

# **Understanding rural teachers and social development in China**

## **Course syllabus**

### **1. Background**

Qualified teachers are one of the key factors to ensure the quality of education, and their professional development level determines the future of education development. Currently, the unbalanced education development pace among countries and the gap between urban and rural areas calls for education imperative, which plays a crucial role in promoting equality and alleviating poverty. Rural teachers, as the main body of rural education, determine the quality and level of rural education, and play a vital role in promoting rural social development and social equity. Ensuring inclusive and fair access to education, promoting life-long learning opportunities for all, and increasing the supply of qualified teachers are stated in the sustainable development goals that proposed by UNESCO. The Chinese government also strives to cultivate and train of high-quality rural teachers, increases the resource allocation to rural areas, and aims to create a team of high-quality, dedicated, and rooted rural teachers to promote rural education and society transformation.

However, the current international discussion of education equality and national efforts of rural education development are both within the structuralism discourse, emphasizing the importance of advanced experience and external economic intervention and assistance, but ignoring the local contextualise development needs. According to Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, development targets need to shift from focusing on the development of economic returns and human capital to individual development and individual value realization, and the development theory should shift from emphasizing external intervention and intervention to internal initiative, to inspire and empower individuals. What is the working and living conditions of rural teachers in China, and how to realize the individual development and personal value of rural teachers are the key to solving the problems of rural teachers in our country. Therefore, starting with the Capability Approach, this course

explores teachers' individual experience and professional development dimensions, understands their career choices and value realization paths, dialogues Chinese experience with international theories, and provides international development experience while working to solve rural teacher problems in China, to promote overall social progress and narrow social gaps.

## **2. Course targets student groups**

This course focuses on rural teacher development, and it is part of the rural development course series. Its target student groups are people who are interested in teacher education, rural teachers and education equity issues around the world. The key promotion areas include education project officials within UNESCO and category one and two centres in the UNESCO system, member states of UNESCO government officials, education system staffs and teachers.

## **3. Course objectives**

From the basic understanding of sustainable development goals and education equality, this Course adopts Amartya Sen's Capability approach to examine the working and living environment, and the professional development of rural teachers in China. With the understanding of the plight and current situation of rural teachers' capability development in China, this course stimulates discussion of the individual development and their perceived value of being a teacher.

This course aims to promote the development of rural education in a long-term sense through the discussion of the plight of rural teachers' individual experience and capability development, with the professional development of rural teachers as the starting point. Helping students to construct theoretical concepts about educational equity during learning, reflects on the plight of teacher education development from the perspective of relatively disadvantaged teachers, and put forward feasible rural teacher development suggestions. The specific goals are as following:

Understand Amartya Sen's Capability Approach, and establish a development theory and conceptual framework based on the perspective of education equity

Understand the basic structure of teacher professional development

Establish a basic perception of rural teachers' professional development in China

Enhance problem awareness and master the ability to analyze facts and phenomena from a theoretical perspective

#### **4. Teaching content and arrangement**

The main content of the course follows the logical clues of "what-why-how", based on the basic understanding of education equality, international environment and Chinese domestic policy system, this course introduces the Capability Approach and teacher professional development theories, helping students to have an in-depth understanding of Chinese rural teachers resource system, competence literacy framework and valued considerations. The course title and topics are as following:

Course title: Understanding rural teachers and social development in China

Course topic:

Introduction and Amartya Sen's Capability Approach

Rural teacher support system, rural teacher case study and application of Capability Approach

Rural teachers' professional knowledge development and individual knowledge and ability reserve

The development of professional skills of rural teachers and the realization of individual professional abilities

Professional attitude and individual motivation of rural teachers

Discussion and summary of the development efficiency of rural teachers from the perspective of Capability Approach

(1) Introduction and Amartya Sen's Capability Approach 3 class hours

Course introduction: Why study this course? Development and teachers

Background introduction: the importance of teachers and education, the basic problem

perception of rural teachers

Capability Approach: background, main scholars, basic logic, high-order logic, What-Why-How perspective, theoretical criticism

Course format: lecture, questions at the beginning and the end of the course

(2) Rural teacher support system, rural teacher case study and application of Capability Approach 3 class hours

Course introduction: the first impression of Chinese rural teachers

Background introduction: Significant changes in China's rural environment and rural schools

Government policy support: working environment, salary, staffing, social status, ability improvement

Research data and theoretical application: provide research background information and discuss how to use CA to explain the career choices of rural teachers

Course format: lecture and seminar, ask questions at the beginning and the end of the course, organize group discussions during the course

(3) Rural teachers' professional knowledge development and individual knowledge and ability reserve 3 class hours

Course introduction: understanding of the abilities teachers should have

Background introduction: teacher professionalism and professional development

Teacher professional knowledge: the existing classification framework and concept introduction, and the performance of rural teachers' ability dilemmas in existing research

Theoretical application: Based on the interview data in the presented study, discuss how to explain the current situation of the professional knowledge development of rural teachers

Course format: lecture and seminar, ask questions at the beginning and the end of the course, organize group discussions during the course

(4) Rural teachers' professional skills development and individual professional ability realization 3 class hours

Course introduction: understanding of teachers' professional skills

Background Review: Teacher Professionalism and Professional Development

Teachers' professional skills: the existing classification framework and concept introduction, and the performance of rural teachers' ability dilemmas under existing research

Theoretical application: Based on interview data in the presented study, discuss how to explain the status quo of the development of professional skills of rural teachers

Course format: lecture and seminar, ask questions at the beginning and the end of the course, organize group discussions during the course

(5) The professional attitude and individual initiative of rural teachers stimulate 3 class hours

Course introduction: understanding of teachers' professional attitude

Background Review: Teacher Professionalism and Professional Development

Teachers' Professional Attitudes: Existing classification framework and concept introduction, and the performance of rural teachers' ability dilemmas under existing research

Theoretical application: Based on interview data in the presented study, discuss how to explain the current situation of rural teachers' professional attitudes

Course format: lecture and seminar, ask questions at the beginning of the course, organize group discussions during the class, and share development suggestions at the end

(6) Reflection and review 3 class hours

Main content: at the end of the course, each student needs to independently complete a rural teacher capacity building proposal based on the content of this course and give a classroom presentation. All the students further discuss the "efficiency" development in the capacity framework, that is, the capacity promotion of rural

teachers should be realized what kind of goal.

Requirements: The research questions are clear, the proposed scheme is reasonable and feasible, the results display and evaluation methods are complete and effective, and the explanation logic is clear.

## **5. Assessment**

### **(1) Attendance (10%)**

One absenteeism without reason or 15 minutes late is considered as absenteeism, and the attendance score is 0. Upon approval of leave from the course facilitator, you may leave the specific course module.

### **(2) Class participation (20%)**

Every student should actively participate in class discussions, and assess the class participation results according to the number and quality of class discussions and speeches.

### **(3) Team cooperation (20%)**

Every student must actively participate in group cooperative learning and seminars. Teachers and teaching assistants will evaluate the performance of classroom group cooperation.

### **(4) Course essay (50%)**

After the course is completed, a course essay should be submitted individually.

Requirements: The research problem is clear, meets the learning characteristics and requirements of the corresponding course, has a real sense of the problem, the implementation plan is reasonable and feasible, the results display and evaluation methods are complete and effective, and the explanation logic is clear.

## **Teaching material**

Reading materials are an important part of the course. They can introduce students to fundamental concepts and articles related to the subject of the course. Extended reading can help students understand and expand the content of learning. It is also an

important content for pre-class preparation and after-class contact.

Reading materials include required reading materials, optional reading materials and reference materials. Required reading materials are the reading materials that students must complete before or after class. Optional reading materials are materials that students can optionally read in their spare time. Reference materials are materials quoted in lectures and can be selected as required reading materials.

#### Session One:

The Capability Approach From Theory to Practice[D], Edited by Solava Ibrahim and Meera Tiwari

Robeyns, I. (2005). The Capability Approach: a theoretical survey[J]. Journal of Human Development, 6 (1):93-117.

Walker, M. (2005). Amartya Sen's capability approach and education[J]. Educational Action Research, 13:1, 103-110.

Mutanga, O. and Walker, M. (2015). 'Towards a Disability-inclusive Higher Education Policy through the Capabilities Approach'[J]. Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, 16 (4),501-517.

Tao, S. (2017). Female teachers in Tanzania: an analysis of gender, poverty and constrained capabilities[J]. Gender and Education, 1-17.

Wilson-Strydom, M. (2017). 'Disrupting Structural Inequalities of Higher Education Opportunity: “Grit”, Resilience and Capabilities at a South African University'[J]. Journal of Human Development and Capabilities, 18 (3), 384-398.

Sharon Tao, Why are teachers absent? Utilising the Capability Approach and Critical Realism to explain teacher performance in Tanzania[J], International Journal of Educational Development, 2013(33):2-14.

Alison Buckler, Quality teaching in rural Sub-Saharan Africa: Different perspectives, values and capabilities[J], 2015(40):126-133.

Alison Buckler, Teachers' Professional Capabilities and the Pursuit of Quality in Sub-Saharan African Education Systems: Demonstrating and Debating a Method of Capability Selection and Analysis, Journal of Human Development and

Capabilities[J], 2016(17):161-177.

### Session Two

David Clarke, Hilary Hollingsworth. Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth [J]. Teaching and Teacher Education, 18 (2002) 947–967.

Mary M. Kennedy. How Does Professional Development Improve Teaching? [J]. Review of Educational Research December 2016, Vol. 86, No. 4, pp. 945–980.

Katrina McChesney & Jill M. Aldridge. A new tool for practitioner-led evaluation of teacher professional development, Teacher Development [J], 2018, 22:3, 314-338.

马永全. 近30年来我国农村教师教育政策的回顾、反思与展望[J]. 教育导刊, 2013, 12: 25-28.

郑新蓉, 武晓伟. 我国农村教师队伍建设与支持性政策的思考[J]. 河北师范大学学报(教育科学版), 2014, 16(1): 5-10.

庞丽娟, 金志峰, 杨小敏. 新时期乡村教师队伍建设政策研究[J]. 中国行政管理, 2017(5): 109-113.

蒋亦华. 新世纪我国乡村教师政策文本的多维审视[J]. 教育发展研究, 2019(20): 53-60.

### Session Three:

LEE S. SHULMAN, Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform [J]. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 57 No. 1 February 1987.

Elbaz F. Teacher Thinking: A Study of Practical Knowledge [Z]. London: Croom Helm, 1983:216.

Shulman L S. Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform [Z]. Harvard Educational Review, 1987:22.

Marije van Braak, et al. A professional knowledge base for collaborative reflection education: a qualitative description of teacher goals and strategies [J]. Perspectives on Medical Education, 2021. PP 1-7.

辛涛, 申继亮, 林崇德. 从教师的知识结构看师范教育的改革[J]. 高等师范



教育研究, 1999(6): 12-17.

申大魁, 刘峰贵. 教师专业知识结构研究综述[J]. 高教学刊, 2018 (12) : 51-54.

张师平. 农村小学教师专业知识结构存在的问题及对策探析[J]. 教师发展, 2019 (12) :25-28.

#### Session Four:

Manuela Keller-Schneider, Hua Flora Zhong & Alexander Seeshing Yeung. Competence and challenge in professional development: teacher perceptions at different stages of career [J], Journal of Education for Teaching, 2020, 46:1, 36-54.

Olga Nessipbayeva. The Competencies of the Modern Teacher [J]. Bulgarian Comparative Education Society, 2012: 148-154.

Sudip Mandal. The competencies of the Modern Teacher [J]. International Journal of Research in Engineering, Science and Management, Volume 1, Issue 10, October, 2018: 351-360.

裴生辉. 乡村教师专业能力现状的调查研究[D]. 黑龙江大学, 2017.2.

胡卫平, 张皖. 教师专业能力发展的理论与实践[J]. 陕西师范大学学报(哲学社会科学版), 2018, 47 (2) : 139-145.

张海珠, 王爱玲. 乡村教师教学实施能力表现水平实证研究[J]. 教育理论与实践, 2018, 38 (31) : 44-48.

#### Session Five:

Bentea Cristina-Corina, Anghelache Valerica. Teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards professional activity [J]. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 51 (2012): 167 – 171.

Anupama Bhargava, MK Pathy. Attitude of Student Teachers towards Teaching Profession [J]. Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, July 2014, Volume 15, Number 3: 27-36.

金顺明. 教师的专业态度[J]. 湖州职业技术学院学报, 2003 (1) : 42-47.

阮为文. 促进农村中学教师专业态度发展研究[J]. 中小学教师培训, 2005, 5: 37-40.

李建辉, 王志广. 简论师范生的教师专业情意、态度与价值观[J]. 福建师范大学学报(哲学社会科学版), 2013(5): 162-172.