

Non-Cognitive Abilities The Indispensable Contributor to Adolescents’ Development

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“If I meet other people and criticize their weaknesses, I rob myself of higher cognitive power. But if I try to enter deeply and lovingly into another person’s good qualities, I gather in that force.”

—Rudol Steiner

THE previous view of education quality paid more attention to the appearance of cognitive ability: test scores. However, a lot of practice and research have proved that the level of cognitive ability cannot completely predict the development of an individual in school and society. The non-cognitive abilities of individuals represented by communication, cooperation, emotional management, etc. can help improve students’ cognitive level and regulate students’ learning motivation; help students achieve better academic performance and achievement; Income has an impact, which ultimately affects the individual’s happiness. These kind of specific abilities other than cognitive abilities, which have a profound and lasting impact on individual adaptation and social development, are core abilities that individuals gradually form in the process of growth and development, and are also called “social and emotional abilities”. The term was promoted by the “Social and Emotional Learning” (SEL) promoted by UNICEF worldwide, and the Study on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) implemented by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

OECD has been committed to promoting the development of youth social and emotional skills. In December 2017, the OECD released the “Social and Emotional Skills: Happiness, Connectivity, and Success” report, which plans to evaluate the social and emotional skills of students aged 10-15 in

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some countries and cities around the world. The research started in 2017, spanning three years, and conducted field surveys and evaluations in 2019. At the end of 2019, the first round of evaluation was conducted in 10 cities in 9 countries around the world. On September 7, 2021, the OECD's first global youth social and emotional ability assessment report was officially released. The report showed that social and emotional abilities had an impact on education, health and quality of life (happiness, life satisfaction, and test anxiety). Important factors affecting social and emotional abilities include school belonging, teacher-student relationship, campus bullying and so on.

As one of the countries that participated in the first round of testing, China conducted an assessment work in 151 elementary and middle schools in 10 districts and counties of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, and surveyed 7,550 students in the 10-year-old and 15-year-old groups. At the same time, a questionnaire survey of parents, teachers and principals was carried out, and more than 26,000 samples were obtained. Based on the OECD international student social and emotional ability evaluation data, a series of research results on the social and emotional ability evaluation of Chinese students have been formed.

The current issue of the *Best Evidence in Chinese Education (BECE)* focuses on the research and evaluation of the development of adolescents' social and emotional abilities, and shares the results of Chinese scholars' research on the SSES evaluation of their own adolescents. Gao et al. (2021) analyzed the performance of Chinese adolescents from the perspective of task ability; Liu et al. (2021) focused on the analysis of the emotional regulation ability of Chinese adolescents; Tang et al. (2021) concentrated on the performance of Chinese adolescents in collaboration ability; Shao et al. (2021) focused on the openness of Chinese youth; Huang et al. (2021) discussed the performance of Chinese youth in their communicative abilities. These five short reports introduced in detail the performance of Chinese young people in the SSES test from five aspects: task ability, emotion regulation, collaboration ability, open ability and communication ability. They analyzed what factors affected the development of these abilities, and further explored how to improve these abilities through education policies and practices.

On this basis, Zhao et al. (2021) gave an overview of China's participation in the OECD global youth social and emotional competence assessment, introduced and analyzed the significance and value of OECD's global youth social and emotional competence and the progress of related research. Meanwhile, they gave a more detailed account of the development of youth social and emotional competence assessment in China, and discussed the social and emotional competence testing. Cheng (2021) also used the OECD SSES test as a model to discuss the aspects that should be considered in the non-cognitive ability assessment in terms of measurement methods, measurement tools, and test subjects. At the same time, he also gave feedback on possible problems in the global assessment. Some thoughts have come out.

This issue of the journal focuses on the theme of the assessment of adolescents' social and emotional abilities, and published a brief report and summary of the results of the test of adolescents' social and emotional abilities from China. We also try to introduce the results of the global youth social and emotional ability assessment conducted by OCED from multiple aspects, as well as the performance of Chinese youth in this assessment, so as to provide timely and accurate information for follow-up related research.

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