

Study on the construction of youth outdoor education system in China

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Abstract: In recent years, the content of physical education in our country has some problems, to a certain extent, restricts the healthy development of young people's physical and mental, aims for the future of China's outdoor youth education research provide certain theoretical reference

Key words: Teenagers; Outdoor education; Connotation; Architecture

1. Introduction

Youth outdoor education originated in the United Kingdom, with the renowned British educator and founder of the Scouts, Robert Baden-Powell, beginning to explore issues related to youth outdoor education in the 1870s. The Industrial Revolution in the UK at the time brought tremendous wealth to the public but also caused a series of serious social problems. In particular, many young people in the country lacked spiritual education in their character, lost their sense of responsibility, and their sense of mission had disappeared. Although many social groups actively organized efforts to save the majority of adolescents from moral decay at that time, they did not see that the root cause of these problems was the lack of proper character education after adolescents' material wealth became saturated. What society needed most at the time was to concentrate on actively guiding and nurturing the nature of the young with positive ideological guidance and character cultivation.

Baden-Powell believed that adolescents could not rely solely on classroom teaching to gain knowledge; comprehensive education should guide the youth to move outdoors to breathe fresh air, learn, play, and exercise. Baden-Powell once said in his book, "In the fragrance of the soil bestowed by nature, walking in the wilderness of the mountain paths, the beating soul begins to look around. The great outdoors is the best school for people to come into contact with and observe the rich and colorful world. Even if only a small amount of fresh outdoor elements are added to daily life, that would be enough." [1] In 1929, Baden-Powell published the book "Scouting for Boys," in which he proposed his outdoor educational philosophy as "education for life." Baden-Powell also pointed out that the main reason for the current listlessness of young people in the UK was a certain "leakage" in traditional education. This leakage was that regular school education was too focused on the study of theoretical knowledge and detached from the reality of life. The reality of life that Baden-Powell referred to is not only about the meaning of survival but also about learning life and social skills through the platform of outdoor sports. Then, he taught others how to build and enjoy life, ultimately creating the value of individual life and existence, and gaining happiness and insight from it.

2. Development overview of youth outdoor Ed.

United States: As early as the early 19th century, some American educators found that taking adolescents outdoors to teach them appropriate practical skills, personal attitudes, and social values could effectively promote indoor education. In 1850, Frederick William Gunn (1816-1881) and his wife founded the first outdoor education school in Washington, D.C., where outdoor sports courses were the main content. The school required all students to camp on the beach by the sea once a year, which is considered the beginning of youth outdoor education. By the 1920s, Dr. L.B. Sharp Lloyd at Columbia University, influenced by Dewey's open education philosophy, officially proposed an "Outdoor Education" program, and he himself is known as the "Father of Outdoor Education" [2]. In addition, many scholars have made indispensable

contributions to youth outdoor education, Dr. Julian Smith (1901-1975) not only considered youth outdoor education as a team collaboration activity but also emphasized the unique natural educational value of outdoor education. He believed that outdoor education is an effective way to enrich and expand classroom education. With the strong promotion of scholars, outdoor education courses have developed in the United States like mushrooms after rain, spread across states such as Washington, California, Texas, Michigan, Indiana, New York, and New Jersey.

United Kingdom: The origin of outdoor education in the UK dates back to the 1990s. In the UK, outdoor education is defined as an educational process provided in outdoor environments, through specific outdoor activity opportunities for adolescents and adults, to maintain and develop their self-esteem and confidence. In 2006, the British government's relevant departments issued the "Outdoor Learning Statement" to encourage primary and secondary school students to step out of the classroom, laying a good external policy environment for the smooth development and implementation of youth outdoor education in the UK. Practice has proven that outdoor education not only stimulates the curiosity and motivation to learn of young people but is also particularly effective for adolescents who have difficulties learning in the classroom [3]. By 2006, about 100 outdoor schools had been established in the UK, and the content and process of outdoor education carried out in these schools were the same, requiring learners to participate regularly and persistently.

Japan: In the 1960s, American outdoor education concepts were introduced into Japan, where they are referred to as "field education." Centered on the theme of "the power to survive," this form of education is implemented by government departments and has become quite widespread in Japan. Although Japanese outdoor schools may not be as systematic as those in the UK, their ultimate goal is also to cultivate good citizens who are physically strong, psychologically healthy, and possess certain social life skills [4]. In the 1980s, Nagano Prefecture in Japan established its first outdoor forest school—"Forest Kindergarten." The educational philosophy of this kindergarten is to perceive and care for nature, mainly by guiding children to engage in outdoor activities in the natural environment, fully mobilizing their senses to wholeheartedly experience nature.

Germany: In 1881, German educators proposed the establishment of schools themed around the outdoors, with the purpose of helping long-term sick youth to improve their academic performance. However, it was not until 1904 that Germany established its first full-time outdoor education school, which enrolled only children with illnesses [5]. The philosophy of German outdoor schools advocates the promotion of students' physical and mental development through outdoor sports. Teachers often use praise and encouragement to communicate and interact with each student. Through these interactions, children can feel the love from teachers and classmates, as well as the unique charm of nature.

Domestic: Adolescent outdoor education in China has just begun, and it is still in the exploratory stage in terms of theoretical research and practical experience. Of course, with the support of relevant departments such as the National Sports Bureau's Mountaineering Sports Management Center, domestic scholars have begun to slowly explore and clarify the current state of adolescent outdoor education in major regions of China, analyze the characteristics and significance of outdoor education, and preliminarily summarize the development trajectory of adolescent outdoor education in China. However, the aforementioned research is merely a description of some superficial phenomena, and most have not yet made in-depth and sufficient discussions on the underlying reasons for these phenomena and how to effectively solve problems. It can be anticipated that in the near future, as the physical health condition of Chinese adolescents continues to decline and the developmental deficiencies of adolescents become increasingly apparent, influenced by modern educational concepts and actively promoted by film and television media, adolescent outdoor education will attract more and more attention and importance, becoming a new research hotspot.

3. The construction of the youth outdoor education content system.

The specific target system of outdoor education determines the content of its implementation. Therefore, this study attempts to delineate the scope of outdoor education based on the cultivation goals of its practice, which mainly includes health education, life education, life skills education, and ecological education.

3.1. Health education

Health education primarily refers to the intervention of physical and mental health for young people through outdoor sports. Physical education is a special form of exercise that has evolved from human daily life practices, using physical activity as a means of sport education. As an important part of physical education, the value of the physical exercise aspect of outdoor education has not been fully recognized. The author believes that the value of physical exercise in outdoor education mainly has two aspects: (1) promoting participants in outdoor sports to become individuals with strong athletic abilities; (2) enabling participants to become proficient in mastering professional knowledge and skills in all aspects of outdoor sports (including the forms and culture of outdoor sports). As the pressures of individual social life continue to increase, people are gradually realizing the importance of mental health in overall physical health, especially the mental health issues of young people, which are receiving more and more attention. Outdoor sports are a form of social activity that meets both material and spiritual needs through close contact with nature. Therefore, outdoor education can not only enhance the physical fitness of young people but also ensure their physical and mental health, ultimately having a positive impact on their lifelong health.

3.2. Life education

In recent years, incidents of adolescents hurting others and committing suicide have been on the rise. People can't help but ask: What's wrong with our children? Why are there so many incidents of disregard for life, both their own and others'? What issues have arisen in our education system? The reasons can be attributed to one aspect: schools' single-minded pursuit of enrollment rates, neglecting the care for the value of life and emotional aspects in education. On the other hand, much of the life education currently conducted in schools is limited to providing students with life health knowledge in written or oral form, but lacks guidance and education on dealing with unexpected events in life, leading some students to resort to extreme measures when encountering problems.

Outdoor sports, as an activity closely connected with nature, have unique connotations of life education and rich life educational resources. How to effectively integrate life education with outdoor education to subtly guide students to cherish life is a topic with both theoretical and practical significance in outdoor education. The author believes that in outdoor education, teaching students how to survive is an important aspect, such as escape and self-rescue skills in unexpected events like earthquakes, fires, and drowning. How to face death correctly is another aspect of outdoor education that should be emphasized. Through outdoor education, the knowledge about death and its application should be conveyed to individuals and society, educating adolescents to establish a correct view of death.

3.3. Life education

The renowned Chinese educator, Mr. Tao Xing Zhi, believed that physical education originates from life and ultimately serves life [6]. However, in the current process of physical education teaching in classrooms, it has been observed that some teachers, in their pursuit of making teaching relevant to life, expend a considerable amount of manpower, material resources, and finances, and even exaggeratedly simulate real-life scenes. For instance, in some open classes in primary and secondary schools, to present a realistic teaching environment, teachers will bring in daily items such as carrying poles and shovels, allowing students to understand and learn their uses. At first glance, this approach seems innovative in classroom design and teaching content and can quickly enhance students' interest in physical education classes in the short term. But upon closer examination, this method can be considered a form of self-promotion and exhibitionism, which is difficult to effectively and sustainably apply to regular physical education classes.

Outdoor sports, as a course closely connected with nature and society, often encounter unforeseen situations during activities, which truly hones adolescents' abilities to respond to unexpected life issues. In modern society, most students are only children and often lack some essential life skills, such as cooking and sewing. Moreover, they lack the spirit and courage for teamwork and overcoming difficulties. Therefore, in the process of youth outdoor education, it is important to first try to understand the existing knowledge structure and life experiences of adolescents and combine outdoor sports courses with their real-life situations. Only when outdoor education courses are connected to the adolescents' actual lives can they be seen, touched, and used by them, and no longer be simply dull physical education courses.

3.4. Ecological education

Youth outdoor education, as a form of ecological education that closely engages with nature, primarily considers non-seeking, non-gaudiness, and non-traceability in terms of ecological principles. Speaking of non-seeking, it is the fundamental character and supreme state of nature. Youth outdoor education should pursue the state of non-seeking. In the process of young people engaging in outdoor sports, they are undergoing an educational activity that has no illusory educational ideals and no daunting teaching objectives. As learners, teenagers do not need to worry about grades; all they have to do is to devote themselves wholeheartedly to outdoor sports and fully enjoy the happiness brought to them by these activities. Therefore, we must vigorously advocate a return to the original ecological outdoor education, distancing youth education from utilitarianism and material desires, restoring its original "non-seeking" state.

Additionally, as an ecological education, youth outdoor education should also pursue a state of non-gaudiness. In simple terms, youth outdoor education courses should try to provide young people with an external educational environment that is close to the reality of life, which has been mentioned earlier in life education but differs here from the broad sense of daily life. The overall educational life provided for young people to experience, if it is "perfect" and "filtered" to the point of being flawless, loses the authenticity of the "whole." More worryingly, young people experience such a "perfect" educational life. When teenagers leave this ideal scene due to age and family changes and encounter "real" life, they will face various setbacks. Therefore, while outdoor education instills "truth, goodness, and beauty" in students, it should also seize the opportunity to let young people grasp the "original ecological" relationship between humans, nature, and society through real situations and personal experiences.

If non-seeking is an educational philosophy and non-gaudiness is an educational method, then non-traceability is an educational realm that youth outdoor education seeks to achieve. The non-traceability pursued by youth outdoor education refers to the internal insight obtained by young people during the process of outdoor sports, a kind of subtle influence. In a sense, the non-traceability that youth outdoor education pursues can be understood as enabling young people to learn self-learning and self-education. The nourishment and cultivation of humans by nature is a form of "self-education" [7]. The ocean, with its openness and vastness, teaches people to embrace all streams, to be inclusive; the grasslands, with their vastness and greenery, teach people to be unrestrained and to pursue freedom.

4. Promoting effective approaches to youth outdoor education

4.1. Theoretical basis and progress in youth outdoor Ed. research

Theoretical research of outdoor education is the foundation and prerequisite for it. With the achievements and guidance of theoretical research, outdoor education activities will not be blindly followed but can be truly carried out in a targeted manner. Through relevant research, we can grasp the overall situation of youth outdoor education in China and, in light of the existing problems in youth outdoor education, deeply explore and systematically organize by drawing on the experiences of developed countries.

4.2. Integrating outdoor Ed. into schools and beyond

Schools are the main front for youth outdoor education. They should start from the overall structure and training objectives of outdoor education, integrate outdoor education into the entire school education system, enrich the methods and means of education, and strive to create a school atmosphere that loves nature and life [8]. However, outdoor education cannot rely solely on schools. Parents of young people also must take on their due responsibilities, consciously realizing the important role of outdoor education in the formation of good qualities for young people, and strive to create an equal, democratic, harmonious, healthy, and uplifting family atmosphere. Finally, all sectors of society are also important promoters of youth outdoor education. In particular, mass media such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet can foster a positive atmosphere for youth outdoor education throughout society, by utilizing programs like the show "Dad, Where Are We Going?" which focuses on youth outdoor education.

4.3. Outdoor Ed. in physical Ed. curriculum

The integration of outdoor education into the physical education curriculum and outdoor sports activities is essential. Through practical operations in outdoor settings, awareness of outdoor education for adolescents should be infused into physical education materials and curricula, such as by adding educational content that relates to life and life skills [9]. Of course, it is also possible to draw on the forms of activities from foreign scouting organizations. By holding regular large-scale outdoor camping activities, it helps to promote and spread the culture of youth outdoor education.

5. Conclusion

The thinking and practical abilities of adolescents are still in a low-level, underdeveloped state, and their judgment of certain things and issues is still quite superficial. In particular, their understanding of health and life is not emphasized, and their ability to live independently is still lacking. Therefore, the construction of content for adolescent outdoor education just solves this problem. It is believed that experiential education through outdoor sports can truly promote the healthy growth of adolescents, teach them to be courageous in taking responsibility, and correctly face the various problems they will encounter in life.

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