

Growing Through Labor-Implementation of a Gamified Tea Learning Curriculum in Kindergarten

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Abstract: *Labor education is essential for student growth, nurturing both physical and mental well-being. Early childhood education, primarily based on games, can stimulate interest in labor, cultivate skills, and foster enthusiasm for work through familiar and engaging games. This article, based on an analysis of the current state of early childhood labor education, uses gamified instruction within the theoretical framework of the tea science curriculum: learning through tea belts, preparing and tasting tea, integrating tea tasting, and retaining and tasting tea. This approach aims to help preschoolers develop a sense of labor and habits, increase their understanding of traditional Chinese tea, strengthen their coordination, and enhance their aesthetic appreciation.*

Keywords: Early Childhood Labor, Labor Education, Gamification Courses, Tea Studies.

1. Introduction

Labor education is a necessary path for student growth. It is closely linked to the other four developments: morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics. It has the comprehensive value of cultivating virtue, enhancing intelligence, strengthening the body, and nurturing aesthetics, while also cultivating both body and mind. Since the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the “Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Primary, Secondary, and College Universities in the New Era,” labor education has garnered increasing attention from governments at all levels, education departments, and teachers. Young children are at an early stage of formal schooling and possess a high degree of plasticity. Therefore, it is crucial to provide labor education to children at this stage to cultivate their awareness of labor, foster work habits, and prepare them for primary education. This article explores how and in what forms labor education can be conducted in kindergartens, as well as the impact and effects of this education, in order to provide some insights into the implementation of labor education for young children.

The early childhood education stage is the first stage of a child's schooling. Most children are between the ages of 3 and 6. Their mental maturity is immature, their learning direction is uncertain, and they are often confused. They are full of curiosity about the world and have a desire to explore it. Education is primarily based on play, which can help children learn knowledge and develop their intelligence in a joyful way. Early childhood educator Friedrich Froebel also emphasized the importance of play in early childhood education. He believed that childhood is the playful period of a child's life. Play is the external expression of a child's inner needs and impulses, and a love of play is a child's nature [1]. Using games that children enjoy and are familiar with to provide labor education can stimulate their interest in labor, strengthen their ability to work, and cultivate their enthusiasm for work. The key to cultivating labor education for children is to offer exploratory, creative, playful, and artistic labor activities. Tea science not only contains my country's profound traditional tea culture, but also the processes such as tea picking and tea making contained in it are characterized by activity and play.

Therefore, it is of certain significance to use the curriculum of children's tea science games to integrate tea science into early childhood education, develop tea science games to provide labor education for children, help children develop a sense of labor, and then form labor habits, and promote their all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness and aesthetics.

2. The Current Situation of Labor Education for Young Children

At present, the implementation of labor education for young children in my country is not enough. The main reasons are as follows: First, parents of young children lack awareness and think that their children are too young. Due to the over-protective mentality and fear that their children will get hurt, they even do not allow their children to participate in simple housework at home; Second, although preschool teachers have a certain understanding of labor education compared to parents, their understanding is relatively superficial, and most preschool teachers only provide simple labor education for children such as sweeping the floor and wiping the table. Although it has a certain effect on cultivating children's labor ability, the form is single and the content is simplified, and it is difficult to stimulate children's interest and enthusiasm for labor; Third, society is a place where human beings live and work together, but children rarely face society alone under the protection of their parents. Since children are still in an incomplete stage of physical and mental development, considering their safety issues, there are also limited places in society where they can receive labor education for children.

The early childhood stage lays the foundation for children's physical and mental development. It's the age of carefree innocence and romance, and also the period with the least academic workload. It's particularly important to provide children with labor education during this period, cultivate their hands-on skills, develop labor habits, and establish a sense of labor before entering basic education. Therefore, here, we propose a specific plan and concept for labor education for young children through tea-themed games, providing some reference for effectively implementing labor education in kindergartens.

3. The Practical form of Tea Learning Games in Children's Labor Education

Young children are in the early stages of development and are highly adaptable. Providing labor education during this stage helps them develop a correct labor consciousness and habits, which will impact their lifelong development. Providing early labor education through tea science not only allows children to enhance their understanding of traditional tea culture and tea processing during the tea picking process, but also leaves a deep impression of tea culture in their young minds, cultivating their hearts and awakening their love for traditional Chinese culture.

3.1 Learn from the Tea Belt and Carry Out Tea Picking Experience Activities

Tea picking is a life skill for tea farmers. To allow children to truly experience the wonders and wonders of nature, fully tap into their innate instincts to explore nature and discover the unknown, while also satisfying their curiosity and innate playfulness, tea picking is naturally the first step in a labor curriculum design, allowing children to explore the origins of tea through hands-on experience. Designing experiential activities themed around tea picking allows children to return to nature, utilizing existing tea plantations within the kindergarten and surrounding tea mountains for situational learning. Children are taken out of the classroom and placed in tea plantations, where they can observe tea trees up close. They can observe tea farmers picking tea and learn to imitate them [2]. While ensuring their safety, children can experience the art of tea picking. Children can carry bamboo baskets and personally pluck the tiny green leaves, allowing them to experience the joy of labor and the happiness of harvest. Here, children can learn about the growth environment of a young bud and how it is plucked from the tree. During the tea picking process, you can also design competitions such as "Which group's tea best meets the standards?" This allows children to understand the importance of cooperation within their groups. Competition between groups can also stimulate children's interest in labor, foster a passion for tea picking, and cultivate a sense of labor awareness. However, outdoor activities also carry certain risks, so children's safety should be considered when implementing these activities. For example, for children who are particularly active, curious, and enjoy exploring, teachers should provide safety education in advance and pay special attention. If conditions permit, one or two security personnel and medical staff can accompany the children on trips.

3.2 Make Tea and Lead Children to Make Finished Tea by Themselves

After returning from tea picking, children can observe the process of tea leaves being harvested and, under the guidance of tea farmers and accompanied by teachers, practice simple operations such as sorting and rolling. After picking the green tea, children immediately begin drying the leaves. They perform somersaults and spread the leaves thinly before sun-drying them. After drying, the leaves are shaken. Children can be equipped with a small bamboo sieve to perform this

operation, which requires extensive body movement and effectively exercises their physical functions. Next, children proceed to the withering and rolling stages. Teachers and tea farmers provide guidance and ensure the safety of the children. Children's tiny hands stir the tea leaves in a large pot, followed by rolling. This final step in the finished tea is sure to fill the children with hope and enthusiasm. After the tea leaves are formed, teachers provide guidance and guidance as they conceive packaging for the finished tea. This allows children to unleash their imaginations and design packaging that reflects the characteristics of the tea. Children can create creative packaging ideas that reflect the tea's qualities and characteristics. Finally, let the villagers in the tea garden comment on which group's packaging is the most attractive.

3.3 Tea Products Linkage, Hold Tea Bar Creative Games

After the tea-picking activity, children have gained a general understanding of tea growth and witnessed the appearance and color of fresh tea leaves. Next, a tea bar game can be designed to help children identify different types of tea. Children can use various senses, such as identification, touch, and smell, to identify different types of tea. They can also try teas brewed from different teas, such as jasmine tea and green tea. The tea bar features a wide variety of teas and beautiful tea sets. The play area is filled with tea boxes containing distinct tea types, each with its own unique flavor. After tasting, children can discuss their favorite teas with their friends and share their reasons. This is a tea party activity specifically designed for children within the tea-learning game. In the tea bar, children tasted the tea they made themselves, ate snacks, and had tea talks, which cultivated their interest in tea. They felt the differences between different teas through tea tasting, communication and discussion, and felt the joy of reaping the fruits of their labor, which cultivated their understanding of tea and their love for labor.

3.4 Let the Tea Flow Out and Enjoy the Beauty of the Tea Art Performance

Since ancient times, tea culture has placed great importance on both tea and water. Good tea goes well with good water, and good water produces good tea. During tea ceremony performances, the color of the tea soup and the shape of the tea leaves are highly valued. The beauty of tea art is a complex combination of factors, including attire, etiquette, and technique. After appreciating a tea art performance, children can rate their favorite tea performance and explain their reasons. Based on the performance, teachers can teach traditional tea etiquette and have children imitate traditional Chinese clothing. Furthermore, a Little Tea People Drama Club can be organized for children, allowing them to design a play based on the performance they just saw, demonstrating tea brewing techniques and tea tasting etiquette. Of course, please note that these performances do not use real boiling water; to ensure children's safety, they are simply asked to imitate the performance. The primary goal is to help children understand that etiquette in tea art is an important part of its cultural heritage and to experience the aesthetic and emotional impact of traditional tea art. We believe that children will be deeply moved and inspired by its beauty during this experience.

4. The Role of Tea Learning Games in Children's Labor Education

4.1 Through the Activities of Picking Tea Leaves, Cultivate Children's Labor Awareness and Habits

Tea culture is a traditional Chinese culture, originating in the Tang Dynasty and flourishing in the Song Dynasty. Since ancient times, scholars have enjoyed tea with friends, emphasizing the artistic conception. First, tea in ancient China has the function of cultivating the body and mind, and fostering character and temperament. During the early childhood education stage, children over the age of three have gradually learned to use language and their learning abilities are gradually improving. At this point, it is time to begin the "Tong Meng Yang Zheng" education to cultivate their upright character and behavior. Therefore, it is of positive significance for children to be influenced by tea culture from an early age [3]. During the labor process, children understand the hardships of labor and the joy of harvest, realize that the fruits of labor are not easy to come by, and learn to respect the fruits of others' labor. In the labor study group activities mentioned by Sukhomlinsky in "Pavlesh Middle School," the labor process itself inspires children's respect for life and interest in science, and their hard work, sense of responsibility, and practical concerns are all positively developed [4]. Secondly, tea plantations offer a rare opportunity to experience the natural beauty of tea. Children can personally experience the tea-growing environment in tea plantations, which are often located far from urban areas. The fresh air allows them to experience the sunlight, soil, and climate conditions that are essential for tea growth. By observing the shape and color of tea leaves, they can not only enhance their appreciation of nature but also cultivate their minds and experience the gifts and charm of nature in such a natural environment. This allows children to understand that the beauty of nature requires our collective protection. Teachers can provide children with environmental protection education and foster their awareness of environmental protection. Finally, during the tea-picking process, children often need the assistance of their peers. Teachers can encourage them to cooperate and collaborate, fostering a spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance.

4.2 Increase Your Understanding of Traditional Chinese Tea by Identifying Different Types of Tea

By personally witnessing and touching tea leaves in the tea garden, children learn about the environment and conditions in which tea grows, such as climate, soil, and water sources, and understand the color, appearance, and form of tea leaves before they are picked. By identifying and tasting tea, children gain a deeper understanding of tea and gain a preliminary understanding of different types. Smelling and touching tea also stimulates children's interest and passion for tea. From the appearance to the aroma and finally the taste of the finished tea, children experience each aspect of the tea. This, in turn, fosters learning habits, cognition, and even cultural identity that will have a substantial impact on their lifelong learning [5].

4.3 By Experiencing the Tea-making Process, Children Can Exercise Their Physical Coordination Ability

Children must endure hard work to reap the fruits of their labor. This process strengthens their muscles and stretches their bodies. Modern children are living in an era of rapidly evolving electronic devices, and many are addicted to electronic tools and online platforms like games and TikTok, which confine them to confined spaces. Tea-picking activities like this allow children to free up their hands and feet, allowing them to participate in the physical exercise of picking and preparing tea leaves, providing effective exercise. For example, by watching tea farmers prepare tea and experimenting with the process, children can unleash their active nature. They can also develop coordination and organization through operations like sorting and rolling.

4.4 Improve Your Aesthetic Ability Through Appreciation of Traditional Tea Art

In the process of making tea packaging, young children can use their imagination to incorporate their creative aesthetic concepts into these small designs. Furthermore, integrating aesthetics into tea art performances, as a vehicle for imparting aesthetic skills, can enhance children's perception and understanding of beauty. In the process of learning tea art, the intoxicating aroma of tea, the gentle tea music, and the delicious snacks easily pique children's interest, greatly helping to stimulate their imagination and curiosity [6]. Furthermore, children can design tea-making stage plays based on their observations, thoughts, and ideas, fully unleashing their natural instincts and imaginations and allowing them to experience the beauty of traditional Chinese tea art.

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