

Research on the Construction of a Distinctive Curriculum System in Kindergartens: A Case Study of the Kindergarten Affiliated to the Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou

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Abstract: With the deepening of educational reform and the development of educational diversification, constructing a distinctive curriculum system in kindergartens plays an important role in improving the quality of early childhood education. Taking the Kindergarten Affiliated to The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou as an example, this paper explores the significance of developing distinctive kindergarten curricula, analyzes their main components, and proposes effective implementation strategies for building such a system, thereby providing certain reference and guidance for the systematic construction of distinctive kindergarten curricula.

1. Introduction

With the deepening of educational reform and the development of educational diversification, constructing a distinctive curriculum system has become an important way to improve kindergarten education quality, which is in line with the requirements of national educational guidelines. The Kindergarten Affiliated to The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou, relying on the ecological and multi-language advantages of its affiliated university, has built a distinctive curriculum system with "cultural confidence", "foreign language characteristics" and "picture book carriers" as the core. This study takes this kindergarten as a case, explores the significance and main content of the curriculum system, and puts forward implementation paths such as refining educational concepts and strengthening teacher training, aiming to provide practical reference for the construction of distinctive curriculum systems in kindergartens.

2. The Significance of Constructing Distinctive Courses in Kindergartens.

2.1. Strengthen Moral Roots and Boost Individual Development

The construction of distinctive courses in kindergartens holds dual values of conforming to the development of the times and meeting individual needs. In terms of moral education, it is deeply aligned with the core educational philosophy of the *Guidelines*, focusing on the all-round and multi-domain development of young children—among which moral education is particularly crucial as an integral part of their social development.

Meanwhile, the development of characteristic kindergarten courses also addresses the needs of young children for personalized development across multiple domains. As clearly stated in the *Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3 to 6*: Children aged 3 to 6 are in a critical period of growth and development. They have a strong curiosity and thirst for knowledge about the novel world around them, and there are differences in the level of physical and mental development among individual children. For example, some children are more interested in the social domain of interpersonal communication and wish to participate in more group activities and games; some enjoy actively exploring the natural world; others are more fond of singing and dancing, or have a keen interest in various scientific phenomena... All of this indicates that only by catering to all young children can we enable them to achieve better development, thereby better meeting their personalized development needs in multiple domains such as health, society, language, art, and science.

Such a curriculum system that emphasizes both the infiltration of moral education and individual differences truly realizes the organic unity of "teaching through fun" and "teaching students in accordance with their aptitude".

2.2. Enhance Educational Quality, Showcase Kindergarten Features

With the development of diversified educational concepts, parents' demands for early childhood education have become increasingly personalized and refined. Building a distinctive curriculum system for kindergartens is an important approach to improving the quality of running a school, as well as an effective way to demonstrate the unique advantages of a kindergarten.

By establishing a distinctive curriculum system, we can provide young children with educational content that aligns with their interests and growth needs. This child-centered educational philosophy helps cultivate children's independent learning abilities and innovative thinking, and enhances their enthusiasm for learning.

For professional kindergartens, constructing a systematic characteristic curriculum not only improves the schools' own operational distinctiveness, but also drives them to continuously explore educational innovation, allocate educational resources rationally, and thereby elevate the overall quality of the preschool education sector.

2.3. Promote the Professional Development of Teachers

With the advancement of educational reform, the requirements for teachers' professional qualities have become increasingly stringent. Teachers should not merely implement curriculum policies in a mechanical manner; instead, they are expected to conduct in-depth research on educational issues, master scientific educational theories, and strive to become expert or educator-type teachers.

To develop a distinctive curriculum, curriculum developers need to possess solid theoretical knowledge, strong curriculum development capabilities, and a high level of professional

dedication[1]. The construction of characteristic kindergarten curricula provides a platform for the professional growth of teachers at large. Meanwhile, teachers are required to have a profound grasp of curriculum construction theories, proficient mastery of curriculum design capabilities, and a strong sense of professionalism.

In the process of developing characteristic curricula, teachers can continuously learn new educational concepts and methods, conduct in-depth research on the characteristics and needs of children's physical and mental development, and design curriculum content and teaching activities in a thorough and meticulous way. This enables teachers to achieve continuous growth through practice. Such a process is not only conducive to improving teachers' professional competence but also helps stimulate their innovative thinking, encouraging them to constantly reflect, summarize and improve in practice. In turn, this allows them to provide higher-quality education for young children and better meet the requirements of educational reform.

3. The Basic Content of the Distinctive Curriculum System in Kindergartens.

3.1. Leveraging Environmental Advantages to Integrate Nature Education

Nature education refers to an approach that involves getting close to and experiencing nature, aiming to help people understand, comprehend and appreciate nature, arouse their awareness and enthusiasm for protecting nature, enhance their ability to conserve nature, improve the relationship between humans and nature, and realize the harmonious and sustainable development of humanity and nature. Interacting with nature not only helps young children establish environmental awareness but also fosters their creativity and imagination, stimulates their interest in scientific exploration, and cultivates their abilities of independent thinking and problem-solving[2].

The Kindergarten Affiliated to The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou is situated adjacent to the ecological base within The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou, endowed with unique and superior natural environment resources. Taking full advantage of these natural strengths, the kindergarten integrates nature education throughout the entire educational process, guiding young children to engage in practical activities such as planting, breeding, painting, observing, and recording in their kindergarten life, thereby enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills in nature. For instance, around the Beginning of Spring (Lichun), the kindergarten organizes children to plant various fruits and vegetables together, allowing them to learn knowledge such as plant growth cycles and seasonal changes through practice. This approach not only enables children to gain simple knowledge in nature but also cultivates their hands-on abilities, teamwork skills, and life skills. Additionally, the kindergarten's high-quality resources provide a solid foundation for implementing the relevant guidelines on labor education and developing various distinctive labor education programs for young children, enabling them to practice the spirit of labor and master labor skills while participating in nature protection-related labor activities.

3.2. Leveraging Language Advantages to Develop Multilingual Courses

Early childhood is a critical period for language development. Acquiring information through language is an indispensable foundation for learning, and high-quality language education also serves as a prerequisite for young children's social interaction[3]. The Kindergarten Affiliated to The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou is located on the campus of The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou, which offers 12 foreign language majors covering 10 foreign languages and boasts unique educational advantages in strong foreign language proficiency. Taking advantage of the university's multilingual resources, the kindergarten has introduced multiple languages such as English, Japanese, and Spanish, and developed age-appropriate

multilingual education programs aimed at fostering young children's international perspective and enhancing their cross-cultural communication competence.

Language enlightenment activities are interactive and engaging teaching practices. To better stimulate young children's interest in language learning, teachers can create diverse language learning contexts[4]. In this regard, the kindergarten attaches great importance to the richness of curriculum content and the innovation of teaching methods, striving to build a favorable language learning environment. Specifically: for children in the junior class, game-based teaching is adopted, using songs, animations and other forms to guide children to contact and actively learn languages; for those in the middle class, language practice sessions are integrated to encourage children to apply what they have learned in games and daily life, enabling them to speak confidently and fluently; for the senior class, the focus is on improving children's comprehensive language application abilities. For example, one of the current thematic activities for senior class children is language comprehensive application training, including speech practice and hosting experience, through which children can attempt major language-related tasks such as hosting events, storytelling, and participating in competitions. Meanwhile, the kindergarten regularly organizes activities like the International Cultural Festival, where professional teachers and foreign teachers familiar to the children guide mutual teaching and learning between the children, promoting mutual understanding and communication.

3.3. Developing Curriculum Resources to Construct a Distinctive Curriculum System

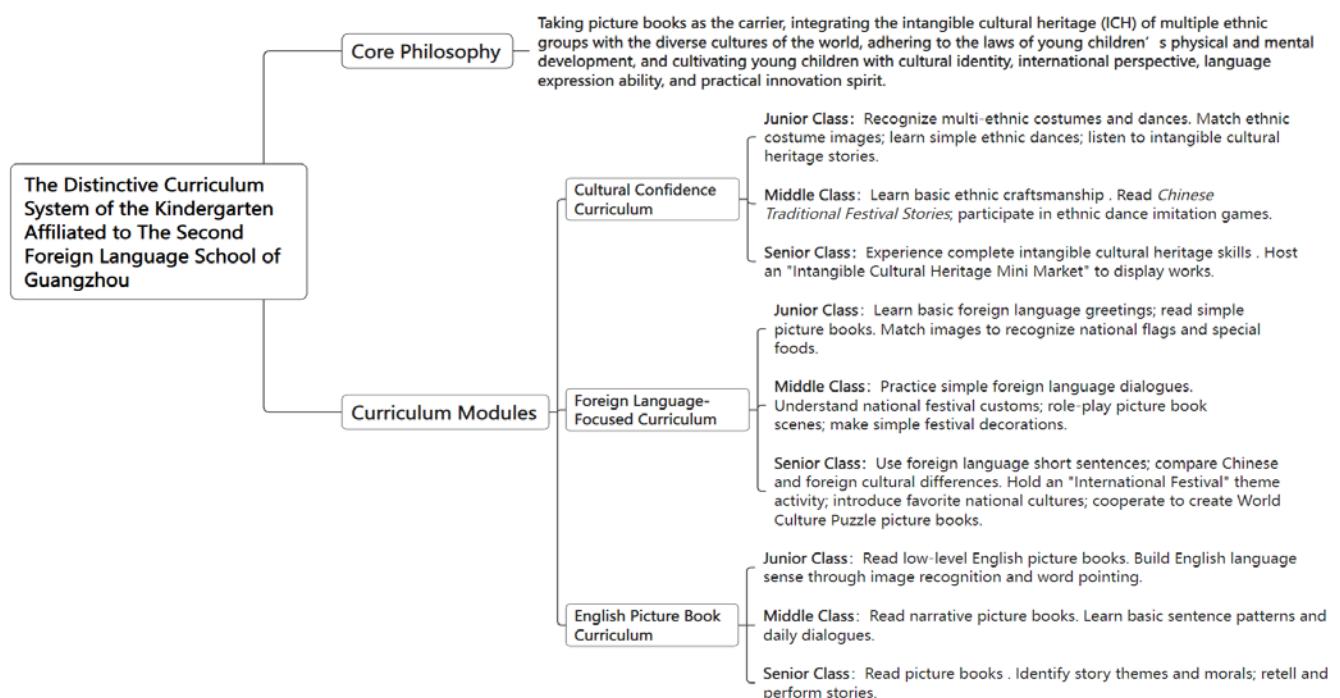


Figure 1 The Distinctive Curriculum System of the Kindergarten Affiliated to The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou.

Curriculum is the key to nurturing people. To transform the talent cultivation model, optimizing the curriculum structure should be prioritized. Constructing a school curriculum system that embodies the spirit of the times, features diversity and openness, is vibrant, multi-level, and optional constitutes one of the important approaches to promoting the development of characteristic schools[5].The core philosophy of the curriculum system at the Kindergarten Affiliated to The

Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou is: taking picture books as the carrier, integrating the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of multiple ethnic groups with the diverse cultures of the world, adhering to the laws of young children's physical and mental development, and cultivating young children with cultural identity, international perspective, language expression ability, and practical innovation spirit. With "cultural confidence", "foreign language characteristics", and "picture book carriers" as the three pillars, the kindergarten has constructed a hierarchical and sequential curriculum resource system in accordance with the physical and mental development laws of children in junior, middle, and senior classes, ultimately forming the distinctive curriculum system of the Kindergarten Affiliated to The Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou.

3.3.1. Cultural Confidence Curriculum

For young children in the junior class, whose thinking is mainly concrete, teachers can select picture books with vivid illustrations to carry out enlightenment activities, helping them initially recognize the unique characteristics of various ethnic groups. For example, choosing picture books such as *Picture Book of China's Map (Volume of Fifty-Six Ethnic Groups)* and *Amazing Chinese Costumes* enables children to clearly understand the costume styles of different ethnic groups; supplementing these with activities like listening to simple intangible cultural heritage stories and learning ethnic dances further deepens their impression of various ethnic groups.

Children in the middle class have improved cognitive abilities compared with those in the junior class. Teachers can organize experiential activities around ethnic festivals and teach children to make simple ethnic handicrafts. For instance, using the picture book *Stories of Traditional Chinese Festivals*, teachers can introduce distinctive festivals such as the Yi Ethnic Group's Torch Festival to children; organizing children to make festival-related decorations allows them to experience the connotation of ethnic culture through hands-on practice.

Children in the senior class have strong comprehension and expression abilities. Teachers can design and carry out ethnic art exploration activities. By selecting ethnic-themed picture books such as *Batik and Sky-Supporting Umbrellas*, teachers first explain the technical principles of batik, an intangible cultural heritage. After the explanation, teachers organize children to make practical works such as handkerchiefs, clothes, and pillowcases using batik techniques. In addition, teachers can carry out picture book story performance activities, through which children can deeply perceive the artistic charm contained in ethnic intangible cultural heritage.

3.3.2. Foreign Language-Focused Curriculum

The junior class is a critical period for young children's language learning. Teachers teach young children simple foreign language greetings and help them understand the characteristics of various countries through a variety of activities. For example, selecting simple picture books such as *Hello, World!* helps children learn daily greetings like "Hello" and "Goodbye"; picture books such as *Animals Around the World* can also be used to enable children to recognize the national flags and characteristic foods of different countries, gradually establishing a preliminary understanding of various cultures.

After entering the middle class, young children's comprehension and expression abilities are gradually improved. Based on this characteristic, teachers can organize basic dialogue training activities for children to enhance their language expression skills. Teachers can select picture books such as *Christmas Around the World* and *Halloween Fun* as teaching materials, and tell children about the origins and traditional customs of Western festivals with the help of the picture book content. During the narration, teachers will also teach children relevant foreign language words and simple dialogues, such as "What's this?" In the learning process, children can not only learn about

the festival customs of various countries but also simulate festival scenes through role-playing and group activities, and make simple festival decorations such as Christmas stockings and cherry blossom cards by hand.

Children in the senior class already have a certain foundation in English. Teachers can carry out Chinese and foreign cultural comparison activities to help them initially perceive cultural differences. For example, using picture books such as *The Chinese Spring Festival and Christmas*, teachers guide children to clarify the differences between Chinese and Western festivals in terms of time, food, traditional customs, etc. The kindergarten also regularly holds thematic activities such as "International Festivals", encouraging children to take the initiative to share the culture of their favorite countries.

3.3.3. English Picture Book Curriculum

For the English Picture Book Curriculum designed for junior class children, teachers should focus on fostering their visual perception and initiating English language sense enlightenment. During the curriculum preparation phase, teachers can select English picture books with bright colors and vivid illustrations, such as *Brown Bear* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. By leveraging the content of these picture books, teachers teach young children basic English vocabulary related to animals and colors, such as "bear", "red", and "apple". Meanwhile, teachers can organize activities like "picture book mimicry shows", guiding children to imitate the actions depicted in the picture books. Through these vivid and engaging classroom experiences, children can deepen their understanding and memory of the learned words while stimulating their interest in English learning.

In the English Picture Book Curriculum for middle class children, teachers can guide them in intensive reading of English picture books. Using picture books with slightly more complex plots, such as *The Little Red Hen*, as teaching materials, teachers carefully explain the content to help children sort out the story logic and teach simple sentence patterns like "The little red hen said...". Additionally, role-playing activities are organized, allowing children to act out the stories in English, which cultivates their oral expression skills and ability to use English in situational contexts.

For the senior class, the English Picture Book Curriculum focuses on developing children's comprehension and comprehensive application abilities. Teachers select classic picture books such as *Charlotte's Web* and *James and the Giant Peach*, guiding children to analyze character traits, identify story themes and morals, and clarify story structures. Furthermore, teachers can hold "picture book-themed debates"—for example, centering on the topic "Does friendship require sacrifice?" from *Charlotte's Web*—encouraging children to express their opinions and participate in debates in English. This not only enhances their English expression skills but also cultivates their critical thinking abilities.

4. Effective Implementation Paths for Kindergarten Distinctive Curriculum Systems.

4.1. Refine Educational Philosophy, Clarify Goals and Directions

The Kindergarten Affiliated to the Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou collects and studies educational documents both at home and abroad, and conducts in-depth research on cutting-edge educational philosophies and teaching methods. Combining its own actual school-running situation, the kindergarten invites educational experts, scholars and in-house teachers to participate in joint discussions. Through full exchanges and in-depth deliberations, it has finally refined its core educational philosophy featuring the "trinity" of natural education, multilingual learning, and picture book reading.

This philosophy advocates that nature should serve as the first teacher in children's growth. In the process of getting close to nature, children can gradually develop keen observation skills, a spirit of bold exploration, and awareness of environmental protection. Multilingual learning programs help broaden children's international horizons and enhance their cross-cultural communication capabilities. Picture books, as an important carrier, can fully stimulate children's imagination and creativity, help them develop good reading habits, and improve their aesthetic appreciation.

Through the in-depth integration of theory and practice, the kindergarten has further clarified its ultimate educational goal: with picture books as the main carrier, it organically integrates the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of multiple ethnic groups and the world's diverse cultures, and strictly follows the laws of children's physical and mental development to cultivate children who have a strong cultural identity, a broad international perspective, as well as excellent language expression and practical innovation capabilities.

4.2. Strengthen Teacher Team Development, Enhance Overall Teaching Quality

Teachers are the core driving force behind the construction of a distinctive curriculum system. The Kindergarten Affiliated to the Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou attaches great importance to strengthening the development, training and cultivation of its teaching staff, so as to improve teachers' professional qualities and teaching competence. It regularly invites educational experts from relevant fields to the kindergarten to deliver professional training sessions, and encourages teachers to actively participate in teaching competitions, teaching research activities and other events at all levels to enhance their teaching proficiency and creativity.

The kindergarten also adopts diverse approaches including teaching research activities, classroom observations and experience-sharing sessions to facilitate mutual learning and discussion among teachers of different classes, thereby boosting their work enthusiasm and initiative. For instance, it regularly organizes group lesson preparation activities, where teachers jointly discuss the teaching objectives, content and methods of the distinctive courses. In addition, the kindergarten encourages teachers to observe each other's classes, conduct evaluations afterward, and exchange teaching experiences and ideas.

4.3. Establish Home-Kindergarten Co-Education Mechanism, Foster a Positive Atmosphere

The *Guidelines* emphasize that "kindergartens should cooperate closely with families to jointly create favorable conditions for children's development". The Kindergarten Affiliated to the Second Foreign Language School of Guangzhou adopts diverse forms of home-kindergarten interaction to guide parents in deeply participating in the curriculum and build an "educational synergy".

The kindergarten has established a home-kindergarten communication platform, through which it reports to parents on the progress of educational and teaching work, the construction and promotion of the distinctive curriculum system, as well as children's learning and living conditions at the kindergarten; collects parents' evaluations and opinions on the kindergarten's operations; invites parents to jointly address issues related to early childhood education; and sets up open online information platforms including virtual parent-teacher meetings, WeChat groups, official WeChat accounts and campus websites. These platforms publish kindergarten news, educational updates, teaching resources, children's daily activities at the kindergarten, as well as photos and video materials of various activities that children take part in.

Meanwhile, the kindergarten regularly organizes parent-child activities such as sports games, picture book salons and reading sessions, creating a platform for parents to gain an in-depth understanding of the kindergarten's education and teaching, and helping parents collaborate with the kindergarten more effectively in educational work.

In addition, the kindergarten has set up a Parent Committee, which can participate in various affairs of the kindergarten such as curriculum development and activity planning, put forward more constructive opinions and suggestions for the kindergarten's long-term development, and thus gather strong forces for home-kindergarten co-education.

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