



Research on Problems and Countermeasures in Creating Natural Corners in Kindergarten Classes

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Abstract: In kindergartens, the nature corner is the best place for children to experience nature. The nature corner not only beautifies the classroom environment but also enriches curriculum resources, improving children's scientific literacy, scientific cognition, and scientific abilities, which is of great value for their growth. This study uses literature, observation, and interview methods to select the creation of a class natural corner at a municipal model kindergarten as the research subject. It is found that the content of the creation does not match the children's age stage, the content is too monotonous, materials lack operability, and children participate little during the creation process. Improvement strategies are proposed based on these issues.

Keywords: class natural corner, district corner creation, natural corner

1 INTRODUCTION

The creation of a class nature corner refers to creating conditions in kindergarten classes to experience nature, satisfying children's curiosity and desire to explore the natural world, and broadening their horizons. However, most children today have "nature deficiency syndrome." The "Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3 - 6" points out: children should get close to nature, love exploration, and understand the things and phenomena around them through exploration. Liu Zhanlan pointed out in her book "Preschool Children's Science Education" that "the nature corner is the main activity area for children and an important place for them to observe and learn about plants and animals. Its core value is to help children understand and recognize the basic characteristics of life." Tian Huixue (2014) pointed out that the nature corner is a microcosm of nature. The creation of the nature corner should follow nature, fully consider its suitability, and be timely and development-appropriate. Cao Qian (2013) believes that when creating a classroom natural corner, space should be used rationally, and improving usage efficiency is key to creating a natural corner. Pan Yanyu (2013) mentioned that when creating a natural corner, special attention should be paid to the collection and presentation of materials, starting from children's interests and cognitive characteristics. Chinese scholar Zeng Meifen (2012) also proposed that children should actively participate in

managing the natural corner to increase their attention and maximize their initiative

Regarding how to create a class natural corner, scholars believe that in kindergarten classes, natural corners should follow nature, the space and materials of natural corners should be reasonably utilized, and children should be involved in managing the natural corners based on their interests and cognition. By reviewing the views of the above scholars, it is found that aspects such as children's age characteristics, the content of corner selection, the operability of materials, and children's participation in creating classroom natural corners are still worth studying.

2 RESEARCH OBJECT AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH SUBJECTS

This study selected a municipal and district-level model kindergarten in Xipu New District, Zunyi City. This kindergarten serves as the main kindergarten of the Xipu New District Early Childhood Education Group, which has won first prize in the group category of the Zunyi City's "Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3-6" and has been recognized as an advanced school collective for three consecutive years. This study used literature, observation,



and interview methods to investigate the creation of natural corners in the kindergarten's classes. Among them, the natural corners of 2 small classes, 3 middle classes, and 2 senior classes were the subjects of this study.

2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

2.2.1 LITERATURE LAW

Search for keywords such as "creating kindergarten class nature corners" and "kindergarten nature corners" on CNKI, and refer to the book "Preschool Children's Science Education" to obtain relevant information on creating kindergarten class nature corners. The collected materials are analyzed, organized, and summarized. This method helps to learn from scholars' research on creating class nature corners and to structure the framework of papers.

2.2.2 OBSERVATION METHOD

Based on consulting relevant materials such as the "Action Study on the Creation and Implementation of Kindergarten Class Natural Corners," a non-interventional observation method was adopted to conduct detailed observations in kindergartens, carefully observe the creation of class natural corners, keep records, and compile an observation record form. The observation content includes the number of corner areas within the kindergarten class natural corner, the basic materials used, the spatial setup and environment of the class natural corners, and analyzes, organizes, and summarizes the observed and collected data. This method helps researchers intuitively see the basic situation of the class natural corner and that the results can be directly applied in papers.

2.2.3 . INTERVIEW METHOD

The interview method refers to interviewers constructing targeted verbal activities with the interviewee to obtain first-hand information. This method is simple, feasible, and highly flexible. This study mainly uses structured interviews, first querying relevant materials and literature on CNKI, then using the observation table to identify problems in creating classroom natural corners and those not directly observed, to set interview questions related to class corner creation. The interview questions include teachers selecting content and materials for creating class natural corners, the main body of the corner, and finally selecting one teacher from the small class, two middle class, and one senior class teacher as interview subjects. Through interviewing teachers, they understand the problems in creating natural corners in kindergarten classes.

3 PROBLEMS AND ANALYSIS OF THE CREATION OF NATURAL CORNERS IN KINDERGARTEN CLASSES

3.1 THE CREATION OF THE CLASS NATURE CORNER IGNORES THE AGE STAGE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

The content of creating a class nature corner should be based on the age characteristics of the children. At different ages, the level of thinking and inquiry development varies to some extent. The content for the small class should focus on appreciation and care, allowing children in the small class to observe the growth of plants and seasonal changes in the nature corner; In the middle class, the creation of a nature corner should focus on cultivating children's desire to explore. In the senior class, experimentation and independent exploration should be the main content, guiding children to participate in planting and recording through drawings and other means. However, some teachers often overlook consideration of the children's age stage when creating the class nature corner. The planting and feeding content chosen for the small, middle, and large classes is similar and does not create according to the children's age characteristics.

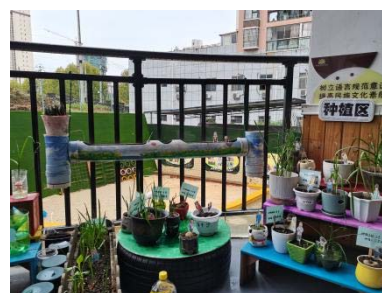


FIGURE 1: NATURAL CORNER FOR PRIMARY CLASS 1;



FIGURE 2: NATURAL CORNER FOR MIDDLE CLASS 2;



FIGURE 3: NATURAL CORNER FOR SENIOR CLASS 1

From the pictures shown above, it can be seen that each class has a separate nature corner, and each area of the natural corner



for each age group has a dedicated area sign. Due to teachers' insufficient emphasis on children's understanding and experiencing nature, the creation of natural corners in kindergartens has developed uniformly, while the creation of natural corners in kindergarten classes is similar and does not reflect the age characteristics of the natural corners in the small, middle, and senior classes. The content of the natural corners in the primary, middle, and senior classes is uniform, with no obvious age differences. The soil cultivation and hydroponic areas of the primary, middle, and senior classes are all common vegetables, and the items in the viewing area are similar. Although basic plant information and the owner's name are written on them, most of the plants in each class share the same plants. If it weren't for the fact that the nature corner is located in the corridor at each classroom's entrance, it would be impossible to distinguish between different age groups.

3.2 THE CONTENT CHOSEN FOR CREATING THE CLASS NATURAL CORNER IS SINGLE

The classroom nature corner is an important place for children to experience nature, and the content created should be rich and colorful to promote children's development. However, most teachers do not give much thought to the content and do it perfunctorily. Each area mostly chooses planting and raising content that is easy to care for. All potted plants basically belong to the same type, consisting of several pots with no changes

Researcher: How did you choose the content created for the class nature corner?

Teacher R: The creation of the nature corner in our kindergarten is discussed by the teachers in our own class, and the content is freely chosen. In our younger class, the nature corner selects planting and care content related to the curriculum, and care must be convenient and safe. The plants in the viewing area are all potted plants and succulents provided by parents, and children are invited to bring them to the kindergarten.

Teacher B: To save time, our class chose planting and feeding content that are common in daily life and easy to care for. Our teacher determines the planting content and provides pictures for the children to choose freely.

Teacher C: In the nature corner outside our senior class, we let children observe the growth cycles and changes of plants. Therefore, we choose planting and raising items with short cycles and easy survival times. Sometimes in the viewing area, we store some plant works made by the children themselves, but most are potted plants brought from home.

From the above interviews, it can be seen that since teachers save time and effort, most of the plants chosen for the class nature corner are ornamental plants brought from children's homes. There are also many similar ornamental plants, most of which are succulents or green plants. Sometimes, several classes or several classes have several identical plant species in the natural corners, with little obvious difference in plant species or seasonality. Although each class chooses different content for creating natural corners, they do not choose content based on children's interests and lifestyles; most focus on plants that are easy to care for, safe, and easy to survive

3.3 THE MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOM'S NATURAL CORNER LACK OPERABILITY

The class nature corner is an extension and expansion of the class science area, inseparable from a rich and diverse array of materials. In the nature corner, to meet the needs of children, it is necessary to provide a variety of well-structured materials, and they should acquire relevant learning and life experiences through continuous exploration, experience, and hands-on activities. However, observations show that the types of materials in the class nature corner are too limited, the layers are not clear enough, and only one or two practical materials are provided, with almost no materials for children to explore and operate

Researcher: What materials did your class choose for the natural corner?

Teacher E: For the younger class, the nature corner in the class is enough for them to look at and touch. Sometimes they water it, so our class's natural corner only has a few plastic watering cans.

Teacher B: In our senior class, we let children do hands-on activities, but materials are limited. We only provide shovels, water bottles, and some old bottles.

Teacher D: The children in the middle class are gradually starting to participate in creating the classroom's natural corner. We provide a few magnifying glasses for children to explore, but most of them use watering cans and small shovels for daily use.

From the above conversation, it is reflected that, due to insufficient material and financial support in the kindergarten and neglect by teachers, teachers do not provide materials of varying difficulty according to their own classes, especially for middle and large classes, who should have deeper materials. Most of the materials are not explored by children. Although each class has common practical items like watering cans in the natural corners, materials like rulers, magnifying glasses, rulers, and pens that children can investigate and explore on their own are only available in a few classes. Moreover, teachers do not make good use of these hands-on materials, only placing them in areas where children glance at them as they pass by without any interest in trying them out.

3.4 THE CREATION OF THE CLASSROOM NATURAL CORNER IS MAINLY TEACHER-LED, WITH LITTLE CHILD PARTICIPATION

Children are the main objects of learning and creation. The class nature corner should help their development. When creating the environment for the class nature corner, it should also be a process of cooperation and participation between the child and the teacher. However, sometimes the creation of the classroom nature corner is often done by teachers to save time, save effort, or prioritize the teacher's interests, by selecting and selecting materials and content for planting and raising themselves, while children only stand aside to appreciate and rarely participate in the creation of the classroom nature corner



Researcher: Who do you usually work with to create the nature corner in your class?

Teacher A: Usually, I and the co-teacher work together. Since we also need to organize other activities for the children, the creation of the nature corner only involves children in sowing seeds and watering them. Things like setting up the environment and making containers are all done by the teachers in the class. Our class also has goldfish, but they are brought by parents and raised by us teachers.

Teacher B: Sometimes letting children participate too much can make the whole class naturally dirty and messy, and later on, too many things become hard to clean; Except for some tools, materials, and seeding provided by parents, everything else is done by three teachers in our class.

Teacher C: Some handmade flowers outside the viewing area in our class were made by the children themselves during class. All the hydroponic and soil-grown plants in the planting area were planted by the children themselves, but our teachers prepared planting containers and let the children sow them directly.

From the above conversation, it can be seen that because teachers want to quickly complete tasks from superiors, save time, and worry that children might make the natural corner dirty and difficult to clean, teachers basically handle the entire creation process and rarely give children opportunities to participate. This includes arranging the classroom natural corner space, selecting tools and materials, as well as choosing planting and feeding. Most children follow the teacher's instructions, without giving them any opportunity to perform. They only participate in observing, watering, and maintaining the plants and animals in the natural corner. By the time the children see the natural corner, it is already complete.

4 STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE CREATION OF NATURAL CORNERS IN KINDERGARTEN CLASSES

4.1 UPDATE THE TEACHER'S CONCEPT FOR CREATING THE CLASSROOM'S NATURAL CORNER

Within the kindergarten, teachers can receive specialized training on creating natural corners, helping them understand the educational value of the corners and selecting content suitable for their age characteristics, allowing children to better experience nature in kindergarten. Training should focus not only on the openness, relevance, and adjustability of the classroom's natural corners, but also enrich teachers' professional knowledge and improve their professional level to create natural corners that match the age characteristics of children. Through training, teachers can "go out," see how other good kindergartens do things, understand their concepts, and apply their experiences to their own class's creation of natural corners, making the corners scientific and clearly age-appropriate.

Teachers should recognize the importance of the nature corner to children. It is not only a key way for them to understand and understand nature, but also an essential path for their learning and exploration. Teachers should change outdated concepts and help them understand that when creating a nature corner for younger classes, emphasis should be placed on children's observation skills. Different roots, stems, and leaves can be placed in the classroom corner for children to observe, and teachers should guide children to use multiple senses to obtain information. When creating a nature corner for middle class, attention should be paid to cultivating children's desire to explore. Teachers can provide children with tools for inquiry or investigation to guide them in inquiry; When establishing a nature corner in senior class, attention should be paid to children's independent exploration and practice, allowing them to experience the development and changes of different plants and animals. An experimental corner can be created in the corner for children to conduct related experiments, helping them discover problems and find solutions.

4.2 CREATE A RICH VARIETY OF CLASSROOM NATURAL CORNER CONTENT

Teachers can choose planting content for the natural corner according to the four seasons, helping children better observe and understand the growth and changes of plants. In spring, children can plant peas and vegetables in the nature corner area, observing the sowing process and germination of seeds; Planting watermelons in the hot summer and preparing more water bottles in the tool area also help children learn that plants need not only fertilizer but also water. Through creating nature corners in different seasons, children gain a new understanding of the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter

Creating a life-oriented environment can stimulate children's thinking and also spark their interest in activities. When guiding children to plant plants, teachers can view plant growth as a process of human growth, so children can discover the growth patterns of plants. When facing newly planted plants, teachers can use questioning to help children achieve this. Based on discussion and analysis of these questions, children realize that plants need watering and fertilization, and gain a deeper understanding of plant growth; They can also combine the creation of the nature corner with the class theme activities. When setting up a nature corner themed around a spring garden, teachers can first guide children to collect pictures of different flowers, then look up information about each type to help children recognize these flowers. Through research, children discovered that spring flowers include pear blossoms, peach blossoms, cherry blossoms, etc. Based on the information, children can choose different planting options. The teacher organically combines the nature corner with the themed activities, allowing children to gain knowledge about the theme and get closer to nature.

4.3 PROVIDE A WIDE VARIETY OF MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOM'S NATURAL CORNER

In the practice of creating a class nature corner, it is important to note that the materials provided can offer children continuous



and in-depth experiences, allowing them to grow experientially through hands-on activities. Teachers can prepare various types of materials. In addition to providing practical materials needed for planting, teachers can also set up some materials in the classroom corner for children to observe and explore. Besides placing watering cans and shovels, magnifying glasses, rulers, pens, etc., can be placed to facilitate children's independent exploration and operation.

Teachers can also make full use of various daily resources and repurpose old materials. They can use commonly used containers such as plastic basins and ceramic basins, as well as milk cups, plastic bottles, paper cups, and other materials. They can also choose pictures, models, and real objects for placement, thereby diversifying the materials. Collecting materials is not limited to classrooms and homes; it can also extend to streets, alleys, parks, and more, providing more opportunities for children to interact with nature.

4.4 DURING THE CREATION OF THE CLASSROOM NATURAL CORNER, TEACHERS SHOULD ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE MORE

Teachers usually arrange the nature corner in kindergartens. To increase children's enthusiasm for participating in the creation of the natural corner, teachers need to fully utilize children's initiative during the arrangement, allowing them to gain a complete creative experience through hands-on operations and increase their participation. What should be planted, what to raise, and how to arrange and utilize the space in the nature corner—all these require discussion between teachers and children. During the creation process, children should do what they can themselves, observe and record as they go, try planning the space themselves, divide areas, and decorate the corners, starting from planting containers to help children participate in the making, thereby enhancing their sense of participation and experience in planting.

During the creation process, teachers can involve children with multiple senses. By having them smell different plants, such as garlic and cilantro, their scents are obvious and very different; At the same time, children can touch the leaves and branches of plants during the creation process to feel their condition, making them look forward to the growth of plants. By viewing photos of mature plants, children can learn how their plants grow up, which helps them gain a deeper understanding of plants and allows them to gain more interesting and meaningful experiences.

5 CONCLUSION

The nature corner is a window for children to connect with nature. The kindergarten classroom nature corner is part of the kindergarten and is as important as the art and construction areas. This study mainly uses observation and interview methods to identify problems and propose some improvement strategies. Early childhood is the most fundamental and critical period in a

person's life, and their contact with nature must also be addressed.

Due to limitations in time, energy, and ability, this paper faces certain limitations in the research process: the scope of kindergarten activities observed and interviewed is small, and individual kindergartens cannot reflect the actual situation of all kindergartens, resulting in certain limitations in the research; There is a lack of relevant practice in creating natural corners, and many issues are not yet fully considered. In future studies, it is necessary to expand the scope of observation, conduct more in-depth research with precise research subjects, and strive to ensure objectivity in observation content to make the research results more realistic; At the same time, it is necessary to continuously strengthen one's own cultural education and research capabilities to ensure research becomes more scientific and rigorous.

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