

WTO and Lifelong Education Strategies for Teachers

WANG Zhi-guo, ZHENG Yu

(Huaiyin Teachers College, Huai'an, Jiangsu 223001, P. R. China)

Abstract: After China's entry into WTO, teachers have been confronted with many opportunities and challenges. Lifelong education strategies are problems we should take into account carefully. This article expounds the objective demands, ideas, content, measures and functions of lifelong education.

Key words: WTO; lifelong education; strategy

After China's entry into WTO, a lot of researches for countermeasures have been conducted in all walks of life, education is no exception. To a developing country like ours, the entry into WTO has made it inevitable immigration of foreign educational institutions. And the competition between the domestic and foreign institutions will become increasingly ferocious. As to our teachers, how to cope with new situation and avail of the opportunities are both important issues we can't afford to neglect. Lifelong education and related learning strategies are satisfactory and feasible project.

1. Some Requirements for Lifelong Education

The UNESCO claims that education in the 21st century is mainly characterized by lifelong education, student-centeredness and the internationalization of education. Education is among the twelve industries of service trade that enter WTO. Like other service trades, education service can supply four means of service—cross-border supply, consumption abroad, commercial presence and presence of natural persons. Therefore, the entry into WTO brings both opportunities and challenges to the teachers who have already borne the heavy burden of educating. The basic principles of WTO—openness, justice and fairness and the main features—freedom, competition and internationalization will be the main criteria by which we evaluate our economic activities. These ideas will be ingrained in our mind, and will be also conducive to the elevation of teachers' social status, betterment of teachers' welfare and occupational mobility; meanwhile some challenges are brought as well. First comes the capability crisis, traditional spoon-feed educational mode is bound to be eliminated, the application of computer network and multimedia technology in education is imperative under this situation. This requires the teachers to master basic skills and knowledge of multimedia network teaching and cultivate the ability of designing teaching software. Then comes the puzzle of values, some western countries may take advantage of the convenient situations of China's entry into WTO, and then infiltrate the capitalistic ideology and values. Finally there come the threat of being laid off and the deprivation of original social status. After the WTO entry, students may have more choices

WANG Zhi-guo, male, professor of Department of Physics and Electronics, Huaiyin Teachers College; research fields: college physics teaching & higher learning.

ZHENG Yu, male, lecturer of Department of College English Teaching and Research, Huaiyin Teachers College; research fields: college English teaching & higher learning.

for their education. The students' going abroad to study, the influx of foreign educational institutions and the foreign teachers, the loss of students will confront the teachers with a crisis, the ineligible teachers are sure to be laid off, the teachers on guard will also be laid off if not working hard. The improvement of education quality also brings a lot of pressure, for instance, many primary schools, elementary schools and high schools now require the teachers conduct bilingual teaching. The Ministry of Education has mandated the definite demands on the English teaching in undergraduates, this program is being implemented step by step, therefore the teacher feel a great pinch in improving their English proficiency. With the prevalence of network, teachers are no longer the exclusive information source for the students. In the quick changing digital era, the teachers become learners, and the students, with a high sensitivity to new culture, will be easier to accept the new culture than the teachers. Teachers' traditional authority and legal authority are gradually vanishing, and their professional authority is faced with serious challenges. New situation and new pressure demand the lifelong education of the teachers.

2. The Idea of Lifelong Education

As the old saying goes: "One is never too old to learn", "Out of three men, there must be one who can teach me" and so on. It can be seen that the idea of lifelong education has gone deep into people's mind, but it has not been elevated to the high position in traditional awareness, and hasn't associated it with professional capability and surviving skills. Many countries have early established the thought of lifelong education, in 1944 it was reflected in British educational decrees; France adopted the conception of lifelong education in the legislative documents for the first time. In late 1950s and early 1960s, the idea of lifelong education came into being, and gradually became an international trend of thought. Lengrand, French education ideologist and adult educator, is the man who first systematically put forward the lifelong education theory. His thoughts were greatly confirmed by UNESCO in the year of international education and his representative works *A Guide to Lifelong Education* had been translated into 18 languages and been publicized and popularized. Lengrand argued that the idea a man having certain knowledge and skills can manage with his whole life has been outdated. Education in the real sense does not consist in acquiring a stack of knowledge, but in personal development and the increasingly sufficient self-fulfillment as a result of the successive experience. Therefore, the objective of education reform is to organize proper structure and use proper method to help people maintain the continuity of study and training in their lives, meanwhile make each person perfect himself really and appropriately. This is also the total concept category of lifelong education.

Aiming at the demand of lifelong education and definition of it, teachers should acquaint themselves with contents and concrete measures of lifelong education.

3. The Contents of Lifelong Education

After entering WTO, Chinese government made earnest promises in the field of education. About this, CHEN Zhi-li who is the former Minister of Education pointed out, in the article of *The Influence of China's Entry into WTO on Education and Related Researches*, professional training should be enhanced and lifelong education system should be established. Vigorous efforts shall be made to develop community education, various and flexible professional training, and modern information technology shall be applied to the development of distant

education. Future society is a learning society; we should establish interconnected education system in various types and at different levels, and also more open and flexible school system shall be established to form a mature socialized education mode to meet the people's diverse demands for receiving education. Therefore lifelong education has many contents and covers a wide range. Combing the present situation, we use the following aspects as the primary contents of lifelong education. Lifelong education in the narrow sense is the improvement of teachers' knowledge and ability, constant perfection of their knowledge framework. The teachers shall study computer network, improve the ability of designing software and foreign language skills, be competent for bilingual education and become familiar with the teaching material in foreign original edition. Then the teachers should constantly renew their teaching methods, absorb good experience and enhance their teaching art and teaching level, face the challenges in a positive way. Last the theoretical research shall be further intensified and level of teaching and researching be enhanced. Lifelong education in the wide sense involves opening universities, various audiovisual education network, and network of high schools, distant education and adult education in various forms.

4. Measures of Lifelong Education

Above all, we ought to reinforce our learning of political theories to enhance our ideological consciousness. Strategically, we need to deprecate it, while tactically we should attach more importance to it. We should build up correct Weltanschauung via the elevation of our political theory level, arm ourselves with advanced scientific values, heighten continually the capability of value judgment and analysis, resist the erosion of negative values, and immerse our ideology and soul according to right values. Secondly, we shall strengthen the ability of self psychological regulation. Facing the new situations, we should grasp the opportunity initiatively to meet the challenge. Thus we can turn passivity into initiative, and stress into motivity. Under the powerful stress, teachers should potentiate the mental regulation ability and learn to self-relaxation. They need to participate in more activities so as to foster hobbies to relax the strained nerves and adjust body and mind reasonably. They should also exert the social supporting system and gain the emotional support from their families, relatives, colleagues and leaders to debase the stress effectively and decrease the occurrence of mental problems. Thirdly, keep to the principle of long-term goals combinative with short-term ones. The long-term goals mean entirely reconstructing the educational system in term of lifelong education to achieve finally the highly efficient society of openness where humans and each of their aspects and desires are respected. The goals can be divided into several stages, i.e., some concrete short-term goals, and then they are much easier to be accomplished. Fourthly, increase the investment for the lifelong education and strive for the enforcement of it by law. Our country has promulgated Education Law and Teachers Law and is supposed to further quicken the lawmaking procedure and try for the financial support from the government. To promote the popularization of lifelong education, we should elevate the students' enthusiasm via the grant of bursary and stipend etc., which provides social vulnerable groups new opportunities for study as well.

5. Functions of Lifelong Education

After the entry of WTO, functions of lifelong education become more and more evident with our country's

progressive fulfillment of the educational service promises. Through lifelong education, teachers can master new knowledge and skills constantly. Then they can remedy the imperfect parts in their knowledge and skill framework. Besides, their ability can be optimized in the market competition and even get stored to realize the increment of their individual capabilities. Therefore, in modern life powered by the evolution of science & technology and innovation of knowledge, lifelong education will function enormously as to the formation and reinforcement of individual capabilities. The actualities require us to construct and perfect the system of lifelong education to meet the challenge of the new era.

The entry of WTO demands teachers to research into the lifelong education strategies in real earnest, just as what the former president JIANG Ze-min requested in the convention celebrating the 80th anniversary of the CCP's establishment, "We ought to advance constantly the ideology & moral quality and science & culture quality of workers, farmers, intellectuals and other working people; enhance their working skills and creating talent continuously; and exert their enthusiasm, go-aheadism and creativeness to full advantage." To seize the opportunity and meet the challenge, we need to strengthen our capabilities and strive for going abroad and competing with worldwide colleagues some day.

References:

- [1] LU Xin-min. (2002). WTO and ISO. *Open Education Research*, (2).
- [2] WU Su-mei. (2002). An Analysis of the Influence of Entry into WTO on Teachers from Psychological Angle. *Education Exploration*, (4).
- [3] CHEN Zhi-li. (2002). The Influence of China's Entry into WTO on Education and Related Researches. *China Education Newspaper*, 2002-01-09 (1).
- [4] TAN Zhuang-cai. (2002). Reading of the Form of China's Promising to Make Concessions in Education Service Trade. *Comparative Education Research*, (4).
- [5] WANG Zhi-guo. (2002). A Brief Analysis of Constructing New Cyber Morality Education System in Technical Schools. *Technical Education*, (25).
- [6] WANG Zhi-guo. (2002). Emphasis shall be Made on the Application of Modern Educational Technique in Physical Experiments. *High School Physics Teaching*, (4).
- [7] WANG Zhi-guo. (2001). The Approaches of Moral Education in Physics Teaching. *Jiangnan Forum*, (8).

(Edited by ZHANG Dong-ling and ZHOU Qun-ying)