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Category: Higher Education Policy

Hui Liu, Xiao Meng Tang

College of Education, Guangzhou University, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China

“Chinese Model” of Lifelong Education System Establishment ——on Timing of Integration of Higher Education into Lifelong Education

Abstract: Still being in its primary state, Chinese lifelong education system is far away from its ideal condition. In future, the difficulty of lifelong education system expansion lies in all forms of education at all levels in national education system. The timing of integration of all forms of education at all levels into lifelong education system is not only restricted by their own characteristics and development rules but also influenced by lifelong education system subject. In future, Chinese lifelong education will present the pattern of gradual integration of all forms of education at all levels into lifelong education system. The order is vocation education first, then followed by regular higher education, and basic education being the last.

Keywords: Chinese model; education; lifelong education system

Chinese lifelong education practice has witnessed a history of over ten years. Since the beginning of 1990s, the central government has come up with the strategic target of setting up lifelong education system, each place has made huge progress on establishment of local lifelong education system by active practice and innovation, and boosted development of national lifelong education policy and construction of the system. But meanwhile, we notice that so far, the lifelong education system is still in primary state, education forms it contains and degree of lifelong education concept it carries are far from its ideal condition. Analyze the difference between reality condition and necessity condition, then further analyze the timing of integration of all forms of education at all levels into lifelong education system, and uncover development route of Chinese lifelong education system will help us to view the development of lifelong education system in a more rational way.

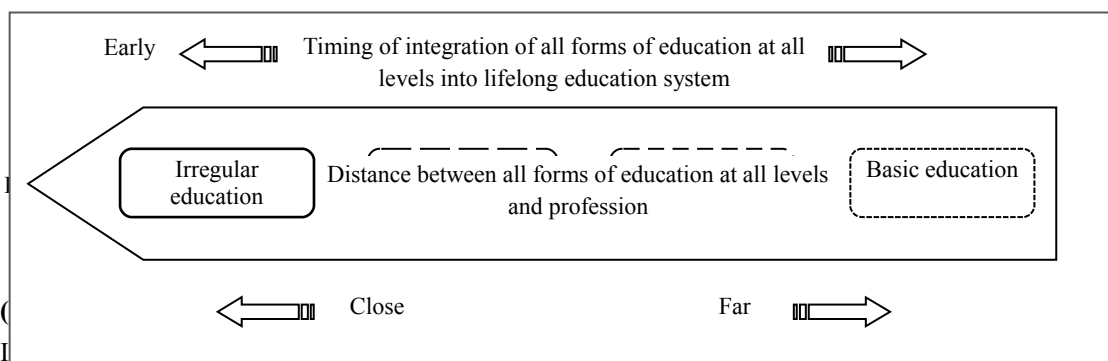
Analytic Dimension of All Forms of Education at All Levels Integrating into Life-Long Education System

When all forms of education at all levels integrate into lifelong education system, they are not only restricted by their own characteristics and development rules of all forms of education at all levels but also influenced by lifelong education system subject.

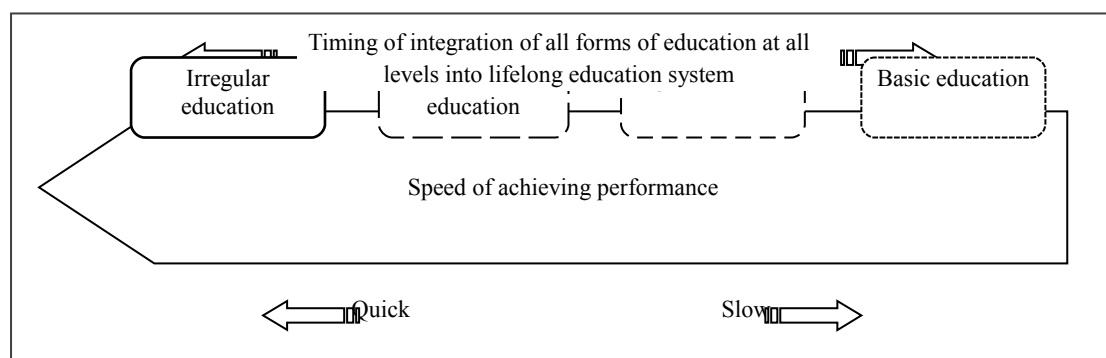
(I) All forms of education at all levels: distance from profession

The primary goal of education is to teach people knowledge and the ability of fitting in society and surviving. From this point of view, all forms of education at all levels in national education system are profession oriented. As the subject and target of all forms of education at all levels are different, their

distances from profession are varied. “Distance from profession” here means closeness between its education target and profession skills requirement rather than time distance between this education phase or form and employment, as profession requires practical skills first but not indirect knowledge. The purpose of lifelong education is to boost people’s lifelong learning and development, however, its primary function is still solving people’s “survive” needs, then “people” growth and generation. At the initial stage of development of each countries’ lifelong education, its effect and function focus on the first aspect, people attach more importance on the practical value of lifelong education, therefore, they will choose education level and type which has direct impact on boosting employment and fostering labors as breakthrough and priority. The selection criteria are the distance between all forms of education at all levels and education. Education level or type that is nearer to profession requirement will enter into lifelong education system sooner, such as vocational education; on the contrary, education level or type that is further to profession requirement will enter into lifelong education system later, such as basic education (Figure 1).

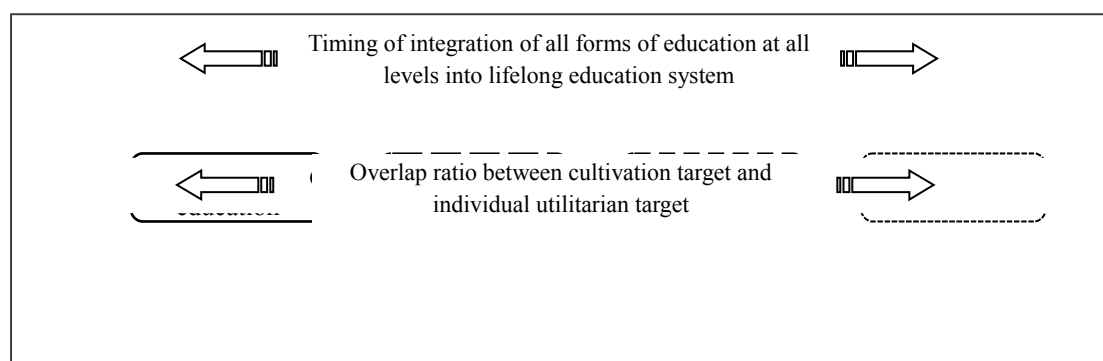


is the subject of policy and implementation. Its lifelong education value and reform ideas will decide the route selection of lifelong education development. So far, Chinese government’s lifelong education policy tends to have obvious utilitarianism. This utilitarianism manifested in department benefit drive and performance evaluation, among which, government utilitarian behavior caused by performance evaluation mechanism is the key factor that impacts government lifelong education policy. So far, the lifelong education system covers irregular education only, and its route selection standard is affected by utilitarian attitude to a great extent, as these education forms will exhibit obvious effect soon after certain material investment. This can be proved by formalization trend presented by lifelong education practice of each place. Therefore, we can believe that standing on the view of government, in future national education system, the process of integration of all forms of education at all levels into lifelong education system will present the following trend: education forms which focus on vocational skill training, take quick effect by material investment, and reflect government lifelong education development performance will integrate into lifelong education system first; on the contrary, those education forms focusing on concept and quality fostering and difficult to take effect after material investment will integrate into lifelong education system later (Figure 2).



(III) Individual subject: occupation orientation

The role that an individual plays in lifelong education is not only the educated, but also a demander. Individual lifelong education demand and their selection of education form are affected by their education philosophy and study philosophy. This philosophy can be either utilitarian or non-utilitarian. In such a populous country as China, fierce employment competition makes it difficult for people to combine utilitarian with non-utilitarian study, therefore, when individuals conduct lifelong study, they will first select the most practical and optimum method to achieve what they want via the most simple way. Driven by employment and vocational development benefit, overlap ratio between individual education target and cultivation target of all forms of education at all levels become a determinant factor of this education level's or type's integration into lifelong education system: for education phase or type that has low overlap ratio between cultivation target and individual utilitarian target, due to the impact by utilitarian attitude, its cultivation target's deviation is higher, the implementation of lifelong education philosophy is harder, such as exam-oriented trend in basic education; for education phase or type that has high overlap ratio between cultivation target and individual utilitarian target, due to the impact by utilitarian attitude, its cultivation target's deviation is lower, it is much easier to integrate into lifelong education system, for example, vocational education (Figure 3).



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