

Research on Implementation Process and Pathways for Effective Conduct of Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools

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Abstract: In the new era, the Party's educational policy explicitly incorporates labor education into the comprehensive cultivation system. The deep integration of labor education with subject teaching has become a key approach to fulfilling the fundamental mission of fostering moral character and nurturing talents. Labor education is not an additional content separate from academic disciplines, but rather a core competency carrier permeating the entire process of knowledge transmission and skill development. This study focuses on effective implementation processes of subject-based labor education in primary and secondary schools, which holds significant implications for enhancing practical outcomes and integrating various disciplines with labor education. Through theoretical analysis, we establish an implementation framework encompassing four aspects: goal alignment, resource integration, process design, and evaluation cycles. Additionally, we propose implementation strategies such as incorporating subject knowledge into task design and leveraging textbook elements for thematic teaching. Research findings demonstrate that scientifically structured implementation processes can facilitate deep integration between academic knowledge and labor education, thereby improving students' labor literacy and comprehensive capabilities.

Keywords: Primary and secondary schools; Subject-based labor education; Implementation process

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1. Introduction

The cultivation of labor literacy represents an essential response to contemporary educational demands in primary and secondary schools, with subject-based labor education providing concrete practical foundations for its realization. Each discipline possesses unique labor content and educational resources: mathematical measurement and computation, Chinese language's labor-themed narratives, and scientific hands-on research all offer diverse avenues for labor education implementation. However, practical challenges such as superficial integration and fragmented execution often hinder the formation of systematic educational frameworks. Identifying labor education content tailored to disciplinary characteristics and establishing phased implementation strategies are crucial for enhancing educational outcomes, representing a key direction for advancing educational reform practices.

2. Connotation of subject-based labor education

Labor education serves as a vital approach to cultivating essential competencies that span lifelong development. At its core, it employs labor as a means to achieve profound integration of physical, psychological, cognitive, and value systems. Rather than merely imitating labor forms, it stimulates intrinsic human potential through practical engagement, forging connections between subjective initiative and the objective world. Individuals develop self-awareness and character refinement while transforming their environment. The primary value of labor education lies in promoting holistic human development: fostering diligent work ethics and excellence-driven practices, instilling respect for laborers and appreciation of labor outcomes, while accumulating practical wisdom for tackling challenges and driving innovation. By seamlessly combining instrumental and humanistic aspects of labor, it not only facilitates skill acquisition but also fulfills educational missions of personality cultivation and social responsibility. Through labor experiences, individuals clarify their societal connections, develop reverence for work, and ultimately achieve alignment between personal and social values, establishing a spiritual and practical foundation that supports lifelong development ^[1].

3. The necessity of effectively implementing subject-based labor education in primary and secondary schools

3.1. Practical support for the concrete construction of disciplinary knowledge

Current subject teaching in primary and secondary schools often separates knowledge transmission from practical application, making abstract concepts difficult for students to truly comprehend and internalize. Subject-based labor education, grounded in disciplinary logic, transforms abstract principles into actionable labor practices. Through hands-on experiences, students gain practical understanding of knowledge, achieving a transition from theoretical cognition to practical application. This integrated approach not only strengthens concrete knowledge construction but also establishes a closed-loop learning model of “cognition–practice–internalization”, providing essential practical support for mastering subject knowledge. It aligns with modern educational requirements for cultivating knowledge application capabilities.

3.2. Targeted cultivation of practical innovation capabilities and a sense of responsibility

Current core competency development in primary and secondary school subject teaching faces challenges of abstraction and superficiality, making it difficult to effectively implement essential qualities like practical innovation and responsibility through single-classroom instruction. Subject-based labor education, grounded in students’ developmental needs, utilizes concrete disciplinary tasks to guide learners in honing practical skills through problem-solving and strengthening accountability awareness through labor responsibilities. By employing task-driven approaches and experiential learning processes, this model transforms core competency cultivation from “macro-level requirements” into “micro-level practices”, effectively addressing the disconnect between theoretical education and real-world scenarios. It provides tangible pathways for developing students’ critical competencies ^[2].

3.3. Ecological linkages between disciplinary collaboration and life education

Current primary and secondary education systems face ecological imbalances characterized by rigid disciplinary boundaries and disconnection between academic instruction and real-life practices, which restrict students’ holistic development. Subject-based labor education bridges these gaps through hands-on experiences, breaking down disciplinary silos to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge while establishing connections between education and daily life. This approach enables students to perceive the intrinsic links between academic learning and practical applications through labor activities. Such interdisciplinary, life-oriented educational models not only enhance collaborative learning ecosystems across subjects but also shift educational focus from classroom-centered to life-centered approaches. These comprehensive pedagogical frameworks provide inclusive support for students’ all-round development, creating a more

dynamic educational ecosystem.

4. Implementation process for effectively conducting subject-based labor education in primary and secondary schools

4.1. Discipline goal alignment: Establishing a synergistic mechanism between labor literacy and disciplinary values

The effective implementation of labor education in primary and secondary schools primarily requires precise goal-setting and establishing a symbiotic mechanism between labor literacy and subject values. The key lies in breaking the separation between labor education and subject teaching to enable their value co-development. Guided by core competencies, educators should identify key aspects of labor education based on subject characteristics, decomposing elements such as labor concepts, skills, and habits into actionable subject objectives. Through thorough interpretation of curriculum standards, it's essential to clarify labor education priorities across different academic stages and disciplines, avoiding vague or overly broad goals. When setting objectives, emphasis should be placed on relevance and progression, creating a mutually reinforcing cycle between subject knowledge acquisition and labor skill development. This approach ensures labor education becomes an intrinsic component of subject instruction rather than an additional task, guaranteeing that every teaching activity delivers dual educational benefits through both academic learning and labor cultivation ^[3].

4.2. Cross-domain resource integration: Building a multi-dimensional collaborative labor education support system

The key to effectively implementing subject-based labor education in primary and secondary schools lies in cross-domain resource integration, establishing a multidimensional collaborative support system. Successful implementation requires abundant and appropriate resources, with interdisciplinary integration serving as an effective solution to address resource fragmentation. Schools should establish joint mechanisms both on and off campus to systematically organize labor-related content within subject teaching materials, while leveraging the educational potential of external venues such as families, communities, and enterprises to create a comprehensive resource network. On-campus, efforts should focus on enhancing facilities like laboratories, libraries, and school farms to incorporate practical labor activities. Off-campus, stable labor education practice spaces should be developed, with specialized venues tailored to subject characteristics. Establishing resource-sharing platforms enables resource exchange between schools and regions, utilizing digital solutions to overcome spatial and temporal constraints. This approach provides customizable resource collections for subject-based labor education, ensuring precise alignment between resource availability and instructional needs.

4.3. Immersive process construction: Promoting deep integration of labor experience and disciplinary cognition

The core of effective labor education implementation in primary and secondary schools lies in immersive process construction, where fostering deep integration between labor experiences and subject cognition serves as the key to realizing labor value. During labor education programs, student engagement through hands-on participation proves essential for bridging academic understanding with practical experience. Moving beyond traditional one-way lecture formats, we establish student-centered practical inquiry frameworks that deepen subject comprehension through complete labor practice processes. Labor tasks should be designed according to disciplinary principles, incorporating subject knowledge application into planning stages, practical execution phases, and problem-solving processes—transforming labor activities into dynamic application and knowledge generation spaces. Emphasizing cognitive guidance throughout the process, task-driven approaches and project-based methodologies encourage students to apply subject-specific methods when addressing real-world challenges actively. Through hands-on practice, labor skills are enhanced while problem-solving experiences deepen subject understanding, achieving synchronized progress in both labor experience and academic learning.

4.4. Closed-loop developmental evaluation: Establishing a dynamic quality assurance mechanism for labor education

The core guarantee for effective implementation of labor education in primary and secondary schools lies in establishing a developmental evaluation cycle and improving dynamic quality assurance mechanisms. A scientific evaluation system serves as the cornerstone for continuous improvement in labor education, where developmental evaluation cycles create positive feedback loops between assessment and enhancement. Establishing multi-stakeholder evaluation mechanisms that integrate feedback from teachers, students, parents, and practice site instructors allows comprehensive reflection of labor education outcomes across various dimensions. Evaluation criteria should focus on holistic labor literacy development, encompassing work attitudes, skill mastery levels, problem-solving abilities, and subject knowledge application, avoiding reliance on single-dimensional outcomes. By combining formative and summative assessments through observation records, growth portfolios, and competency evaluations, educators can track students' labor development progress throughout the learning process. Implementing feedback mechanisms that transform evaluation data into actionable recommendations enables targeted adjustments to teaching objectives, resource allocation, and instructional approaches. This creates a dynamic “evaluation–feedback–improvement–enhancement” cycle that continuously optimizes the quality of labor education implementation.

5. Implementation pathways for effective subject-based labor education in primary and secondary schools

5.1. Integration of disciplinary knowledge into labor practice task design

Labor education and subject instruction should be deeply integrated, breaking down the barriers between knowledge transmission and practical application by transforming academic content into hands-on labor tasks. Teachers must identify real-world contexts for knowledge application based on core subject competencies, designing practice tasks that combine theoretical knowledge with labor skills through decomposing key concepts and connecting them to daily life needs. Throughout this process, educators should emphasize the practical value of knowledge, guiding students to actively apply subject-specific knowledge while completing labor tasks. This approach fosters a mutually reinforcing relationship between knowledge acquisition and skill development, making labor practice a vital platform for applying academic knowledge ^[4].

Building upon the Chinese literature “The Oath to the Land” from the seventh-grade Chinese textbook and interdisciplinary science knowledge, teachers can design a hands-on activity titled “Planning and Cultivating a Campus ‘Homeland Farming’ Practice Garden”. First, by integrating the emotional connection to land described in the text with scientific concepts like “plant growth requirements”, educators should guide students to survey unused campus spaces. Students will apply mathematical knowledge to measure plot areas, calculate soil and seed quantities, and plan planting zones (e.g., grain crops, vegetable plots) based on sunlight and ventilation conditions. Next, students select climate-appropriate crops such as wheat and leafy greens, combining botanical growth cycles from science lessons to create detailed maintenance schedules. These plans should specify daily irrigation schedules, weekly soil loosening procedures, and pest control methods. Students are required to document crop growth through “observation journals with visual records”, tracking plant height and leaf count while calculating growth rates using mathematical formulas. During harvest season, students learn standardized harvesting techniques using tools like sickles and baskets, while understanding scientific principles of crop drying and threshing. Finally, students process harvested crops (e.g., pickling vegetables, threshing wheat), design packaging labels with product details, and organize a “Campus Harvest Sharing Event” to distribute finished products to faculty members. This practical approach reinforces interdisciplinary knowledge while fostering students' love for the land and sense of responsibility.

5.2. Exploring labor elements in teaching materials for thematic instruction

Textbooks serve as primary teaching tools containing extensive labor education resources that are closely linked to subject knowledge. Teachers must systematically explore and accurately distill these resources. Educators should adopt a holistic teaching philosophy, thoroughly analyze textbook content, and identify labor-related elements through textual examples, post-class exercises, and supplementary materials. By integrating these elements with subject teaching objectives, they can design thematic instructional activities. Establishing connections between knowledge acquisition and labor awareness enables students to understand the significance, value, and methods of labor while learning academic subjects, thereby fostering a respect for and appreciation of labor.

Building upon the technical labor elements from the Chinese textbook “The Oil Seller” in Grade 7 Volume 2, we will conduct a thematic teaching activity titled “Craftsmanship Builds Dreams: Exploring Skilled Workers Around Us”. When explaining the text’s depiction of the oil seller skillfully pouring oil into gourds, teachers can extend the lesson to real-life technical labor scenarios, guiding students to reflect on the connection between “practice makes perfect” and practical work experience. The core task involves students documenting the work experiences of local skilled workers through interviews and field observations, such as community auto mechanics, street pastry chefs, or elderly family members skilled in sewing. Students will be instructed to organize interview content using Chinese language knowledge, focusing on refining action details, tool usage techniques, and experience accumulation processes, then composing narratives or essays. Students are encouraged to participate in labor processes actively (e.g., assisting mechanics with tool organization, learning basic pastry shaping techniques) and photographing work scenes. The classroom will feature a “Craftsmanship Sharing Session” where students present their fieldwork experiences and labor insights through written works. Teachers will evaluate students based on dimensional criteria including detailed descriptions, emotional expression, and labor cognition, helping students appreciate the challenges and value of technical labor. This approach integrates language proficiency development with labor spirit education, ensuring thematic teaching combines academic depth with humanistic warmth.

5.3. Assign labor-related homework based on subject characteristics

Labor-based homework serves as a crucial bridge between academic learning and real-life practice, enabling students to deepen their understanding of subject knowledge through concrete tasks while cultivating work habits and a sense of responsibility. Teachers should align with core subject competencies to blur the boundaries between classroom and home environments, transforming academic concepts into tangible labor assignments. By comprehensively considering students’ age characteristics and living contexts, educators must ensure tasks are appropriately challenging and relatable to daily life. This approach guides students to observe, reflect, and innovate through hands-on activities, allowing academic achievement to be reinforced and expanded through practical labor experiences. Ultimately, this approach achieves an effective integration of knowledge acquisition and labor education.

Based on the core concepts of “Civilized Etiquette” and “Friendly Treatment” from the “Social Life and Moral Education” section in the eighth-grade Moral and Rule of Law textbook, design a “Civilized Labor Practice Project: ‘Etiquette Warms Homes’ for Families and Communities”. Considering eighth-grade students’ cognitive levels and social engagement capabilities, teachers should first explain the essence of civilized labor (e.g., courteous work attitudes and orderly labor behaviors) during classroom instruction. The assignment consists of two components: At the family level, students are required to undertake 1–2 etiquette-related household tasks, such as daily living room organization, entertaining guests (serving tea, pouring water, polite communication), preparing simple meals for family members, and documenting civilized details during labor processes. At the community level, students participate in volunteer services like cleaning public areas, assisting elderly residents with smart device usage, and promoting responsible pet ownership knowledge, while recording feedback from beneficiaries. Students must complete a “Civilized Labor Practice Log” detailing labor duration, tasks, and reflections. Weekend summaries should highlight 1–2 improvement suggestions (e.g., “Preparing specialty tea snacks in advance for family gatherings demonstrates sincerity” or “Creating illustrated brochures

for community outreach enhances effectiveness”). Submitted materials must include photos of labor scenes. Teachers facilitate classroom discussions, recognizing diligent participants and feasible suggestions. This approach enables students to practice moral principles through labor while cultivating family responsibilities and social service awareness.

5.4. Utilizing disciplinary experiments for labor skill training

Labor-intensive components are inherent in subject-based experiments, ranging from material preparation and instrument operation to process management and result documentation. Each step serves as a practical platform for developing technical competencies. Educators should move beyond traditional teaching approaches that prioritize experimental outcomes, integrating labor skill cultivation throughout the experimental curriculum. By clearly defining labor requirements at each experimental stage, students can master standardized procedures, collaborate systematically, and organize materials meticulously. This methodology not only enhances experimental proficiency but also instills fundamental labor skills, cultivates rigorous work ethics, and fosters safety awareness in practical settings ^[5].

5.5. Organize labor achievement exhibitions based on academic progress

The implementation of labor education in academic disciplines requires establishing a closed-loop practice system through teaching processes. The presentation of labor outcomes serves as a crucial component of this cycle, bridging the application of subject knowledge with enhanced students’ understanding of labor value. Educators should accurately grasp the rhythm of knowledge acquisition, strategically positioning labor practices during critical stages of knowledge internalization. By using labor as a means to deepen understanding, students can then utilize outcome presentations as communication platforms. Through exhibition and feedback processes, students experience the creativity and sense of achievement inherent in labor activities, while simultaneously leveraging these outcomes to foster the integration of academic knowledge with practical labor competencies.

Taking the “Building a Better Online Community” project integrating Moral and Rule of Law education with art curriculum from Grade 8 as an example, after students master core concepts like “How the Internet Shapes Society” and “Creating a Healthy Digital Environment”, teachers organize creative exhibitions showcasing their work. Two weeks in advance, educators guide students to explore connections between cyber ethics and artistic expression, incorporating moral principles into visual creations through project directions such as “Cyber Civilization Posters”, “Clean Internet Initiative Handwritten Newspapers”, and “Cyber Civilization Video Scripts”. During implementation, teachers teach art fundamentals including color coordination, composition design, and typography, while encouraging students to integrate real-world cyber ethics cases (e.g., combating online rumors, responsible digital communication) into their work. Students are motivated to incorporate family labor scenarios (e.g., collaborative poster design discussions with parents). The exhibition phase features a “Cyber Civilization Showcase Corner”, displaying works categorized by “Print Media” and “Creative Script”, each accompanied by explanatory cards detailing design concepts, moral education elements, and collaborative processes. Students serve as “Promotion Ambassadors” sharing creative insights and teamwork experiences, while school administrators and parent representatives evaluate entries to select “Best Exhibits”. Outstanding works are compiled into digital albums published on the class WeChat official account, helping students reinforce subject knowledge, appreciate creative value, and strengthen awareness of cyber civilization promotion.

6. Conclusion

In the contemporary educational landscape, in-depth analysis and practical implementation of subject-based labor education in primary and secondary schools have provided crucial support for establishing a comprehensive development framework. From precise implementation processes to meticulous planning of diversified approaches, these initiatives have achieved seamless integration between labor education and academic instruction, fostering holistic development of students’ core competencies. Such efforts address the urgent demands of educational reform in our era, laying solid

foundations for building multidimensional educational systems. They hold profound significance in driving education toward life-oriented practices and promoting students' lifelong development.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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