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The "Four Motions" Teaching Reform Thought Based on the Law of Transmits Knowledge

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Abstract

Transmits knowledge includes four modes: from tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge, from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge, and from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge. Combining the laws of transmits knowledge with the practice of teaching reform, the "Four Movements" teaching reform thought has been proposed. This thought aims to achieve effective teaching goals efficiently through interaction, vivid, action and first-mover.

Keywords: transmits knowledge, explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge, interaction

1. Introduction

In the Era of Education 4.0, knowledge-as a resource with infinite creativity and rapid renewal-has surpassed traditional production factors to become the core endogenous driver of economic growth. As technological paradigms shift and educational philosophies evolve, universities must keep pace in teaching students to learn, synthesize, and create knowledge. They should foster "learning through competition" and "competing through learning," establishing a virtuous cycle between the two. If a corporation's purpose is to create customer and enterprise value, then a teacher's mission is to create student and educator value through mutually rewarding processes and win-win outcomes.

2. Four Modes of Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge consists of explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that can be managed through a codification mode, meaning it can be expressed clearly through language, text, or coding. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, refers to knowledge that can only be managed through a personalization mode, meaning it is personal, experience-based, and difficult to articulate or codify using clear language or text [1]. nowledge transfer involves four modes:

2.1 Socialization (Tacit Knowledge → Tacit Knowledge)

This mode involves the direct transmission of tacit knowledge from one individual to another, such as the traditional apprenticeship or parental instruction. For example, teachers transmit their own tacit knowledge and key skills to students, often through personal dedication and hands-on instruction [2].

2.2 Xternalization (Tacit Knowledge → Explicit Knowledge)

In this mode, tacit knowledge is transformed into explicit knowledge, typically through publishing academic works, applying for patents, and other forms of documentation. In research-oriented universities, teaching alone is not sufficient; faculty members are also expected to externalize their accumulated tacit knowledge and technological innovations into explicit forms, such as monographs or patents, to enable partial sharing with students and peers.

2.3 Ombination (Explicit Knowledge → Explicit Knowledge)

This refers to the combination of existing explicit knowledge, such as exam preparation, assembling academic papers, or translations. While this process may not involve innovation, it represents a foundational stage of

knowledge acquisition. Under exam-oriented education systems, university students tend to achieve better results in this mode compared to the other three modes of knowledge transfer.

2.4 Nternalization (Explicit Knowledge → Tacit Knowledge)

This mode involves transforming explicit knowledge, such as textbook content, into one's own tacit knowledge through practice, reflection, and application. Some students perform well on written exams but lack practical skills in real-life situations, reflecting poor internalization of knowledge. In exam-oriented education environments, students generally perform less effectively in this mode compared to the other three [3].

3. The "Four-Movement" Teaching Reform Approach

Effective Teaching refers to instruction that achieves efficient knowledge transfer and maximizes student value in terms of knowledge, academic performance, and attitude. The Three Kingdoms-era strategist Zhuge Liang stated in Sixteen Strategies for Military Governance: "The wise secure victory before fighting; the foolish fight first and then seek victory" [4].

In the same vein, effective teaching reform requires sound strategy and planning before implementation.

Based on the logic of knowledge transfer and the author's teaching experience in the Principles of Management course, this paper argues that in order to transform isolated knowledge islands possessed by teachers into a shared knowledge network among students, teaching reform should follow the "Four-Movement" approach: Interaction, Vividness, Action, and First-Mover.

3.1 Interaction

Interaction refers to exchange, including the exchange of ideas, behavior, and language. Teacher-student interaction encompasses both exchange behaviors and adaptive behaviors, which are crucial for helping students acquire both explicit and tacit knowledge. While memorization and note-taking primarily support exam-oriented explicit knowledge, the classroom should focus on inspiring student thinking and engaging in interactive dialogue to enable acquisition of learning methods and thought processes (tacit knowledge). Teachers may provide printed copies of lecture slides before or after class to reduce note-taking time and increase time for discussion and reflection.

Teacher-student interaction is a two-way process involving both bottom-up and top-down communication. In terms of bottom-up communication, Eastern Han philosopher Wang Fu noted in Qian Fu Lun: On Clarity and Obscurity that "Good governance requires encouraging remonstration and allowing free expression; only then can the ruler govern wisely and understand the people" [5]. A relaxed and harmonious learning environment encourages students to express their ideas and personalities, fostering motivation and initiative.

Educator Tao Xingzhi emphasized that: "Children can only fully express their creativity when granted freedom of speech, especially the freedom to ask questions" [6]. Regarding top-down communication, Xunzi, an educator of the Warring States period, argued that: "The ruler's way should favor clarity over obscurity, and openness over secrecy" [7]. Some teachers fear that being too close to students may compromise classroom management, but in reality, students only trust those they respect. Just as leaders can befriend subordinates, teachers can form respectful friendships with students. Openness and clarity in teaching, lesson preparation, and classroom management are essential to building a collaborative learning environment.

Only through openness and clarity can a dynamic learning network be established, where every student participates and feels a sense of belonging. This facilitates learning, cooperation, and ultimately, a shift from small-scale evolution (incremental improvements) to large-scale revolution (transformative changes) in teaching reform. In the era of Education 4.0, the rapid development of digital and intelligent technologies has made platforms such as WeChat, cloud classrooms, Rain Classroom, and virtual classrooms effective tools for real-time interaction.

3.2 Vivid

Knowledge transfer theory suggests that teaching does not equal learning; teaching a subject does not guarantee students have learned it. Teachers serve as information providers in an "excited state," while students are receivers in a "receptive state." Didactic teaching-transferring explicit knowledge in a rote manner-often leads to poor engagement and results. Many teachers simply follow the textbook or copy from teaching guides.

Educator Ye Shengtao once said, "Teaching guides are like opium" [8]. Guided teaching involves a two-step process: teachers externalize their accumulated tacit knowledge into explicit content such as slides, and students then internalize this through critical thinking, thus converting it into their own tacit knowledge.

Mencius noted, "Good governance wins the people's wealth; good education wins their hearts" (Mencius: Jin Xin I) [9]. Rules and discipline can control behavior, but they do not ignite intrinsic motivation. A vivid presentation, however, can engage students' interest and encourage them to follow the instructor's logic willingly. Teachers should create an open, thought-provoking classroom environment to stimulate student participation.

In practice, using intelligent technologies such as smart classrooms significantly improves knowledge delivery, reduces time spent writing on the board, and enhances both learning efficiency and interest. For example, when teaching the difference between leadership and management, the author uses the Song Dynasty's conscription system. General Yue Fei led the Yue Army not only with military power but also through moral influence, such as personal example and ideological guidance (e.g., "Loyalty to the nation"). In contrast, other Song generals relied solely on authority, resulting in weaker combat effectiveness. The author also designed engaging slides that stirred student interest and led to remarkable teaching outcomes.

3.3 Action

Xunzi believed that "Learning culminates in practice" (Xunzi: On the Effectiveness of Confucianism). Does academic qualification = ability? Not necessarily. Qualifications reflect explicit knowledge, while ability involves tacit knowledge. If one gains tacit knowledge during academic training, then qualification equals ability; otherwise, it does not. Exam-oriented education emphasizes scores and the transmission of explicit knowledge. In contrast, quality-oriented education focuses on developing both explicit and tacit knowledge.

Laozi stated: "The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao," emphasizing action over speech. He also advocated for "teaching by nonverbal action," reinforcing the importance of deeds over words [10]. Internalizing and applying tacit knowledge is more effective than mere memorization.

British scholar Reg Revans pioneered Action Learning (AL), promoting collaborative problem-solving rather than traditional lecturing. AL helps students learn cross-system problem-solving and adapt to complex, real-world challenges. AL = P (Programmed Knowledge) + Q (Questioning Insight) + R (Reflection) + I (Implementation), focusing primarily on tacit knowledge.

To deepen student understanding and practical application of knowledge, teachers can adopt two methods: (1) create opportunities for experiential learning outside the classroom, broadening students' cognitive channels and experiential space; (2) design problem-based scenarios to foster student engagement and application of management knowledge. For instance, in discussing the dilemma faced by domestic software firms between tolerating piracy (which harms legitimate sales) and banning it (which reduces user demand), students are guided to propose a trade-off strategy: offer a product line with some free or open-access features to attract new users and retain existing ones, thus achieving long-term profitability.

3.4 First-Mover

In the Education 4.0 era, virtual teaching is rapidly transforming traditional teaching, with speed and first-mover advantage becoming critical. Knowledge foresight is essential. In management education, for example, economies of scale have evolved into customer economies of scale; 4PL (Fourth-Party Logistics) is replacing 3PL; MRP (Materials Requirement Planning) has progressed to DDMRP (Demand-Driven MRP); traditional e-commerce is being upgraded to instant retail; and physical organizational structures are transitioning into virtual ones. It is recommended that leading business schools offer a cutting-edge management course to senior students, where top faculty members each deliver a lecture on the frontier theories in their research area. Currently, only a few Chinese universities (such as Zhejiang University) provide such courses for Ph.D. students, embodying the "first-mover" teaching philosophy.

Frontier theories should include both Western innovations and classical Eastern thought. For instance, the strategic thinking of the Three Kingdoms period is on par with modern theories of higher-order competition. Concepts from The Art of War, such as "Victory lies in unified command" and "Inconsistency breeds failure," align with the strategic integration of value chains in virtual operations. Teachers should also stay informed on international education reform trends and continuously innovate pedagogical methods.

4. Conclusion

In the Education 4.0 era, educators must possess both strategic foresight and practical wisdom. The modern KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid) resonates with Laozi's notion that "The greatest truths are the simplest." In teaching, scholars should combine intellectual rigor with accessible expression, guiding students from knowledge acquisition and integration to knowledge creation.

With the development of the Next-Generation Internet (NGI)-1000 times faster than the current Internet-and the advancement of digital intelligence technologies, education must adapt to the opportunities and challenges of the high-speed economy. Universities should adhere to the principles of knowledge transfer and continue innovating through the "Four-Movement" reform, aiming to achieve effective teaching and maximize student value.

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