

# Research on the Path of Integrating Local Resources into Rural Kindergarten Curriculum

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## ABSTRACT

Rural areas have abundant local resources. Integrating local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum can not only promote the reform and development of rural kindergarten curriculum, but also inspire rural young children to deeply understand and love their hometown. However, throughout the most rural kindergartens in China, local resources are disconnected from kindergarten curriculum and various local resources have not been effectively developed and utilized. In view of the aforementioned background, strengthening the theoretical and practical research on the curriculum of rural kindergarten local resources and developing and utilizing local resources according to local conditions have become the urgent problems to be solved. This paper discusses the feasibility, necessity, and effective path of integrating local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum, in order to promote the effective integration of local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum and provide some reference for rural kindergarten curriculum reform.

**Keywords:** Local resources, Curriculum, Rural kindergarten curriculum.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chen Heqin emphasized that "The curriculum of live education takes nature and the great society as the starting point, allowing students to directly learn from nature and the great society." In the context of abundant local resources, rural kindergartens should fully investigate and utilize local resources in rural areas, making them curriculum resources necessary for achieving high-quality early childhood education.

## 2. THE CONCEPT DEFINITION OF LOCAL RESOURCES AND RURAL KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The term "local resources" consists of two words: "local" and "resources". The existing research mainly defines local resources from the concepts of "local" and "resources". Curriculum is a widely used educational term with rich connotations. Kindergarten curriculum is a broader form of curriculum and rural kindergarten curriculum is a subset of kindergarten curriculum.

### 2.1 Local Resources

In *Ci Hai*, the definition of "local" is "hometown, home village". Chinese scholars generally believe that "local" is a geographical area where a person was born or has lived for a long time, composed of the natural, cultural, and living aspects of the "local", and has dynamism. "Resources" refer to the collective term for various material elements such as material resources, financial resources, and human resources possessed by a country or a certain region. "Resources" can be divided into two categories: natural resources and social resources.

The local resources in this paper refer to the natural and cultural ecological resources in the area where rural kindergartens are located, namely natural and human resources with local characteristics. Among them, natural resources mainly include animals and plants, sand, soil, wood and stones, terrains and landforms, as well as various field resources, and human resources refer to historic buildings, folk arts (such as paper cuttings, kites, New Year pictures), folk customs

(setting off firecrackers, pasting Spring Festival couplets), etc.

## **2.2 Curriculum and Rural Kindergarten Curriculum**

In early educational theory, Komenský proposed that curriculum refers to textbooks or teaching content. In the 1890s, Dewey proposed the view that curriculum is activity; Taylor further developed the concept of curriculum based on Dewey, believing that curriculum is experience. It can be seen that curriculum is a dynamic and constantly evolving concept. At present, the widely accepted views in the academic community on the understanding and interpretation of curriculum mainly include: Curriculum is the subject of teaching; Curriculum is a planned teaching activity; Curriculum is the expected learning outcome; Curriculum is learning experience; Curriculum is the reproduction of social culture; Curriculum is social transformation.

Kindergarten curriculum not only includes all planned subject teaching activities on the schedule, but also all spontaneous and generative activities of young children, and even various game and life activities. In other words, "Kindergarten curriculum is a means to achieve the goals of kindergarten education, which is the sum of various activities that help young children gain beneficial learning experiences and promote their comprehensive and harmonious development of body and mind." The various activities here refer to the "purposeful and planned educational processes that guide young children to be lively and proactive in various forms" in the Kindergarten Working Regulation.

Rural kindergarten curriculum refers to educational activities conducted in kindergartens in rural areas. According to the previous explanation of kindergarten curriculum, rural kindergarten curriculum refers to the sum of educational content and processes designed in rural kindergartens to promote the comprehensive development of young children based on the characteristics of rural environment, resources, culture, etc.

## **3. THE FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING LOCAL RESOURCES INTO RURAL KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM**

The implementation of the rural revitalization strategy and the reform of rural preschool curriculum have brought unprecedented conditions

and development opportunities for the integration of local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum, mainly reflected in four aspects: strong policy support, unique local resources, rich theoretical foundation, and missing local curriculum.

### **3.1 Important Guarantee: Strong Policy Support**

The Ministry of Education clearly stated in the Guidance of Kindergarten Education Program (Trial) that "All types of kindergartens in urban and rural areas should start from reality and implement quality education according to local conditions, laying a solid foundation for the lifelong development of young children." At the same time, it also emphasized that "Every kindergarten should make full use of social resources, guide young children to actually experience the richness and excellence of Chinese culture, feel the changes and development of their hometown, and stimulate young children's emotions of loving their hometown and motherland." In other words, rural kindergartens should actively utilize the local resources around them, deeply explore the educational value of these resources, and explore kindergartens' curriculum of local resources that meets the physical and mental development characteristics and needs of young children in rural areas.

### **3.2 Realistic Demand: Missing Local Curriculum**

The existing curriculum design of kindergartens mostly focuses on urban kindergartens, but due to the differences in educational resources between rural kindergartens and urban kindergartens, rural kindergartens may encounter various problems such as maladjustment and mismatch when implementing the curriculum of urban kindergartens. However, rural areas have rich and unique local resources, but most rural kindergartens lack the awareness of integrating these resources into their curriculum, resulting in insufficient recognition and identification of local culture among young children. Therefore, it is necessary to develop local curriculum suitable for rural young children to enhance their understanding and identification with the local culture.

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### **3.3 Theoretical Basis: "Live Education, Live Textbooks"**

Mr. Chen Heqin pointed out that the curriculum of live education is based on nature and the great society, allowing students to directly learn in nature and the great society. The great educator of the people, Tao Xingzhi, also pointed out that education should be based on the life experiences of young children and advocated that live education should utilize the living environment. He believed that kindergarten education should not be limited to the limited space within the kindergarten, but should be closely linked to nature and society, allowing young children to learn and live in the natural and social environment. It can be seen that "nature and the great society" are the eternal sources of kindergarten curriculum.

### **3.4 Development Space: Unique Local Resources**

Nature has endowed rural areas with abundant resources and time has also created unique local culture. For example, the most prominent local resources in rural areas are farmland and crops. Under different seasons and climatic conditions, various crops are planted in farmland, such as rice, wheat, corn, vegetables, etc. These crops are important carriers for rural young children to understand nature and life. Both human resources and natural resources such as plants, trees, and landscapes have a unique soul and charm, becoming a vivid interpretation of rural culture and a valuable asset in early childhood education.

## **4. THE NECESSITY OF INTEGRATING LOCAL RESOURCES INTO RURAL KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM**

Looking at existing literature, the authors believe that integrating local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum is an inevitable requirement for empowering rural revitalization with rural education, adapting to the natural development of rural young children, and supporting the professional growth of rural teachers, with immeasurable value for the reform and development of rural preschool education.

### **4.1 Rural Revitalization: Empowering Rural Revitalization with Rural Education**

General Secretary Xi Jinping deeply pointed out in the report of the 20th CPC National Congress that implementing the rural revitalization strategy is a comprehensive and historic task related to the comprehensive construction of a socialist modernized country. Education plays a fundamental and pioneering role in rural revitalization. It is the responsibility and mission of education to achieve effective connection between consolidating and expanding the achievements of poverty alleviation through education and rural revitalization and to empower rural revitalization with rural education. A good preschool education plays a promoting role in forging a solid educational foundation and rural kindergartens' curriculum of local resources is the guarantee of rural education quality and the fundament for empowering rural revitalization with rural education.

### **4.2 Following One's Nature: Helping Young Children Become Ideal Young Children**

Due to the lack of a mechanism for nurturing rural areas, in the "urban centrism" of rural preschool education, local knowledge is far from the classroom and the cultivation of hometown awareness is often neglected. Therefore, utilizing rural resources to construct rural kindergarten curriculum can not only increase young children's knowledge reserves and cultivate their awareness of loving their hometown and countryside, but also follow the natural development of young children, allowing them to grow naturally in natural education and helping them grow into ideal young children.

### **4.3 Teacher Development: Helping Preschool Teachers Become Curriculum Experts**

Integrating local resources into the curriculum of rural kindergartens requires teachers to pay more attention to the value of local resources and recognize their important role in the growth of young children. On the other hand, it urgently requires teachers to have certain abilities in curriculum development and innovative practice and be able to design curriculum content and activity forms that are more closely related to

young children's life and suitable for their development by combining local conditions and the needs of young children. This requires rural preschool teachers to deeply explore local resources, explore their educational value, and actively promote the effective integration of local resources with kindergarten curriculum. This process not only promotes the professional growth of rural preschool teachers, but also helps them become experts in rural preschool curriculum as soon as possible.

## **5. THE PATH OF INTEGRATING LOCAL RESOURCES INTO RURAL KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM**

Based on the characteristics of local resources and the trend of curriculum reform in rural kindergartens, the authors believe that the path of integrating local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum should specifically include six aspects: creating a localized kindergarten environment, establishing theme activities, designing game activities, creating distinctive corners, strengthening family-kindergarten cooperation, and following action research.

### ***5.1 Cleverly Utilizing Local Resources and Creating a Localized Kindergarten Environment***

The creation of kindergarten environment is an implicit curriculum that invisibly brings profound influence to young children, which is also one of the important conditions for educational activities and an extremely important aspect of kindergarten education work. However, due to differences in the environment and the lives of young children, the creation of rural kindergarten environment should be different from that of cities, which should have both rural and local characteristics and be in line with the developmental trajectory of young children. Therefore, in terms of overall environmental layout, attention should be paid to reflecting localization and being full of rustic charm, creating a kindergarten environment with local characteristics that is suitable for young children's natural growth.

For example, Chongren is the hometown of partridge chickens and its history of raising partridge chickens can be traced back to the Sui and Tang dynasties over 1,400 years ago. Nowadays, Chongren partridge chickens are already well-known and have become an integral part of Chongren people's spiritual and cultural pursuits.

Starting from partridge chickens, kindergarten teachers can cleverly create the environment of rural kindergartens by placing hand-painted partridge chicken pictures and various partridge chicken origami in the hallway of the kindergartens. They can also tell stories about partridge chickens. In the process of using partridge chickens to create and spread beauty, young children may deeply perceive and harvest beauty.

### ***5.2 Designing Localized Theme Activities Based on Local Resources***

Theme activities are a teaching method centered around young children, which revolves around a theme, allowing young children to explore, discover, and solve problems in diverse learning activities, promoting their comprehensive development and improving their overall quality. Designing localized theme activities based on local resources can not only enrich young children's learning experience and improve their overall quality, but also help them better understand local culture and the local environment.

For example, teachers can design and organize theme activities on "farm work", allowing young children to participate in planting, breeding, and operating agricultural tools, allowing them to directly experience rural production and life. At the same time, teachers can also use the natural landscape of rural areas to guide young children to observe the mountains, rivers, fields, forests, etc. in rural areas and know about their characteristics and changing patterns. For example, teachers can design and organize theme activities of "Local Culinary Journey", allowing young children to understand, make, and taste local cuisine. At the same time, they can arrange some specialty restaurants or outdoor picnic activities, allowing young children to enjoy the food while feeling the atmosphere of local culture.

### ***5.3 Widely Excavating Local Resources and Designing Independent and Innovative Local Games***

Local games refer to traditional games closely related to rural life, which are a vivid reflection of rural culture and an important form of game in rural kindergartens. These games are usually closely related to rural production, life, natural environment, etc., with strong regional characteristics and ethnic colors, such as rubber band skipping, fishing, Chinese rope weaving,

playing house, sticks, red lights, green lights, watermelon, and white lights, etc. . Teachers should have a deep understanding of local culture and history, explore the local human environment, widely excavate local resources, and provide more unique inspiration and elements for independently creating local games.

For example, "spinning top" is a traditional rural game resource, and teachers can explore and utilize it to design and carry out independently innovative "spinning top" rural games. Firstly, in the design of tops, diverse designs can be attempted to create tops of different shapes, sizes, and weights to meet the needs of players of different ages, genders, and interests. Secondly, in terms of the gameplay of spinning tops, designers can try to combine the tops with other toys, or add new spinning techniques and game elements, adding more competitive elements to make the game more challenging and interesting. Thirdly, teachers can incorporate more cultural elements into the game, such as incorporating local music, dance, clothing, etc., allowing young children to experience the charm of local culture in the game.

#### ***5.4 Putting in Local Materials and Creating a Localized Distinctive Corner***

The corner is an indispensable activity area for young children's daily life in the kindergarten. The rich materials in the area can provide more exploration space and thinking opportunities for young children, and make them gradually learn to solve problems independently. Putting in local materials in the corners of rural kindergartens can not only provide more educational materials for kindergartens, but also further promote local culture and cultivate young children's love for their hometown.

For example, in the corner of fine arts, teachers can provide natural materials such as leaves, flowers, seeds, etc. for young children to create by pasting, weaving, painting, etc. In the corner of science, teachers can provide seeds, soil, water, etc. for young children to plant and experiment, or provide stones, sand, water, etc. for young children to build and discover. In the corner of role-playing, teachers can make straw skirts and hats using straw, as well as bamboo tubes and rafts from bamboo. In the corner of music, teachers can use stones, bamboo, wood, and other materials to make simple musical instruments, such as stone lute and bamboo flute, for young children to perform and create.

Teachers should consider the safety of local materials when distributing them, and classify them according to the principles of naturalness, interest, sociality, and permeability, in order to stimulate young children's strong interest in local resources.

#### ***5.5 Strengthening Family-Kindergarten Co-education and Providing Strong Support for the Construction of the Curriculum of Local Resources***

Mr. Chen Heqin once said that early childhood education is a very complex matter, which is not something that kindergartens can handle alone, nor can families handle alone, and that it is necessary for both parties to work together to achieve full results. Parents are extremely important resources in educational activities. Only when parents have a full understanding of the integration of local resources into rural kindergarten curriculum can they better support kindergartens. Therefore, rural kindergartens should attach great importance to parental work, fully leverage the role of parents, and build the curriculum of local resources through family-kindergarten co-education.

For example, kindergartens can invite parents to participate in the design of the curriculum of local resources. Parents and kindergarten teachers can jointly design curriculum goals and screen curriculum content, provide information and suggestions for the construction of the curriculum of local resources, and offer suggestions for teachers to integrate local resources into the curriculum. Parents can undertake the task of collecting local resources, such as natural items, handicrafts, etc. Parents can also assist teachers in organizing teaching practice activities, such as leading young children to visit local natural landscapes, historical relics and traditional architecture, traditional handicraft workshops, etc. They can also participate in curriculum evaluation, observe the learning process and achievement display of young children, provide evaluation and suggestions on the development of young children and the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, and help teachers continuously improve curriculum design.

#### ***5.6 Following Action Research and Gradually Improving the Curriculum of Local Resources***

Action research is a social science research method aimed at solving practical problems and

improving the efficiency and effectiveness of practice through a cycle of practice, reflection, and re-practice. It usually involves a deep understanding and analysis of specific situations or problems, as well as finding solutions through practice and reflection. The construction of curriculum of local resources should follow the action research method, gradually summarize experiences, extract achievements, and adjust strategies in a timely manner, so as to highly integrate local resources with kindergarten curriculum.

For example, the natural environment and human environment vary in different regions. Rural preschool teachers can collect and organize information on local resources through interviews and field investigations, continuously deepening their understanding and comprehension of local resources. Moreover, they can continuously adjust and improve curriculum content and teaching methods through practice and reflection, making the curriculum more in line with the age characteristics and learning needs of young children. Meanwhile, in order to improve the curriculum practice and reflection ability of teachers, kindergartens should regularly organize and carry out learning and training activities on curriculum theory in a gradual process to achieve the organic combination of local resources and rural kindergarten curriculum, and gradually improve the curriculum of local resources.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Young children living in rural areas from childhood also need to build their understanding of themselves, others, and the world through natural education, and also need the opportunity to understand the impact of human behaviors on nature. Kindergartens and teachers should provide systematic curriculum of local resources for young children based on their own geographical environment and local culture in rural areas, allowing them to explore humanity and nature in a real question-driven manner, and gain growth under the infiltration of local soil and water.

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