



**EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF
CHINESE STUDIES 6 (2023)**

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— M. WOESLER, ED. —

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EDUCATION IN CHINA

- EDUCATION IN CHINA -
THE TWO TRENDS OF DECOUPLING
AND OF PROGRESSIVE
EDUCATIONAL REFORMS
- CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LOGIC
OF CHINA'S COLLEGE
ENTRANCE EXAMINATION SYSTEM
- CHINA AS INSPIRATION
FOR EUROPEAN THINKERS
- 'CHINESE THOUGHT' AS
PHILOSOPHY

European Journal of Chinese Studies 6 (2023)

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Education in China

The two trends of decoupling and of progressive educational reforms

Woesler, Martin

Hunan Normal University, China

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Abstract

Education seems to be considered more important in China than most other regions in the world. China has a 2,500 year-old tradition in intellectual knowledge transfer mostly through repetition, memorization and imitation in contrast to Western concepts of comprehension, critical questioning, creativity and personal development. The institutions filtered students hierarchically in an elitist,

centralized system based on grades and marks.

In the beginning of the 21st century, pressure on students with results in psychosis and suicides has led to experimental admission of alternative pedagogies like the Waldorf pedagogy, which is spreading rapidly in China and may be one of the reasons of the abolition of grading in grades 1-9. But at the same time, there is the contrary trend, that ideological indoctrination is reinforced. Chinese students in the past decades had a hard burden, which is eased now with measures like abandoning grades, allowing to repeat Gaokao, less tutoring and more time for spare time activities. Although the university students will not profit from the new policy to abandon grades, they also welcomed the hypothetical case of an abolition of the grading system and expected positive effects on their own health and on society as a whole.

Key words

Education, China, grading, marks, pressure, suicides personality development, Waldorf pedagogy, abolition of grades

Introduction

In 2021 and 2022, we are witnessing a historic change: the most populous country on earth is making a paradigm shift in child education. In 1949-2020, China had some of the highest pressures in the world, education was grade-centred, collectivist-militaristic, knowledge acquisition intellectual (not heart-based), there was competition, awards, and a centralized selection and elite system. In 2004 Waldorf schools were admitted, in 2014 it was decided that half of the students must go to practise-oriented professional schools instead of

universities. In 2021 and 2022 grades for grades 1-9 were abolished. On 5/5/2022, the Ministry of Education decided that grades 1-12 should learn to cook, plant, and repair household appliances starting in September 2022. However, the pressure is still on via the strict selection process for universities via the Gaokao Central Baccalaureate Examination.

The abolition of grades and the practice orientation are in stark contrast to the continuing discrimination of sexual orientation, religion, political conviction and ethnicity. Individuality, critical faculties and creativity still get a raw deal. Self-esteem is reinforced with the argumentation of the superiority of „the Chinese“ instead of the achievement of maturity and independence. Many lessons are ethnocentric, historical-revisionist and ideologically indoctrinating.

Before entering kindergarten, children in China are heavily pampered, often with grandparents spending half days with them at indoor playgrounds.

Playfulness and curiosity seem to exist even more among adults in China than in the West, but one also sees fewer children playing.

1. Background, methodology, basics and sources of information

The overview given here is based largely on the experiences of the author and his family, supplemented by Chinese laws and regulations and a non-representative survey of 100 students in China conducted in April and May 2022. The author has lived in China intermittently for about eight years since 1990, visiting numerous schools and universities, on the mainland and in Hong

Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, initially as a student, later as a teacher at the Goethe Institute, as a visiting scholar, and as a tenured professor at Key Universities partly with staff responsibilities. Through university professorships in the USA, Germany and Italy, he also has opportunities for comparison.

The present work evaluates sources on the historical change of the understanding of education in China and current Chinese-language ordinances on the reform of the education sector, results of existing studies on suicides, China in the PISA comparison, documentations of the spread of Waldorf education in China with classification in the historical-sociocultural background in the education system as well as on these bases an assessment of the education methodology and effects on personality development, world knowledge, critical ability,

compatibility on the international labour market, etc.

2. Tradition

In China, education has been extremely important in the past and present. In Chinese, „learning“ and „study disciplines“ are both called „学“ (pronounced: „hsüä?“). The first surviving schools were the Hundreds of schools of thought at the time of the Warring States around 600 BC. where masters taught students. According to legend, Zhong Qiu (centuries later called Confucius) taught up to 3000 students, often from wealthy families, about loyalty, caring, propriety, and rule-legitimization. The goals were the own perfection for the harmonization of the community, less striving for knowledge or self-realization. This tradition of private schools of wealthy families, in which children of

relatives and service personnel were also admitted, has persisted in China over the millennia, until the introduction of compulsory education in 1905.

Like Plato and Jesus, nothing written by Confucius has survived; rather, sayings from various sources were compiled into the *Analects* attributed to him. Later, the „School of Scholars“ 儒学, otherwise translated as the „Teaching of Gentleness“ referred to him as a founding father. He is credited with the saying „Learn, learn and learn again“ „学习、学习、再学习“ which already contains an essential element of Chinese pedagogy: Memorization and repetition. In fact, just learning the Chinese characters is a diligence task, practiced by constant repetition over about a decade. This approach to a given ideal has a life-determining effect; popularly, one only achieves perfection at

an advanced age and is then allowed to develop one's own style and become a master oneself. Too short comes the development of creativity, critical ability, maturity and individuality.

The Western demand to learn for life and not for grades or rewards finds its albeit distant equivalent in the aphorism of the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi, chapter Shanmu: „Acquaintance with the noble is as easy as water (君子之交淡如水)“ means in a figurative sense, one should not strive for vanity, fame and wealth, but should appreciate the noble.

At the Qin Empire unification around 220 BC, first Legalism became the

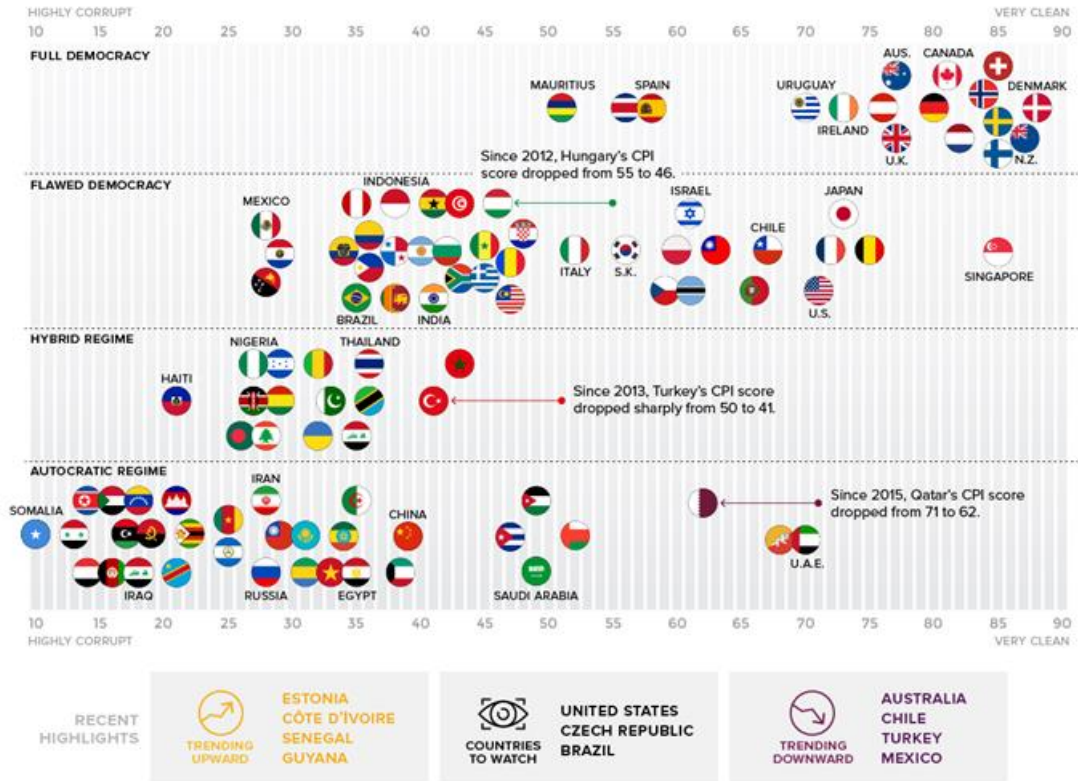
state philosophy, in the Han Dynasty Confucianism became the state philosophy, merging Legalism with it. Confucius was venerated in temples, Confucianism also became a popular religion that continues to this day in China alongside Daoism and Buddhism. As early as 725, the first university in China was founded, the Jixian Book Institute (Academy) with 18 students. It is one of the so-called „4 major universities“¹ in China.

In 606 AD, the teachings and canonized texts of Confucianism became the curriculum of meritocratic civil service examinations at the county, provincial and empire levels, which were anonymous. However, China today is one of the most

¹ 976 wurde mit der Yuelu-Akademie (wörtlich: Yuelu-Buchinstitut) in Changsha um eine Bibliothek herum eine Universität geschaffen, die heutige Hunan-Universität. Einige der

frühesten Universitäten weltweit, wurden rund um Bibliotheken gebaut, wie auch der Name „Shuyuan“ (Buch-Institut) verrät.

corrupt countries on earth, and it also has a long tradition of it: buying offices existed in various dynasties.



SOURCES: Transparency International - 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index, The Economist Intelligence Unit

visualcapitalist.com



Corruption and restrictiveness of the social system are correlated: China and Germany are at opposite poles with regard to these two scales. Source: Transparency International, 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index, visualcapitalist.com.

Until 1905, the exams were considered an essential system for social mobility. All civil servants, including those responsible for canal construction, for example, had to excel in knowledge of Confucian texts, including the poetry collection *Book of Songs*. They determined, as executive and judiciary with the merchants becoming more important, the fate of public life until the end of the imperial era in 1911. The illiteracy rate was reduced from about 95% to less than 10% since the introduction of compulsory education in 1905.

During the republican period 1912-1949, teaching was changed to Western content.

The current name „Daxue“ (High Teaching) for universities originates from an Anglicism. Today’s Peking University is located on the campus of the former Yenching University, with which it merged. Together with it, it has a US church founding history.



Beijing Teaching Institute, founded in 1898.



Female students in the library of Yanjing University in 1919.

3. 1949-2000

Since 1949, the primary goal has been to raise citizens loyal to the regime. The so-called „core subjects“ (especially ideological education) take up one tenth of the lessons and also accompany the Chinese during their professional life in the form of training, at least from department head level upward. During the Cultural

Revolution of 1969-1979, school and university instruction was suspended for several years; it was a matter of „learning from workers and peasants“.

In 1970s evaluations of comparative cultural surveys from the 1960s by Geert Hofstede and others, a significantly increased long-term orientation was diagnosed among members of the Chinese cultural area: According to it, the main goal in life was to improve living conditions for the offspring and to continue the line of ancestors. Traditionally, the younger generation takes over the care of the older. This burden has been reinforced by the one-child policy and today's aging society. In particular, only children are often pampered at preschool age and then experience the expectations of parents and grandparents regarding education and career choices as a major burden.

Similar to France, the school system is organized in a centralized hierarchy and is essentially based on grades and scores, which creates great competitive pressure. The pressure culminates in the nationwide uniform central baccalaureate examinations („Gaokao“), whose scores of 1-650 determine the quality of the university to be attended.

Because the school system has been the only guarantor of social advancement besides wealth, the percentage of university students in the total population has grown faster than the demand for suitably qualified workers, leading to great insecurity.

Grading is based on a point system adapted to percentage calculation. Partial and intermediate grades are awarded between 0 and 100 points, with 60 points or more being considered a pass. The final grade is often calculated on a weighted

basis, with class participation about 30-40% and the final exam about 60-70%. The final exam is often graded in 5 equally weighted categories such as topic, logic, literature, expression, theory. The university system hardly has any dropouts or students who fail the final exam.

4. Since 2000

China has been found to lack creativity in education compared to foreign countries.

Parallel to the standardized Gaokao path, the proportion of students who take the alternative path of so-called „international schools“ or „study abroad“ has been increasing for a few years. Here there are the purely foreign schools with foreign accreditation, to which students may go if one parent is a foreigner.

Then there are often expensive so-called „international private schools“, which (like all Chinese schools) since 2021 are only allowed to use domestic teaching materials. The students of international schools usually do not take part in the central baccalaureate examinations (Gaokao) and therefore do not have a university entrance qualification in China. Graduates of both international and national schools can apply to foreign universities and often spend several years abroad. Those who take advantage of a state scholarship are obliged to work in China after completing their education.

5. Concrete implementation of gradings

In present-day China, students receive grades between 0% and 100% (top grade) on exams and midterm exams during the school year or semester, and 60% is

considered a pass. They are therefore used to a percentage measurement system. Grades below 60% are extremely seldom and students who do not graduate also.

Exacerbated by ancestor worship (there must be a male descendant to carry on the ancestor worship and the line of the family name) and earlier one-child policies, we now have extreme pressure on only children to perform. Accordingly, their rebellious phase seems to be generally absent compared to adolescents in societies like Germany. The high pressure is reflected in psychological problems, behavioural abnormalities and a suicide rate among students that is taboo and whose figures suggest a high number of unreported cases; according to some cases that have become known, there is evidence of a direct causality with poor grades received. Parents openly espouse an expectation of the kind like „You have to be the best in all school subjects.“ or „You

have to be in the top three in this competition.“ This attitude of mothers is often called the „tiger mom“ phenomenon in China.

At Hunan Normal University, there are clear rules about what percentages may be awarded and how often. That is, it is not an absolute system, but a relative system, related to the respective student cohort.

The most decisive factor in determining the course of life is the number of points achieved in the so-called Gaokao, a centralized school-leaving examination (max. 650). It determines the allocation for so-called 1st Ben universities, 2nd Ben colleges, 3rd Ben technical colleges or Zhuanke (vocational schools). Within the universities, there are carrier gradations for national level, provincial level and city level. This differentiated university landscape means, for example,

that while Shanghai students study at elite universities throughout the country, they hardly ever study at national-level 211 universities in other cities, let alone at provincial- and city-level universities, since they have universities at all levels in Shanghai itself. Other classifications are the „elite universities“, the „key universities“ (which are the 211 universities also recognized by Anabin) or provincial level universities (so-called 1st and 2nd rank universities) or county and city level universities (so-called 3rd rank universities). The student composition is from all over the country in the case of elite universities, and often from the region in the case of lower-ranked universities and colleges. In this process, disadvantaged groups such as rural residents, members of minorities, etc., receive extra points.

Those who have achieved a high score can go to a university where students

from all over the country study and have better job prospects later on.

American university presidents from Ivory League universities such as Yale and Harvard are regularly invited to evaluate elite Chinese universities. I learned from the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2016 that overall they state that Chinese students are less open to discussion and creative, also that teaching takes place less between informed adults, but still with power distance between teacher and students.

The best jobs are given to Chinese graduates who, after studying in China, have completed master's and/or PhD studies in the United States or other Anglophone countries. They are given rapid promotion opportunities in many sectors, e.g. universities, upon their return and are now also given preference over foreigners with the same degrees. For example, it is common for a Chinese

professor who held a professorship at a university of applied sciences in Germany to become a dean in China and be granted the right to supervise PhD candidates.

Overall, the number of Chinese university students has increased dramatically, so that a degree no longer means a job guarantee. Starting salaries are often as low as 3000 yuan per month (430 euros).

6. 2022 Survey on health effects of grading and an elimination of grading

The author found the pressure of grades in China to be extreme compared to his teaching in the U.S. (Massachusetts, Utah) and Europe (Italy, Germany).

In late April/early May 2022, he conducted surveys on the health impact of grades among 112 students, including 30 bachelor's students and 82 master's

students. The response rate was 85% (25.5/30) among bachelor's students and 85.4% (70/82) among master's students. The percentage of women was higher than average due to the student population (translator degree program).

The results of the survey:

\Study Program Question	Bachelor	Master
What stress level do grades cause? (X% of 100% stress)	71.5%	66.1%
Feelings about grading: disappointed and treated unfairly	55.6%	41.4%
Feelings about grading: powerless and remote-controlled	54.4%	42.1%
Effect of grade abolition on health (one could also state negative effect with „-“)	+58.4%	+49.8%
Effect of abolition of grades on society (one could also state negative effect with „-“)	+19.6%	+12.0%
Desire to learn for life instead of for grades	78.6%	70.2%

Overall, the bachelor's students were found to have a somewhat higher stress level with regard to grades (71.5%) than the master's students (66.1%). It can therefore be assumed that there was a habituation effect.

Similarly, feelings of disappointment or unfair treatment resonated more strongly with bachelor's students at 55.6% than with master's students at 41.4%.

The same trend was evident in the feelings of feeling powerless or remote-controlled: Here it was 54.4% among bachelor's students and 42.1% among master's students.

Also, the effect that grade elimination would have on one's health was reported to be 58.4% positive among bachelor's students and 49.8% positive among master's students (on a scale of -100% to +100%).

Overall, students also saw a slightly positive effect for society in the event that grades were abolished (bachelor's: 19.6%, master's 12%).

The same pattern was seen in agreement with the statement that one should learn for life, not for grades: Bachelor 78.6% and Master 70.2%.

7. 2004-2020: 2004 experiments with Waldorf schools and 2014 state halving of student enrollment.

7.1 Since 2004

In 2004 the first Waldorf (Huadefu 华德福) kindergarten and school were established in Chengdu, in 2010 the „Chinese Training and Mentoring Program for Waldorf Education“ and in 2011 the „Chinese Forum for Waldorf Education“. At the beginning of 2022, there are over 50 schools oriented to Waldorf education,

over 300 initiatives (kindergartens, daycare centres, kindergartens in parents' homes, daycare centres and parent-child groups) and over 800 educators learning Waldorf education on the job in Chengdu, Beijing, Xi'an, Nanking, Canton and Hong Kong. Although it is very difficult to obtain approval from the Ministry of Education, Schools applying Waldorf pedagogy are spreading rapidly in China. This is partly because the state education system relies on formal, intellectual learning, memorization and testing, and partly because Waldorf education has affinities with Taoism and traditional Chinese medicine and emphasizes personality development. (Source: <https://iaswece.org/category/asien/china-de/>, visited 5/5/2022). Similarly, Kelihua 科利华 schools have also been approved.

The Waldorf movement has successfully campaigned against grades,

especially head grades. The social credit system (SCS) awards head grades to all citizens and organizations in China to a much greater extent, participants have the impression that their whole person incl. intimate areas such as political attitude etc. is comprehensively graded in various aspects. Whereas performance evaluations still served the ostensible purpose of increasing performance as understood by the state schools, personal evaluations as in the SCS are an even stronger encroachment on the right to self-determination and free self-development. If Waldorf education has been so successful in abolishing grading in grades 1-9, it could also have an influence on the possible abolition of scoring systems in Chinese society, given the appropriate commitment.

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<https://iaswece.org/>

2014 50%

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http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A07/moe_950/202104/t20210406_524618.html

7.2 Since 2014, reduction in the number of university students in favour of apprentices

As early as 2014 and then again repeatedly in 2021, regulations appeared according to which already at middle school (7th-9th grade) half have to go to vocationally oriented middle schools (职业中学), i.e. early vocational colleges, so to speak. With this degree, you can go directly to work or do an apprenticeship or further qualification, not go to a university. Regulations:

On 6/5/2022, the Department of Education announced that beginning in September 2022, elementary (grades 1-6) and middle school (grades 7-12) children will learn to cook, garden, and repair household appliances.

8. 2021: Current Reforms of the Education system

2021 has seen numerous sweeping reforms, reflecting two opposing trends in the adoption of foreign experience:

8.1 August 2021: Transfer of experience from abroad

On the one hand, the positive experiences with the Waldorf schools were transferred to the state schools in the sense that grades 1-6 no longer receive grades, but differentiated, individual feedback. This is practiced differently from school to school, and coarse feedback such as „bad“, „normal“ and „good“ or the complete absence of feedback, for example that exams are not returned corrected, are also common.

Regulation: http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A06/s3321/202108/t20210830_555640.html

Während In past decades, children appeared in the street scene at best in guided groups, but in 2022 children can be seen more often again.

8.2 Pushing back foreign influences

Between July 2021 and January 2022, regulations were published prohibiting education agencies from accepting money from abroad and prohibiting the use of foreign teaching materials (exception: foreign accredited schools for students who have a non-Chinese parent). This leads to the absurd situation that now, for example, only Chinese teaching materials may be used for English classes.

July 2021: Ban on accepting money from abroad:

http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-07/24/content_5627132.htm

August 2021: ban on the use of foreign teaching materials for grades 1-9

http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_zt/moe_357/jyzt_2020n/2020_zt04/baodao/202004/t20200409_441846.html

January 2022: Ban on the use of foreign teaching materials at colleges and universities:

http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A07/moe_743/202201/t20220106_592688.html

Since individual lessons cannot be conducted without foreign teaching material, it is then recommended (<https://edu.sina.com.cn/ischool/2021-08-27/doc-ikqcfnc5289832.shtml>) to use foreign material in the form of the edition of domestic publishers in such cases. This is regulated in more detail at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A26/moe_714/202001/t20200107_414578.html#01, ...#02 and ...#03.

8.3 Combating Tutoring

In the early 2020s, there was a competition to see which student got

tutoring for more subjects. By regulation, teachers who worked in schools or colleges were no longer allowed to offer private tutoring on the side. Educational agencies were not allowed to poach teachers from schools and colleges. Rather than as much tutoring as possible, the emphasis was on orientation to specific disciplines/specialties and the acquisition of social skills/teamwork skills.

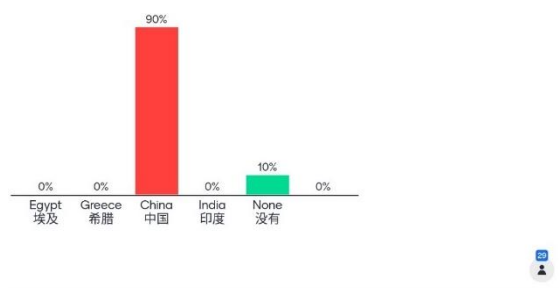
http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-07/24/content_5627132.htm , especially item 14: 培训机构不得高薪挖抢学校教师.

9. World knowledge of birth cohorts after 2000

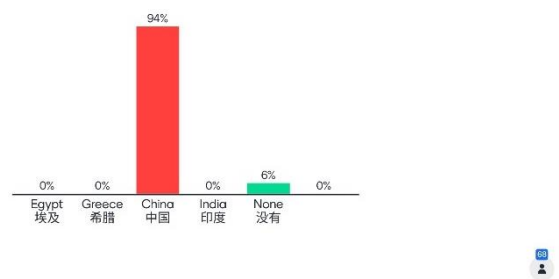
I frequently ask my Bachelor and Master students the following question at the beginning of class:

Which country’s culture is a great civilization with an unbroken history of more than 5,000 years and will presumably be the **globally leading and dominating culture** in the 2nd half of the 21st century?

BA students:



MA students:



On January 8, 2022, Prof. Yan Xuetong, Director of the Institute of International Relations of Tsinghua

University and Senior Professor of Art at Tsinghua University, summoned the knowledge level and attitude of students of birth cohorts since 2000 in the forum lecture of the 5th Conference of Chinese Lecturers in International Relations and Politics in Beijing, co-hosted by Tsinghua University and Peking University Press. He described the result of indoctrination since the cradle:

According to Yan, the new generation of students has a strong sense of superiority and self-confidence. They viewed other countries „condescendingly“ and international affairs with „wishful thinking.“ They believed it was easy for China to achieve foreign policy goals. They viewed the world in black and white with China against the rest of the world, understanding the rest of the world as if it were the same country. They regarded universal human values such as peace, morality, fairness, and justice as

China's unique heritage and believed only China was righteous and innocent, while other countries, especially the West, were „evil.“ „Westerners“ had a natural hatred for China. The West was „evil“ and had a natural hatred for China. In addition, he said, students are heavily influenced by the Internet and see the views of some Internet celebrities as common sense, such as economic determinism, conspiracy theories, and the instrumentalization of debt as a weapon.

As countermeasures, Yan suggested that students should be taught knowledge in the context of current events so that students could understand objective facts of the present and avoid blind self-confidence. Second, historical comparisons should be made so that students could understand the difference between the present and the past and recognize the twists and turns of historical development. Third, students should be helped to

understand the diversity of the world and avoid black-and-white painting. Fourth, students should be helped to define concepts and establish common standards and definitions to improve student interest and the quality of discussions. Fifth, mind maps should be used to improve students' logic and critical thinking and reduce the influence of simplistic narratives such as Netflix. Sixth, recent developments of the digital age should be taken into account.

In China, 10% of the school and university education of Chinese children and youth consists of „core courses“ (this includes ideological training, but also sports, etc.). Means of indoctrination are mainly rewritten history books and ideas of Xi Jinping, such as the new self-confidence about the Chinese rise, the „rebirth“ and „rejuvenation“ of the Chinese nation, and so on. The climate of restriction in China, which in waves is also repeatedly directed against Western influences, such as in the

„campaign against intellectual pollution,“ has increased sharply since 2013. The banishment of Western theories and textbooks from the classroom and the tabooing of enlightenment and peaceful evolution show, similar to the strong equalization in Russia in the course of the Ukraine war, that one wants to take away the comparability of the critical analysis of one’s own path by not knowing about other paths. The abolition of English as a compulsory language is also currently being discussed in China. It becomes difficult when young people with this knowledge and attitude enter the international job market, where they are at a competitive disadvantage due to their lower level of knowledge and lack of communicative connectivity.

Source:

<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/GcftpDXIBDFJ26E570VHcg>

Chinese students are required to return to China and work afterwards if they take up a CSC scholarship. They systematically receive training prior to their stay abroad, which encourages them to recognize alleged enemy propaganda about China and to engage in foreign espionage. No special persuasion is required, as the students have already been systematically indoctrinated and brainwashed beforehand, convincing them that other countries are conspiring against China and that it is their duty to help their country. In fact, when Chinese phones arrive in the EU, they still do not show Google and other sites that are blocked in China, this is only possible with a non-Chinese SIM card. In addition, a Chinese Internet data package is also offered.

10. Decoupling

The trend, which is evident in the students' unworldly knowledge of the world and in their attitude toward other states and ethnic groups, has been propagandistically supported since 2013 with encouragement for more self-confidence and with the „superiority“ of the Chinese way, Chinese democracy, the right to choose one's own way, and the prohibition of interference in „internal affairs“.

English is being consistently cut back. In the discussions for the new education plan, it is argued that one does not need English at all in the countryside. The education bureau in Changsha declared on 10.6.2022 that at the end of the 6th school year (elementary school), instead of Chinese, math and English as in the previous year, only Chinese and math would be tested. (Changsha 2022). The

National Ministry of Education also stated at a press conference on Oct. 16, 2020, that sports would be given the same weight as foreign languages in the medium term. (Wang 2020). In the education plan of 3/25/2022, English instruction, which is compulsory starting only in the 3rd year, is given 6-8%, science 8-10%, arts 9-11%, and physical education and health 10-11%. (Wang 2020).

Literature

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11. Plagiarism and exam fraud

Cheating on exams is legendary, with footage of parents using stilts to try to get to the windows of the exam rooms on the outside of the school building to help their children with exam papers. Cell phone jamming devices are standard on exams. Online exams must be accompanied by two cameras, one on the computer and one in the room showing the examinee and his surroundings from an angle behind him. In addition, he must present his aids and ID card to the camera at the beginning of the exam.

The number of plagiarisms is extremely high in China. Numerous term papers and final theses in individual subjects, but also for entire degree programs, are traded on Internet platforms. Interestingly, the students hardly receive any sanctions; dropouts or students who

do not pass the final exam do not seem to be foreseen in the Chinese system.

There are cases where Chinese students who could not motivate themselves to graduate while studying abroad (possibly due to lack of control) return home with a fake degree certificate. Personally, I am aware of cases in the U.S. where Chinese colleagues facilitated favour doctorates for their visiting colleagues. I consider a large proportion of Chinese colleagues at American universities to be underqualified.

In the social credit system, for the education sector, particular emphasis was placed on reducing plagiarism in final theses.

12. Suicides as an effect of pressure to perform and expectations

China's suicide rate was significantly elevated by international standards until about 20 years ago; since then, it fell below U.S. and European levels until about 2010 and has been rising again since then (Qiao 2022).

Since the stress for students has remained high throughout, other reasons for the statistical fluctuations may also play a role; Qiao cites the complex requirements here and the dependence on approval from various authorities before a suicide may be documented as such. For example, if it is politically desirable, all window falls where no suicide note was found can be reclassified as accidents. My personal impression from several years of teaching in China, Europe and the U.S. is that the pressure on students in China is higher on average.

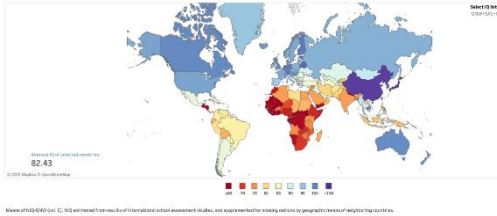
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13. Performance of Chinese students in IQ measurement and PISA

13.1 „Intelligence Quotient“

Another type of grading is the determination of a so-called „intelligence quotient“ based on certain, mainly combinatorial answers. As of 2019, the highest intelligence quotient in the world is in China (104), Germany (100) and Australia (99).



https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/jurijfedorov/viz/NationalIQ_15619310314730/IQworldmap

13.2 China tops in PISA studies

China has led in PISA almost every year since 2009. There are various reasons for this, including the fact that, unlike the other countries included, the entire country was not compared in each case, but only selected regions, partly just Shanghai, partly the four regions of Shanghai, Beijing, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. All of these regions have a traditionally good education infrastructure. If Boston were also included,

it would lead the PISA study. Both the partial selection and the signal that this lead sent out were criticized. Gruijters (2020), for example, said that other countries now wanted to copy the Chinese education model because they hoped to achieve similar results.

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14. Conclusions

China has one of the oldest traditions of education and meritocratic performance assessment, although it is among the most corrupt autocratic social systems. A

distinctive feature is the emphasis on learning by imitation, memorization and repetition, traditionally shortchanging critical thinking and creativity. Since 1949 in particular, the education system has been centralized along Soviet lines and the frequency of examinations has increased. Students are also under social pressure. Grade-free Waldorf education has been spreading rapidly in China since 2014 and is one of the reasons for the abolition of grading in grades 1-9 in 2021.

Students in China perceive grading as very stressful, Bachelor students even more so than Master students. Most of them would like to see grades abolished and expect this to have a positive effect on their health (+58.4% for BA and 49.8% for MA) and a less positive effect on society (+19.6% for BA and 12.0% for MA).

The Waldorf movement is spreading rapidly in China. The working hypothesis is that the positive experience has led to the abolition of grading in grades 1-9. Also, in surveys of students, grades were perceived as very stressful, and students promised strong positive effects on their health and slightly positive effects on society if grades were abolished.

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