

### Thematic Conference on the Cooperative Project jointly held by the NIES and The Government of Nanan District, Chongqing

The NIES and the government of Nanan District, Chongqing jointly hosted the thematic conference on the cooperative project of advancing education quality and balance among regions on 15th March 2021. Yu Fayou, Vice-president of NIES, Bao Ruhua, Deputy Head of Nanan District of Chongqing, Long Xiaomei, Head of the Nanan District Educational Commission attended this conference.



Yu Fayou spoke highly of the exploration and achievement on promoting the balanced development of compulsory education in Nanan District, and pointed out that bilateral cooperation, which displays an integration of innovative theory and practice, would improve education quality and facilitate balanced development in the district.

Yu Fayou made a presentation entitled "Regional education quality under the guidance of new thought". The research group of NIES investigated 5 government agencies, 8 primary and secondary schools in Nanan District, and provided a feedback on the balanced development of compulsory education accordingly.

### Vice President Dr. Liu Guihua Meets with the Diplomats of Embassy of Cuba to China

On 19th March 2021, the first secretary of Embassy of Cuba to China, Mr. William Silva and his colleagues visited NIES. Dr. Liu Guihua, vice president of NIES attended the meeting.



Vice President Dr. Liu Guihua introduced the functional orientation, organizational structure, research field, important research outputs of NIES in recent years and the remarkable achievements of China's education reform and development. He sincerely invited the represents of Cuba to participate in the China Education Sciences Forum and the 3rd Belt and Road Education Forum to be held by NIES this year. Mr. William Silva reviewed the history of educational exchanges and cooperation between China and Cuba, spoke highly of China's achievement in educational reform and development, and gladly accepted the invitations. Mr. William Silva was very interested in the research progress of NIES in the fields of promoting educational equity, special education, and projects of educational reform and practice. Dr. Wang Xiaofei, the director of Department of Research Administration gave a brief introduction of the key research projects of NIES.

An in-depth exchange and discussions on the practical promotion of the cooperation agreement between NIES and the Central Institute of Education Sciences of Cuba, the participation of the activities of Belt & Road Education Research Network and the potential cooperation projects in the future were conducted in the meeting.

### The 2nd Forum of Educational Research Journal Was Successfully Held

The 2nd Forum of Educational Research Journal was held in Guangxi Normal University on April 17-18, 2021. The forum, with the theme of "From Poverty Alleviation through Education to Rural Educational Revitalization", was sponsored by the periodical office of Educational Research Journal, organized by the Faculty of Education of Guangxi Normal University, and supported by Guangxi Ethnic Education Development Research Center. 80 experts and scholars from more than 60 universities and research institutes across the country participated in the forum.



Yin Changchun, Party Secretary of NIES, delivered a speech at the forum. The experts and scholars delivered keynote speech themed "From Poverty Alleviation through Education to Rural Educational Revitalization". During the forum, group discussions and dialogues were held around the topics of "the knowledge and logic of the theory of poverty alleviation by education in China" "the value of rural education" "the healthy growth of rural children and teacher development""the sustainable development and layout optimization of county high schools". The new book "Education Interrupts the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty--A Collection of Special Topics in Educational Research" edited by the periodical office of Education Research Journal was also launched.



# NEWSLETTER

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## NEWS from Belt & Road Education Research Network

### New Reforms in School Education: Schools reluctant to part with traditional approach

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The term training that was popular in the pre-industrial era changed to education with industrialization and then to development in the new knowledge era. The paradigm shift in education that is now taking place calls the teachers to give up their previous roles of transmission and transaction to embrace the new role of transformation. The children today do not come to school to get the knowledge available to the teacher to adopt as it is or to adapt as suitable. Instead they come to school to find out new knowledge and meaning for themselves to prepare for the emerging, complex and dynamic future.

Our schools for long rested on three traditional pillars that focus on retaining the known, learning the pre-determined and constructing what is. The demands of the new millennium called the educationists to move the schools onto three new pillars that focus on revising the known, exploring the undetermined and constructing what might be. Exploration thus gaining a central place in learning, was for a new generation of proactive and futuristic citizens, who were ready to construct, not only new knowledge and meaning but also various requisites that the world needed in the future.

In view of taking our schools to the three new pillars early in the new millennium, the National Institute of Education introduced a new competency-based curriculum for all state schools of the country. Competencies were identified for subjects offered from grades 6 to 11, and broken down into competency levels that could be attained in a specified time period. At a time where many countries of the world were struggling with basic competencies, the officers responsible for the national curriculum followed a few developed nations that were moving into subject competencies. The purpose of all this was to motivate the students to go beyond subject knowledge to develop relevant attitudes and skills, which together with the knowledge, prepared them to face real life situations. Special attention was also paid to the subject Health and Physical Education that caters to physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of the learner.

To attain all these targets, an activity-oriented approach was introduced for learning and teaching, in a learner-centred environment. The activities planned under this approach focused on the competency levels specified for each subject.

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These activities also incorporated a variety of learning-teaching methods in addition to the main method of exploration. The students were expected to explore in small groups receiving teacher support in terms of feedback and feed forward. Feedback resembling medicine was for student groups that were off the track. Feed forward regarded as a tonic or stimulant was for other groups that were reaching the target speedily. The new culture of assessment thus initiated was to enable the students to learn independently with minimum teacher intervention.

Exploring groups also got the opportunity to present findings, elaborate findings of their own group as well as other groups, and conduct a variety of evaluations. Such evaluations allowed the students to make judgments on their own performance, performance of their own group and other groups, and the performance of the teacher. Having to do something in the learning environment helped students develop intra personal or personal skills namely initiative, responsibility, accountability, commitment, entrepreneurship, stress management and self-discipline. Having to think while at work enabled them to develop thinking skills such as creativity and critical thinking. Working in groups facilitated the development of inter-personal or social skills which nurtured caring and sharing, co-operation and collaboration, communication, leadership and followership. The activity-oriented approach thus took our children on to a new platform where they could develop creativity, critical thinking,

collaboration and communication that are popular today as the 4C's.

Reforms 2007 introduced five criteria for continuous assessment and evaluation within every activity. The first three of these referred to as subject competencies, were hard skills derived from the content selected for the activity. The last two originating from the learning-teaching process were generic competencies, commonly known today as soft skills. Generic competencies thus coming to the fore had to be caught by the students during the learning-teaching process rather than taught by the teacher. These competencies did not allow subjects with similar characteristics to be present in the curriculum any longer. This situation made Life Competencies, a subject that was there in the curriculum to be dropped while prohibiting old subjects like Value Education to be re-considered in the future. (To be continued.)

