

Original Paper

Exploration on Improving Learning Efficiency of Junior College Students in Private Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The impact of social progress and scientific and technological development on students' learning is two-sided. On the one hand, students can enjoy the convenience brought by these advances in their study; on the other hand, they inevitably lead to the decline of students' learning efficiency. Affected by multiple factors such as student source quality and school management, the problem of low learning efficiency is particularly prominent among junior college students in private higher education institutions. Based on this background, this paper analyzes the causes of low learning efficiency of junior college students in private higher education institutions, and further explores and puts forward targeted improvement suggestions from multiple perspectives.

Keywords

Private higher education institutions, Junior college students, Learning efficiency

1. Introduction

Since the state expanded higher education resources in the 1990s, a large number of private resources have entered the field of higher education, and cooperated with existing public colleges and universities to establish institutions of higher learning that provide education at the corresponding level. These institutions are funded by non-state fiscal appropriations; they have played a vital role in raising the gross enrollment rate of higher education in China and have become another important base for talent cultivation in the country. At the initial stage of their establishment, all these institutions existed as secondary colleges affiliated to certain public undergraduate universities. In addition to enrolling undergraduate students at the corresponding level, private higher education institutions mostly offer junior college programs and recruit junior college students.

However, given that the fundamental purpose of private higher education institutions is to provide educational opportunities for more students, coupled with their relatively short history of operation in general, the overall comprehensive quality of students in private higher education institutions is quite different from that of students in public ones. Among these differences, the gaps related to learning are particularly prominent. Compared with their counterparts in public institutions of higher learning, students in private ones are significantly deficient in learning initiative, as well as learning efficiency and effectiveness. This gap is especially distinct among junior college students in private higher education institutions.

2. Current Situation of Learning Efficiency of Junior College Students in Private Higher Education Institutions

While inadequate learning enthusiasm and insufficient learning initiative are prevalent among college students in terms of overall learning efficiency currently, junior college students in private higher education institutions exhibit a remarkable gap in learning efficiency compared with undergraduate students and those in public higher education institutions. The specific manifestations are elaborated as follows.

2.1 Slow Acquisition of Acquired Knowledge

A prominent characteristic of junior college students in private higher education institutions regarding learning efficiency is that the majority demonstrate a slow rate of knowledge acquisition. The speed of knowledge acquisition is primarily determined by the ability to comprehend and digest new knowledge. In terms of the digestion and integration of prior and new knowledge, even undergraduate students in private higher education institutions tend to be relatively sluggish; most students struggle to independently integrate and comprehend newly acquired knowledge with existing knowledge reserves, thereby hindering the effective digestion of new knowledge.

2.2 Low Knowledge Retention Rate

Another indicator of low learning efficiency is the low knowledge retention rate, which can be simply defined as “rapid forgetting”. Some students are able to comprehend knowledge during the learning process, but due to insufficient in-depth understanding and inappropriate learning strategies, they fail to conduct timely post-class self-review subsequent to teachers’ in-class instruction. Consequently, the knowledge they have acquired is quickly neglected and forgotten after the learning process.

2.3 Poor Interconnectivity of Knowledge across Different Courses

The true mastery and comprehension of knowledge lie in the capacity to draw inferences from one instance and achieve a holistic integration of relevant knowledge. However, junior college students in private higher education institutions perform relatively inadequately in this aspect. To cultivate qualified talents that meet the demands of society, colleges and universities design a series of interrelated professional courses in accordance with professional training objectives, students’

academic duration and knowledge acceptance capacity. Nevertheless, most junior college students in private higher education institutions lack effective connection between knowledge from different courses and exhibit poor interconnectivity among them. Typically, the knowledge comprehended and mastered in a specific course is only applied within the current semester and the context of that course; when it comes to the connection between prerequisite courses and subsequent courses, the knowledge acquired from prerequisite courses can barely be effectively retrieved and utilized.

3. Analysis of the Causes for Low Learning Efficiency of Junior College Students in Private Higher Education Institutions

Low learning efficiency is detrimental both to students' academic accomplishment and to private higher education institutions' talent cultivation. Only through a comprehensive analysis of its underlying causes can targeted intervention measures be formulated scientifically and effectively. The factors contributing to the low learning efficiency of junior college students in private higher education institutions cover the overall social development, family education, and institutional management; undoubtedly, they are also closely associated with students' individual characteristics.

3.1 Socio-Economic Development and Escalating Temptations

Contemporary society is advancing at a rapid pace, with scientific and technological progress evolving by leaps and bounds. While the fruits of technological advancement have brought convenience to daily life, they have also given rise to numerous temptations. In the process of junior college students' academic learning, mobile phones and the Internet are two critical factors that lead to low learning efficiency. Although students can reap the benefits of increasingly accessible mobile terminal devices and Internet resources in their studies—for example, conducting online independent learning anytime and anywhere with network coverage, and implementing blended online-offline teaching in classrooms by utilizing students' mobile devices—it is undeniable that mobile phones constitute a major factor undermining students' learning efficiency. Various mobile applications and social networking software on mobile devices, while facilitating students' academic pursuits, also encroach on their learning attention and concentration.

3.2 Deviation in Family Education Focus and Low Parental Expectations

Most school-age students currently enrolled in higher education institutions were born after the implementation of China's family planning policy, and each student is highly cherished by their parents. Compared with students in public higher education institutions, those admitted to private higher education institutions generally have relatively lower college entrance examination scores. A key reason for parents to choose private higher education institutions is to ensure their children have access to higher education opportunities and obtain a "reasonably acceptable" academic diploma to gain a foothold in society in the future. Some parents even hold the perception that their children are not sufficiently mature to enter society immediately after high school graduation; thus, enrolling them in a

private higher education institution is essentially entrusting the school with their supervision. As long as their children's personal safety is guaranteed, parents pay minimal attention to the specific effects of their academic learning.

3.3 Lax Daily Institutional Management and Insufficient Active and Effective Teacher Guidance

The original purpose of establishing private higher education institutions is to expand access to higher education for more people. However, it is undeniable that many private higher education institutions have inadequate management and low academic requirements for students in daily operations. In the process of talent cultivation, these institutions focus more on whether students can complete the required academic credits and graduate smoothly, rather than on the specific efficiency and effectiveness of their learning process. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced among junior college students in private higher education institutions. Consequently, examination cheating is widespread in many private higher education institutions, while the penalties for such misconduct are relatively lenient, and it is relatively easy for students to retake courses to earn missing credits. This induces students to neglect daily academic learning, fostering undesirable habits such as perfunctory learning attitudes, disregard for learning efficiency and effectiveness, and over-reliance on simple course retakes to meet credit requirements, pass academic examinations, and obtain relevant academic certificates.

Due to the functional positioning and academic level of private higher education institutions, coupled with relatively lax daily academic management, most teachers—especially those responsible for daily student management—lack active and effective guidance for students' academic learning. Higher education emphasizes students' independent learning capabilities, and teachers no longer supervise and urge students to study closely as they did in high school. Most instructors leave the campus immediately after completing their classes, so their guidance for students is confined to in-class hours. Owing to the characteristics of the courses they teach and their own work constraints, although instructors may provide general learning suggestions, they cannot focus on every individual student in class and find it difficult to offer practical and targeted guidance for specific students' learning needs. Counselors, who play a crucial role in students' daily campus life, are also limited in guiding students' academic learning due to their heavy workload and different work priorities.

3.4 Poor Student Self-Control and Inappropriate Learning Strategies

In addition to external factors, the most critical cause of low learning efficiency stems from internal factors, namely students' individual attributes. On the whole, poor self-control is the primary factor leading to students' low learning efficiency, and junior college students in private higher education institutions exhibit weaker self-control compared with students in public higher education institutions and undergraduate students in private higher education institutions. Students' knowledge acquisition mainly relies on two channels: in-class teaching by instructors and after-class independent learning. Junior college students in private higher education institutions are more prone to distractions during

class, with their attention easily diverted by mobile phones and other irrelevant factors. After class, they lack initiative and enthusiasm for independent learning. Without necessary learning arrangements, most of their spare time is allocated to club activities or leisure pursuits, with little time devoted to autonomous academic learning.

4. Countermeasures and Suggestions for Improving Learning Efficiency of Junior College Students in Private Higher Education Institutions

Only when students' learning efficiency is improved can they better accomplish their academic tasks. Many junior college students have no plans for further academic advancement, and most of them directly enter the job market after graduation. Therefore, to enable junior college students in private higher education institutions to master various essential knowledge required for social engagement during their academic years and truly become talents useful to society, it is imperative to adopt multi-faceted measures to enhance their learning efficiency.

4.1 Construct a "Tripartite Integration" Supervision Model Involving Society, Schools and Families

4.1.1 Improve Social Information Feedback

Society serves as the optimal testing ground for acquired knowledge. It is undeniable that in the process of knowledge acquisition, some students perceive that the knowledge they have learned has little relevance to practical work, thus neglecting their academic studies and resulting in low learning efficiency. Based on this, private higher education institutions should actively construct school-enterprise cooperation platforms, improve the feedback mechanism for social demand information, and enable students to clearly understand the knowledge and talent standards required by enterprises and society. This will fundamentally mobilize students' learning enthusiasm, stimulate their learning initiative, and thereby achieve the goal of enhancing learning efficiency.

4.1.2 Optimize Daily School Supervision and Management

Institutions are the main venues for students' daily learning. To improve the learning efficiency of junior college students in private higher education institutions, these institutions must optimize the daily management of students' learning, strengthen supervision and impose strict requirements on students in all links, including pre-class preparation, in-class learning, after-class review and examinations. This helps students make progress through external constraints and prevents them from harboring fluke mentality.

4.1.3 Attach Importance to School-Family Communication

As an old saying goes, parents are their children's first teachers. Family education is an indispensable part of students' education and exerts a significant impact on their academic learning. Therefore, to improve students' learning efficiency, private higher education institutions need to actively communicate with parents. Through effective communication, institutions can keep parents informed of their children's actual learning situation at school, understand parents' expectations and ideas, and

then provide targeted suggestions to parents, so as to jointly help students complete their academic tasks and achieve the educational goals of the institutions.

4.2 Encourage Teachers to Innovate in an All-Round Way and Enhance the Attractiveness of Knowledge

Teachers play a crucial role in students' learning process. In teachers' teaching practice, being familiar with students and understanding their learning status is an important prerequisite for delivering high-quality courses. Therefore, to improve the learning efficiency of junior college students in private higher education institutions, teachers in these institutions need to make greater efforts.

4.2.1 Innovate Teaching Methods and Models

In-class learning is an important channel for students to acquire knowledge, and the role of teachers in classroom teaching is self-evident. It is undeniable that there are many relatively tedious and difficult-to-understand courses in the talent training program of private higher education institutions. If teachers do not emphasize the innovation of teaching methods and models in class, it will inevitably lead to low learning efficiency among students. In addition, most junior college students in private higher education institutions have poor self-control and are more likely to be distracted during class. Therefore, to better improve students' learning efficiency, on the one hand, teachers need to optimize teaching methods, actively explore and innovate, and integrate tedious knowledge into engaging teaching. On the other hand, teachers need to continuously explore the innovation of teaching models, and apply student-friendly teaching methods such as flipped classrooms, case-based teaching and immersive teaching to stimulate students' learning initiative and consciousness, thereby enhancing learning efficiency.

4.2.2 Innovate Knowledge Assessment Methods

At present, the main method of knowledge assessment is the final semester examination. Although this method can comprehensively assess the content learned in a semester at one time, it also leads many students to form the habit of neglecting daily learning and cramming for exams at the end of the semester. Therefore, to improve students' learning efficiency, teachers need to innovate knowledge assessment methods in light of the actual characteristics of different courses, so that the assessment of knowledge mastery can fully reflect students' learning performance throughout the entire semester.

4.3 Give Full Play to the Role of Student Self-Management Organizations

4.3.1 Exert the Leading Role of Student Unions and Various Student Associations

Learning in high school is mostly supervised by teachers and parents, while university education emphasizes student self-management, hoping that students can study actively and proactively under the self-management of student organizations such as student unions and associations, thereby improving learning efficiency. Therefore, it is necessary to fully recognize the role that student unions and various student associations should play in students' learning process, and then add more management

activities or association events related to improving learning efficiency in the management of student unions and the design of association activities.

4.3.2 Encourage Students to Carry Out Extensive Mutual Learning in Classes and Dormitories

In addition to promoting students to improve learning efficiency through student union management and association activities, it is also feasible to carry out certain “emulation, learning, striving, helping and surpassing” activities within classes and dormitories, allowing students to find their own learning role models and catch-up goals in classes or dormitories to promote the improvement of learning efficiency. At the same time, top-performing students in classes or dormitories can share their learning methods, and through mutual learning assistance, promote the improvement of learning efficiency among students with low learning efficiency.

4.4 *Strengthen the Edification of Campus Culture*

4.4.1 Improve Students’ Learning Environment

To improve students’ learning efficiency, private higher education institutions need to help students optimize their learning environment, so that students are not restricted by the environment when they intend to study and improve their learning efficiency. For example, institutions can extend the opening hours of study rooms and expand student study areas.

4.4.2 Create a Learning-Oriented Cultural Atmosphere

“Reeds grow straight without support when planted among hemp; white sand turns black when mixed with mud.” To improve the learning efficiency of junior college students in private higher education institutions, it is necessary to create a sound learning-oriented culture on campus. Through the edification of the learning atmosphere, students can transform from “being forced to learn” to “willing to learn”, stimulate their internal motivation for learning, and thus independently enhance their learning efficiency.

4.5 *Help Students Develop Good Learning Habits*

In addition to lacking learning initiative, students with low learning efficiency mostly have undesirable learning habits, and most of them fail to achieve “active pre-class preview, attentive in-class listening and conscious after-class review”. Therefore, private higher education institutions, teachers, student organizations and associations can help students with low learning efficiency improve their learning efficiency through rigid requirements, experience sharing and mutual assistance.

5. Conclusion

Private higher education institutions have provided important support for the development of higher education in China. However, the problem of low learning efficiency among students in private higher education institutions, especially junior college students, cannot be ignored. To this end, private higher education institutions should actively explore solutions. Whether it is timely feeding back social demands to students, strengthening communication and exchanges with parents, or enhancing daily

management, optimizing learning environment construction, and strengthening cultural edification within the institutions, efforts should be made to assist junior college students in improving their learning efficiency. Only in this way can private higher education institutions better cultivate students, give full play to their supporting role in higher education development, and better transport talents to society.

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