, effective connection between the two is difficult to achieve. Additionally, the resource support and supervision mechanisms required for policy implementation are unsound. Many kindergartens and primary schools lack dedicated funding, personnel, and time for transition activities, making joint teaching research, teacher training, and other work mere formalities.

V. Path Construction from the Perspective of Synergy Theory

Synergy theory emphasizes the interaction between subsystems within a system and their overall effectiveness, providing important theoretical support for achieving two-way bridging. From this perspective, the transition should build a child development-centered, "four-in-one" collaborative mechanism integrating curriculum, teachers, parents, and policy, striving for an optimized transition process through the joint efforts of multiple actors.

5.1 Constructing a "Bridging" Curriculum System

The curriculum is the core carrier of the transition, and its design should fully reflect continuity and progression. First, at the objective level, drawing on Finland's "continuous learning path" concept, curriculum objectives spanning both kindergarten and primary school stages should be formulated, highlighting the organic connection of the four dimensions:

physical and mental preparation, life adaptation, social interaction, and learning ability. Specifically, the kindergarten stage should focus on cultivating children's basic abilities and positive qualities through play-based, life-oriented activities, while the lower primary grades should gradually introduce subject knowledge on this basis to avoid disconnections. Second, at the content level, thematic, project-based "bridging courses" should be developed, such as "I'm Going to Primary School," "Making Friends," "Master of Time," etc., integrating knowledge, ability, and emotional goals to help children achieve a natural transition in real-life situations. For example, activities like joint picture book teaching, role-playing, and school visits can allow children to learn about primary school learning and life through experience, reducing strangeness and anxiety. Finally, at the evaluation level, a multi-participatory process evaluation system should be established, combining teacher observation, child self-assessment, parent feedback, and other methods to comprehensively record and support children's development process. Evaluation should focus on individual differences, avoid horizontal comparison based on single standards, and truly serve a developmental function.

5.2 Establishing a Two-Way Interaction Mechanism

Teachers are the implementers of the curriculum and key executors of transition work; their level of collaboration directly determines its effectiveness. First, a regular joint teaching research system should be established, forming teaching research groups comprising kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers, and teaching researchers to regularly conduct activities like lesson study variation, teaching observations, and case discussions. Through these activities, mutual understanding of each other's educational philosophies and methods can be enhanced, jointly solving practical problems in the transition.

Second, integrated teacher training should be promoted. At the pre-service training stage, normal universities can add cross-stage content to the curriculum to help students establish a comprehensive view of child development; in in-service training, cross-stage thematic workshops should be organized, such as on "children's executive function development" and "play-based teaching strategies," to enhance teachers' professional competence and collaborative awareness. Furthermore, methods like teacher rotation and classroom exchanges can allow teachers to personally experience each other's teaching environments, enhancing empathy and understanding. Finally, regarding environmental creation, lower primary grades can appropriately introduce kindergarten elements like learning areas and flexible schedules to create an inclusive, supportive learning atmosphere, helping children gradually adapt to the learning pace and requirements of primary school.

5.3 Guiding Parents Towards Scientific Transition Views

Parents are important supporters of child development; their educational views and behaviors profoundly impact transition work. First, through parent schools, expert lectures, workshops, etc., parents should be helped to establish a scientific view of child development, understand the potential harms of "advanced learning," and shift focus from "knowledge anxiety" to "holistic development." Schools can regularly publish transition guidance manuals, push relevant policy interpretations and parenting advice to enhance information transparency and authority. Second, parents should be encouraged to actively participate in transition activities, such as parent-child open days, school experience days, and family task lists, allowing them to understand children's development needs and the school's educational philosophy through practical participation. Parents can also provide more personalized information to teachers by recording children's behavioral performance and emotional changes, achieving deep cooperation between home and school. Finally, a parent support network should be established, encouraging experience sharing and emotional mutual aid among parents, reducing the spread of educational anxiety, and forming a positive, healthy parenting community.

5.4 Optimizing the Institutional Guarantee System

Policy is the external guarantee for promoting transition work, and its design should focus on systematicness and operability. First, local governments should issue detailed implementation plans, clarifying the division of responsibilities and evaluation standards for kindergartens, primary schools, families, and relevant departments. For example, a

"Kindergarten-Primary School Transition Work Guide" could be developed, providing specific activity designs, evaluation tools, and case references to help schools and families better implement transition work. Second, resource support and funding guarantees should be strengthened, establishing special funds to support activities like joint teaching research, teacher training, curriculum development, and parent education. Education departments can also introduce professional expertise from universities and research institutions through purchasing services and cooperative research to enhance the scientificity and effectiveness of transition work. Finally, a multi-departmental collaborative supervision mechanism should be established to regularly evaluate and guide the transition work of kindergartens, primary schools, and off-campus training institutions, promptly correcting behaviors that violate policy requirements, and ensuring policy seriousness and enforcement.

VI. Conclusion

Two-way kindergarten-primary school bridging is a systematic project involving multiple actors and levels. Its effective implementation relies on the collaborative efforts of curriculum, teachers, parents, and policy. Based on the perspective of synergy theory, this paper systematically analyzes the main dilemmas currently faced and proposes specific breakthrough paths from four dimensions. The research indicates that only through the integration of curriculum goals and content, the construction of teacher collaboration mechanisms, the guidance of scientific parental concepts, and the refinement and guarantee of policies can the transformation from "one-sided adaptation" to "two-way endeavor" be truly achieved, creating a smooth, natural, and scientific transition environment for children.

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