

## Jilin Li, the Founder of China's Situational Education

Xiaoqiao Cheng,<sup>1</sup> Jianping Xia<sup>2</sup>

1. Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China

2. Zhenjiang Experimental School, Zhenjiang, China

---

*Abstract: Jilin Li was a famous child educator and founder of Chinese situational education. She has taught for sixty years in the Second Affiliated Elementary School of Nantong Normal School in China, and has been studying situational education for 40 years. In the long-term teaching practice and theoretical research, Jilin Li systematically studied and practiced situational teaching, situational education, situational curriculum, and situational learning paradigm, and constructed a complete set of situational education theory and practical operation system. This commentary review will introduce Jilin Li's contributions and major achievements, and comprehensively describes Jilin Li's educational thoughts. We believe that Jilin Li is an original educational theorist who has emerged from educational practice. Her research has solved the worldwide problem of the unity of cognition and emotion, and has become a model for the organic integration of Chinese and Western cultures.*

*Sci Insigt Edu Front 2019; 3(2):275-295.*

*Doi: 10.15354/sief.19.co012*

---

**Keywords:** *Jilin Li; Chinese Education; Situational Education*

---

**About the Author:** *Xiaoqiao Cheng, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China.  
Email: xqcheng2008@vip.163.com*

**Correspondence to:** *Jianping Xia, Zhenjiang Experimental School, Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, China.  
Email: xwph123@163.com*

**Conflict of Interests:** *None.*

ON September 9, 2014, at the celebration of the 33rd Teacher's Day Commendation Conference in China, Jilin Li, a famous child educator and founder of Chinese situational education, was awarded the first special award for national education excellence in basic education issued by the State Council of China on her study of "Exploration and Theoretical Research on Situational Education Practice". This is the highest award in the basic education in China. The expert group's evaluation comments were, "Jilin Li has excellent research quality of perseverance and seeking truth from facts, and the research results were original. In the research paradigm, the integration of practice and theory was natural, and it has global influence." On July 18, 2019, Ms. Jilin Li died of illness and was aged 81. The news of her death made the Chinese education community grieve, and more than a thousand educators gave her a farewell in the hot summer weather. At the last moment of Jilin Li's life, she first thought of the children she was worried about for a lifetime. The only requirement for her hospitalization was that the ward should face to the school so that she could see the children. From the hospitalization to her last minute of life, Jilin Li had to open the window every morning, sit on the bed, listen to the bustling children at the school, listen to the crispness of the daily school bells, and listen to every sound from the next school. When she fell into deep feelings, she slowly stood up from the bed and looked out at her most concerned children. She once chatted with her apprentice and said, "I can see you from here. When I see you working at the desk and seeing the children playing happily, I am relieved." (China Education News, July 18, 2019).

## **Jilin Li's Life and Her Achievements**

Jilin Li was born in Nantong City, Jiangsu Province, China in May 1938. In 1956, she graduated from Nantong Women's Normal School in Jiangsu Province. After graduation, she taught at the Second Affiliated Elementary School of Nantong Normal School. In 1958, Jilin Li, who was only 20 years old, had just been a teacher for two years, was invited by the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education to participate in the preparation of reference books for elementary Chinese teaching. In 1962, she was invited to participate in the symposium on Chinese teaching hosted by the Propaganda Minister of Jiangsu Province and educator Tianshi Wu. She was praised by Wu for her novel speech. In 1978, she was awarded the first batch of special teachers in Jiangsu Province.

In the fall of 1978, Jilin Li, as a representative of Nantong City, attended the inaugural meeting of the Jiangsu Provincial Education Association. She was confirmed by the organizing committee of the conference to make a speech at the conference. Her topic of the speech was "How to Develop Children's Intelligence in the Teaching of Chinese in the Lower Graders of Elementary Schools". Jilin Li explained in her speech that "in the language teaching of elementary schools, attention should be paid to cultivating students' interest in learning, to guide them to observe the accumulation of perceptual materials, to inspire their positive thinking, and to train their language", which caused a strong reaction of the participants. After the meeting, Jilin Li was invited to give special reports to primary school teachers in Nanjing and Shanghai.

In 1979, Jiangsu Education published the full text of Jilin Li's paper "How to Develop Children's Intelligence in Primary School Chinese Teaching" in the Volume 1, Issue 3. This was the first paper on children's intelligence in the field of basic education in China at that time, which attracted great attention from Chinese academic fields.

In April 1979, when Jilin Li attended the Nantong City Model Workers Symposium, Zhaoyi Jiang, her English teacher in middle school, suggested her to use the situational teaching method that was already used in English teaching in elementary Chinese teaching. Since then, Jilin Li has summed up the common characteristics of English teaching and elementary Chinese teaching scenarios: First, the created situation is what children have experienced in life; second, the situation is connected with the text language.

In the spring of 1980, the Shanghai Education Delegation visited the Second Affiliated Primary School of Nantong Normal School. Jilin Li set up five observation classes for them, including three types of elementary Chinese teaching: reading, oral composition, and essay commentary. The experts and famous teachers from the Shanghai Education Delegation evaluated Jilin Li's lessons to inspire students to think and guide the students to imagine through context; this is very conducive to cultivating students' attention, memory, observation, thinking and imagination, and further affirmed the effectiveness of situational teaching in all aspects of children's intellectual development. This event enabled Jilin Li to meet professors from East China Normal University and Shanghai Normal University and famous teachers from Shanghai, laying the foundation for his later study and research.

In the summer of 1980, Jilin Li took the paper "Combining Training Language with Developmental Intelligence" to participate in the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Elementary School Chinese Teaching Research Association and to make a speech at the conference. She mentioned in her speech that one of the effective ways to train students' language and intelligence development was to create situations based on textbooks and essays, bring students into context, provide them with a specific and vivid language environment, and unify language training and intelligence development in situational teaching. Li's speech at the conference was praised by experts and peers, which aroused the attention of the national elementary Chinese community on situational teaching. Jilin Li's paper was published in *Middle School Chinese*, and Jilin Li was elected as the executive director of the Association. Jinsong Wang, a journalist from *Guangming Daily*, who participated in the conference, specially wrote a report entitled "Jilin Li and Situational Teaching Method", and published in the September 2008 issue of *Guangming Daily*.

In the fall of 1980, Jilin Li was invited to participate in the academic activities organized by the China Education Union Education Experimental Group in Shanghai, and gave an academic report entitled "Using Situational Teaching and Cultivating Children's Aesthetic Competence" to teachers in Shanghai. During this academic activity, Jilin Li met Diankun Du, a professor at East China Normal University. Professor Du suggested that she should form her own primary school Chinese teaching system based on the existing teaching practice and research, and clearly pointed out that the system is

for students' general development. According to Professor Du's opinion, Jilin Li summarized the five basic principles of the development of Chinese teaching in the first round of experimental classes, from the forms and cases of children's development, and wrote a long essay "From the Whole, Focusing on Children's Development", and published in the first issue of *Education Research* in 1985. In 1986, under the guidance of Professor Du, she applied the theory of "field theory" and wrote an article entitled "Situational Experiment and Research".

In 1981, Jilin Li published a paper entitled "Creating Situations in Chinese Teaching" based on the report "Using Situational Teaching and Cultivating Children's Aesthetic Ability" to teachers in Shanghai, published in *Education Research*, No. 8 (1981). This article focused on Jilin Li's practical exploration of "using situational teaching and cultivating aesthetic ability". Jilin Li believed that in the teaching of Chinese language, children should be educated in the ideological education while giving them full access to the Chinese language tools. Based on this, she wrote "Ideological Education and Emotional Cultivation in Elementary Reading Teaching", and published in *Education Research*, No. 4, 1982.

In 1987, in the 23rd issue of "Jiangsu Education", the paper "The Exploration Process of Situational Teaching and Its Theoretical Basis" was published. She clearly stated in the article that "situational teaching is to create children's warm emotions and emotions by creating optimized situations, a teaching model that combines activities with cognitive activities." In 2017, Jilin Li was based on his own research on how children learn to write and to read, how children learn mathematics, etc., and wrote an article entitled "Building a Situational Education Children's Learning Paradigm" and published in *China Education News* on November 22, 2017.

Since 1991, Jilin Li has presided over the key topics of the National Education Science "Eighth Five-Year Plan", "Use of Situational Teaching, Comprehensively Improve the Quality of Chinese Teaching and Experiments", and the National Education Science "Ninth Five-Year Plan" key task, "Using Situational Education, Experiments and Research on Promoting the All-round Development of Children's Quality", and National Education Science's "Tenth Five-Year Plan" key project "Development and Research of Situational Curriculum", and National Education Science "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" key project "Children's Situational Learning Research". Jilin Li's research results of these projects have won the National Outstanding Achievements in Educational Science Research. The monograph "Situational Experiments and Research" won the first prize of the first national outstanding scientific achievement in education, and the monograph "Primary School Chinese Situational Teaching" won the second national education the first prize of the outstanding achievements in scientific research; the monograph "Experiment and Construction of Situational Curriculum for Children" won the first prize of the 4th National Outstanding Achievements in Educational Science Research, and the study "Learning Science and Children's Situational Learning" won the 5th National First Prize of Outstanding Achievements in Educational Science Research and First Prize of Outstanding Achievements in the 14th Jiangsu Philosophy and

Social Science. The “Divisional Education Trilogy” won the fifth China Excellent Publication Award.

Since the 1990s, Jilin Li's exploration of situational education has gradually influenced the country. In 1993, Jilin Li's 15 episodes of “Elementary School Chinese Situational Teaching” was filmed by the Ministry of Education and the Central Electronic Education Center and broadcasted throughout the country. In the same year, Jilin Li participated in the “Commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the ‘Three Faces’ Comrade Xiaoping Deng held by the China Education Society, and presented the paper “Exploration and Reflection on Situational Education”, which attracted the attention of experts and scholars. In December 1996, the former Central Institute of Educational Science and the Jiangsu Provincial Education Commission jointly organized the “National Situational Teaching – Situational Education Academic Seminar”. In July 1996, Jilin Li went to Hong Kong to participate in the “High-performance Chinese Teaching Seminar” and gave a speech on “Situational Teaching, Effective Ways for Children to Learn Chinese”, which made the Hong Kong education community begin to understand situational teaching. From 1996 to 1998, People's Education opened the “Jilin Li's Teaching Art” column to promote situational teaching to the whole country. In December 1998, Jiangsu Institute of Situational Education was established in Nantong City, and Jilin Li served as the director of the Institute. In 2002, Jilin Li participated in the “Constructivist International Forum” organized by East China Normal University, and presented the paper “Situational Education: Promoting Children-Knowledge-Society Perfect Construction”. From the perspective of the complexity of learning knowledge, the uncertainty of the learning process, the openness of the learning system, and the difficulty of learning to mobilize potential, she elaborated on how to design a happy and efficient learning environment for children. On the basis of the conference papers, she wrote the article “Situational Education: Children - Knowledge - Society”, published in the China Education News (Basic Education Edition) on March 21, 2003. In 2006, People's Education Publishing House published a 3.6 million-word eight-volume book *Jilin Li's Anthology*. The Chinese Education Association, the China Academy of Educational Sciences, the China Education Press, and the People's Education Publishing House jointly held the “Jilin Li Education Thought Symposium - Jilin Li's Anthology” premiere. In 2006 and 2008, the “Course • Textbooks • Teaching Methods” respectively opened up a column of “Jilin Li: An Educator Who Came out of Elementary School Teachers” and a column on “Situational Education Research”. In 2012, the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education, East China Normal University and *Guangming Daily* jointly organized the “Jilin Li Situational Education Thought Seminar”. In 2013, East China Normal University and Jiangsu Academy of Educational Sciences jointly hosted the “35 Years of Reform and Innovation, the 15th Anniversary of Jiangsu Situational Education Research and the Exhibition of Situational Education Achievements”.

In the new century, Jilin Li's research on situational education began to have an impact on the world. In 2008, the “Jilin Li Situational Education International Forum” was held. Jilin Li's main report, “Construction of Chinese Situational Education and Its Unique Advantages”, was highly praised by Chinese and foreign experts. In 2014, the

National Science Foundation (NSF) of the USA, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) jointly organized the “International Conference on Learning Science”. Jilin Li was invited to give a keynote speech at the conference. In 2017, Jilin Li’s monograph “Theory and Application of Children’s Mother Language Situational Learning”, “The Course of Children’s Situational Learning Paradigm Construction”, and “Children’s Situational Learning Curriculum System and Operation” (English version) were published by the *German Springer Publishing Group*. This is a major event in which Jilin Li’s theory of situational education has been spread globally. To this end, China Education International Exchange Association, China Education Science Research Institute, China Education Association, China Education Press, Germany Springer Publishing Group, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education, Nantong Municipal People’s Government deliberately in the working place of Jilin Li – the Second Affiliated Elementary School of Nantong Normal School, jointly held the “International Symposium on Chinese Situational Education Children’s Learning Paradigm and Jilin Li’s Children’s Situational Learning Monograph (English Edition)”.

Jilin Li, as an outstanding figure in the education field due to his excellent teaching and research, was elected as the representative of the Seventh National People’s Congress in 1988 and was elected as a member of the Presidium of the General Assembly. In 1993, he was elected as the representative of the Eighth National People’s Congress. Because of its outstanding achievements, she won the first batch of national “May 1st Labor Medals” in 1989, won the National Model Worker and the national “3-8 Red Flag Bearer”, and won the honor of the national outstanding teachers and national outstanding educators. In 2011, Jilin Li as the only elementary school teacher and Xiaoyan Zhou, a tenured professor of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Zhanpeng Jin, a professor at Central South University, won the title of National Education and Education. In 2017, Jilin Li was selected as one of the 90 contemporary Chinese educators. In December 2018, Jilin Li was awarded the “2018 China Good Education Candlelight Award” at her age of 80. He was honored as “an influential educator in China’s basic education and a pioneer in China’s education reform.” Jilin Li also serves as the vice president of the China Education Society, a member of the Textbook Review Committee of the Ministry of Education, a member of the National Curriculum Textbook Expert Working Committee, a vice chairman of the National Elementary School Language Research Association, an adjunct professor at Nanjing Normal University, and an adjunct professor at Nantong University, a part-time researcher at the Central Academy of Education, and a part-time researcher at East China Normal University.

## **Jilin Li’s Educational Thoughts**

Every educator’s educational thought has its own characteristics. The characteristic of Jilin Li’s educational thought is that she not only put forward her ideas and correspond-

ing action plans, but also personally practiced and verified her own thoughts. Jilin Li has taught for 60 years and has practiced and studied situational education for 40 years. She constantly explores in educational practice, continuously proposes new theories, and constantly verifies her new theories. From the initial situational teaching, to the situational education and situational education curriculum, to the contextual learning paradigm, it involves teachers' teaching, students' learning, and the content and methods of education. It is a comprehensive educational thought.

## **Situational Teaching**

Jilin Li's situational teaching practice began in 1978. At the beginning, her original intention was to cultivate students' interest and encourage students to love learning and study. In order to cultivate students' interest in learning, she pays particular attention to the class, the fun, and not boring. In the teaching of Chinese pronunciation (Pinyin), in order to avoid monotonous repetition, she used the method of learning ancient poetry to consolidate the syllables, using intuitive teaching aids and movements to help students remember the fonts and learn the ancient poems by means of poetry and painting. Two semesters passed, and she found that there were no extra learning classes, but the correct rate of dictation was 99.8%. Additionally, students also learned 20 ancient poems, 20 children's songs, 9 small stories, and 11 oral essay training in combination with the learning of general textbooks. This kind of teaching encouraged her to embark on the path of situational teaching research.

### **Basic Principles of Situational Teaching**

- (1) Premised on cultivating students' interest in learning. Jilin Li believed that elementary school students (especially the lower graders) cannot use rational knowledge to control their emotions and will. In the process of learning, unintentional attention plays an important role, and interest becomes an internal factor that causes and maintains unintentional attention. If students are interested in learning activities, they can often pay attention for a long time. Therefore, cultivating students' interest and motivating them to learn and study is a prerequisite in elementary school.
- (2) Based on guiding students to accumulate sensory materials. Jilin Li believed that perception is the basis of the development of thinking. Accumulating perceptual materials is the first step in developing students' intelligence. To accumulate perceptual materials, students should be guided to observe them carefully and to arouse their intentional attention by observation to help them form a distinct deep impression. The scene of real life is the most realistic and vivid, and the scenery of nature is more colorful. The teacher combines the teaching content to guide the students to carry out purposeful observation, and inspires the students' imagination and thinking in the observation, which plays an important role in understanding the teaching content and language expression. If teachers often carry out purposeful

and planned observation and guidance, the students' observation will gradually become sharper and their thinking ability will be improved.

- (3) Focus on inspiring students' positive thinking. Jilin Li believed that perception is the emotional stage of cognition, and the real task of cognition is to reach the mind through perceptual consciousness. To this end, the focus of situational teaching should be to inspire students' positive thinking. The thinking of elementary students is gradually developed from concrete to abstract, from imperfect to perfect. Positive thinking that inspires students should also follow this pattern. By creating a situation with the help of students' perceptual experience, on the basis of developing students' image thinking, through the repeated observation and analysis of the teaching situation, the students' logical thinking is developed.
- (4) Train students' language as a means. Jilin Li believed that in the past, the traditional method of reading analysis in Chinese teaching made the text fragmented, undermined the artistic conception and overall beauty of the article, and weakened the appeal of the textbook. She believed that in order to make students learn vivid, fun and happy, it is necessary to create situations according to the textbooks and essays, bring students into the situation, and provide them with a specific and vivid language environment, so that it can be unified of both the language training and intelligence development. Situational teaching can bring students into the situation, prompting them to observe and understand objective things in detail, deeply understand their feelings, and deepen their understanding of the teaching materials. Through the means of pictures, photos, music and literary depiction, the teacher reproduces the context, allowing students to experience the accuracy and vividness of the language; via the demonstration of the teacher-student action, set the context related to the teaching materials, and carry out basic language training. Combining teaching materials and essays, students are directly brought into the real situation of life. Through observation, they obtain rich perceptual materials, restore the context in the text to understand, use and master the texts, and conduct oral and written composition training. After summing up her own multiple use of situational teaching, Jilin Li believed that if situational teaching is to be effective, first, the situation to be created is what students have experienced in life, which makes them feel particularly cordial. Second, to connect the situation to the text language, they have the vocabulary to describe it, and then they can very smoothly and naturally motivate them to use the text language.

## **Basic Method of Situational Teaching**

After a few years of exploration, Jilin Li realized that situational teaching should be a kind of "developmental teaching", which aims to promote the all-round development of students. She believed that contextual teaching based on the dialectical unity of "form" and "idea", "feeling" and "object" is a way to make full use of the image, create a concrete and vivid scene, and learn the emotions of the students, thus guiding them understand and use the language as a whole, which is characterized by the integration of

“words, forms and feelings”. Based on her many years of research, Jilin Li has summarized her own situational teaching methods from the perspective of situational teaching to promote student development:

- (1) In the process of teaching reading, create a situation, combine “speech” and “shape” to carry out segment training of language.
- (2) Through the “observation of situational composition” to guide students to study and observe, let them deepen the experience in the context, and develop association in the context; when writing, they conceive in the context of reappearance, present in the context, promote the feelings of the students and lead to wording.
- (3) Through the six channels of “life display of the situation, physical demonstration of the situation, music rendering of the situation, picture reproduction of the situation, play to understand the situation, language description of the situation”, create contextually related materials, and the aesthetic education of the students is motivated to make them feel beautiful and enter the amazing world.
- (4) Based on the concept of “formal freshness and specificity, practical content, and methodological enlightenment”, to promote further development of students.

Jilin Li believed that the core of situational teaching is to “inspire students’ emotions” and mobilize students’ subjective initiative through “bring into context”. Teachers should unify the knowledge of single word, words and sentences in the teaching of Chinese, and the training of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the context. With the inner feelings and emotions of the students entering the situation, they are tempered by moral quality, aesthetic emotions and willpower. Therefore, it is guaranteed to complete the teaching tasks of “literature” and “morality” in Chinese teaching, and promote the harmonious development of students’ intellectual and non-intelligent factors.

## **Situational Education**

Under the guidance of the former president of East China Normal University, Fonian Liu, and Professor Diankun Du, Jilin Li began to explore the development of situational teaching to situational education on the basis of certain achievements in situational teaching, and formed a systematic thinking of situational education.

### **The Core Elements, Basic Principles, Operational Principles and Basic Strategies of Situational Education**

#### ***The Core Elements of Situational Education are “True, Beauty, Emotion, and Thinking”***

“True” is to give students a real world, let symbol learning and colorful life links. “Beauty” is to bring pleasure to students’ learning, to enable students to obtain the high efficiency of learning, and to promote students’ active and comprehensive development in the immersion. “Emotion” is the driving force for students to generate learning

through edification, and let emotions accompany cognitive activities. "Thinking" is to expand the space of thinking and imagination, and to develop the potential wisdom of students.

### ***Basic Principles of Situational Education***

These principles include inducing initiative, strengthening aesthetics, focusing on creativity, infiltrating education, and running through practice.

### ***The Operational Essentials of Situational Education***

Take "beauty" as the realm, "love" as the link, "children's activities" as the way, and "the surrounding world" as the source.

### ***The Basic Strategy of Situational Education***

The strategies include set children be the first, inspire intelligence with emotion, foster beauty with beauty, combine learning and application, and link to real life.

## **Use Situational Teaching to Promote the Overall Development of Students.**

Jilin Li believed that traditional indoctrinating teaching turns learning into a process of continuous accumulation of knowledge and training memory. The brain function of the mobilized and fully utilized students is only related to the mechanical, logical and emotional part. This will inevitably make students become dull and slow. Obviously, this is incompatible with the promotion of student development. Situational education must always unify education and student development. The overall harmonious situation will bring about the coordinated development of students' knowledge, ability and psychological quality.

When considering the relationship between situational teaching and student development, Jilin Li believed that the core of situational teaching is "inducing students' emotions", and teachers mobilize their subjective initiative by bringing students into context. In the multi-year practice of Chinese teaching in elementary schools, she concluded that uniting the knowledge of single words, words and sentences in the teaching of Chinese, the training of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in the context, and relying on the inner feelings and emotions of students entering the situation, so that they can be cultivated by moral quality, aesthetic feelings and will. Effectively guarantee the completion of the teaching tasks of "literature" and "morality" in Chinese teaching, and promote the harmonious development of students' intellectual and non-intellectual factors.

Jilin Li believed that situational teaching needs to involve five aspects in promoting the development of students. (1) It is necessary to cultivate the interest as the

premise and induce initiative, including arousing students' curiosity and curiosity, cultivating students' self-esteem and self-confidence, and cultivating their good study habits. (2) Based on the guidance observation, strengthen the sensibility, including the choice of the image of beauty, gradually increase the difficulty of learning, and broaden the imagination space. (3) It is necessary to cultivate emotions as a motivation and infiltrate education. (4) Focus on development thinking and focus on creativity, including developing the accuracy of children's thinking in the understanding and application of words, guiding children to use rhetorical techniques, enriching the imagination of thinking, strengthening the training of children's texts, and developing the logic of thinking. Develop the creativity of thinking in children's imaginative homework. (5) It is necessary to use language training as a means to practice, including learning to read in reading, learning to write in writing, combining training language with developmental thinking, and gradually increasing creative ingredients and fostering independence from the beginning of imitation.

### **Use Situational Teaching to Carry Out Aesthetic Education**

Jilin Li believed that art is image, beautiful, and affectionate. Education should introduce art into education, use art's intuitive and language portrayal to create a situation, reproduce the context of textbook description, and find ways to conduct aesthetic education in teaching.

- (1) Introducing the situation and perceiving the appearance of beauty. The teacher brings the students into the situation depicted by the pictures and feels that there is movement in the stillness; the teacher brings the students into the situation of life and feels the sound and the color; the teacher brings the students into the imaginary situation and feels visible and audible.
- (2) Analyze the situation and understand the essence of beauty. Teachers should provide conditions for analyzing beauty and understanding beauty, guiding and helping students to analyze and understand beauty; teachers should also give students a ruler to let students learn to analyze and understand beauty in self-practice.
- (3) Reproduce the situation and express the feeling of beauty. Teachers should inspire students to express their desires, teach students how to express beauty, and inspire students to develop a world of beauty.
- (4) Control the situation and induce the aesthetic motivation. The situation created by the teacher and the emotion expressed by the teacher should be true and emotional. Teachers should be enthusiastic, so that students can feel the enthusiasm and warmth in the situation, ignite the spark of wisdom; the aesthetic situation created by teachers should be far-reaching, so that students can develop ideas.

Jilin Li believed that the educational function of "beauty" is all-round, beauty can be stimulating, and beauty can speak, beauty can be tempered, and beauty can be bred. In order to carry out aesthetic education for children, it is necessary to reflect aesthetics from the aspects of teaching contents, teaching methods, teaching language, and teacher manners.

- (1) To show the beauty of teaching content. Both the language subject and the mathematics subject contain aesthetics, and all teachers need to be fully revealed in the teaching to show the students and let the students feel.
- (2) Choose the teaching method of beauty. Through the static beauty of the space of the picture, the dynamic beauty of the time of the music and the dynamics of the drama combined with the beautiful teaching methods, the students can experience the beautiful situation of the content of the textbook and gain the beauty feeling, thus enriching the students' appearance and activating the students' thinking, association, imagination, Emotional activity.
- (3) Use the beautiful teaching language. The aesthetically pleasing language of instruction allows students to feel beautiful, associate beauty, and guide students to pursue beauty, inspiring students to comprehend beauty, and bring them into the realm of beauty.
- (4) The teacher's manners that perform beautifully. Teachers are the wise, demonstrative, respectful, and authoritative in the minds of students. To this end, the image of the teacher should be infiltrated, rejuvenated, and attractive. Students look at the teacher's appearance, listen to the teacher's beautiful language, feel the teacher's beautiful emotions, and will enable students to obtain a distinct, friendly beauty.

### **Use Situational Teaching to Carry Out Ideological and Moral Education**

Jilin Li believed that all moral actions are born with moral emotions. If the education of emotions is neglected, then the ideological education of reading teaching must be an empty concept of preaching and abstraction, which cannot impress the students' mind. On the contrary, it will lead to students' rigid thinking and mental retardation. To this end, the most effective means of school moral education is to arouse the emotional resonance of students.

- (1) Starting from the image of feelings, carrying out ideological and moral education. The textually touching, association-rich, and aesthetically pleasing texts are also vivid and esoteric texts. Teachers can use situational teaching to make students feel like to be on the way, as if to see someone and listen them in the real situation. Therefore, being influenced by subtle influences on thoughts and feelings.
- (2) Inspire the students' emotions with the teacher's true feelings. In the process of letting students feel the image, the teacher's emotion is a very important external condition for the students' inner feelings and emotions. The student's emotions are generated in the process of knowing the object, and the image in the textbook and the teacher's emotion are the objects of the student's understanding. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers must be placed in the situation to stimulate the students' emotions.
- (3) Use noble emotions to guide students to form correct ideas. Ideological and moral education in situational teaching can not only stay in the generation of emotions, but also consciously guide students to form correct concepts on the basis of students' emotions, that is, from "moving them with emotions" to "promoting them

with reason” In the process of stimulating emotions, judge whether it is right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, from moral emotions to moral concepts, and then to moral behaviors.

## **Use Situational Teaching to Develop Students' Creativity**

Jilin Li believed that the cultivation of elementary students' innovation is mainly to cultivate an innovative spirit, innovative desire, and different thinking qualities, so that they can initially experience the joy of innovation.

- (1) Aesthetic education in situational teaching is the soil for cultivating innovation. Jilin Li believed that innovation is related to students' interest in learning, learning attitude, keen observation, diversified thinking quality, and rich spiritual world. Among these factors, it is the student's experience and pursuit of beauty that can drive and adhere. The pleasure of aesthetic feeling affects students' imagination, association, emotion and behavioral movements, which enables students to generate innovative desires and motivations in the process of obtaining aesthetic sense, thus promoting students to form a spiritual world and values that pursue innovation.
- (2) The harmonious teacher-student relationship in situational teaching can stimulate the potential of students' innovation. Jilin Li believes that in today's promotion of innovative education, efforts should be made to establish a friendly teacher-student relationship. Teachers should establish the concept of activating students' creative potential. We must firmly believe that every student with normal brain function has the potential for innovation. We must believe that students' ability to innovate can be cultivated and developed. The expectation of teachers in students in situational education, the true blending of teachers and students, and the cooperation and interaction between students all provide a relaxed and unfettered environment for students' innovative activities, thus enabling students' creative potential to be stimulated.
- (3) Observation and imagination in situational teaching can broaden the space for innovation. Jilin Li believed that cultivating students' creative thinking is to intentionally cultivate the broadness of students' thinking, the fluency of thinking and the originality of thinking. To cultivate students' creative thinking, teachers need to optimize the teaching situations that can encourage students to observe. Guide students to discover in observation, to explore in observation, to imagine in observation, and to express in observation. Teachers should also use the intuition of pictures, music, and performing arts in an optimized situation to give students a clear and direct impression and provide psychological and emotional preparation for students to imagine. When students are full of observation and imagination in situational teaching activities, their innovative thinking space will continue to expand.
- (4) Discipline training in situational teaching lays the foundation for innovation. Jilin Li believed that certain basic knowledge and practical ability are the necessary foundation for innovation. She has always combined the discipline ability training and development thinking in her many years of situational teaching practice. For

example, in the language subject, combining the training of words, cultivating the accuracy of students' thinking; combining the training of rhetorical techniques to enrich the image of students' thinking; through the training of texts, developing the orderliness of students' thinking; through comprehensive language training To cultivate the flexibility and broadness of students' thinking; to develop the creativity and the oppositeness of students' thinking through the practice of imaginative composition. In the mathematics discipline, combined with computational training to cultivate the agility of students' thinking, combined with the understanding of geometric form training to cultivate the image of students' thinking, combined with the calculation of applied questions to cultivate the broadness and logic of students' thinking, combined with the exploration of formula theorem to cultivate the creativity of students' thinking.

## **Build a Situational Education Course**

### **Three Dimensions of the Situational Education Curriculum**

- (1) The first dimension of the situational education curriculum is the student. Students are the starting point and destination of situational education. The ultimate goal of education is to enable all students to achieve comprehensive and full development. The development of students takes place in certain situations, and the situation is an indispensable resource for students to build knowledge. It is also an irreplaceable realistic scene for students to use experience and knowledge. In situational education, students are the first, the real subject of learning. Without the construction activities of the subject, there is no possibility of knowledge generation, and even less the development of students.
- (2) The second dimension of the situational education curriculum is knowledge. Jilin Li believed that knowledge is interdependent with the situation. Any knowledge is generated in a certain situation and will eventually return to the situation. The situational curriculum combines the teacher's language description with the intuitive means of drawing, music, performance, multimedia, etc. to create a situation, and knowledge is embedded in the situation. A true, authentic situation that gives knowledge roots, connections, and backgrounds. The knowledge acquired by students in such situations is not a single knowledge point and an isolated symbol, but a harmonious, comprehensive, vivid, aesthetic-containing, and culture-rich one.
- (3) The third dimension of the situational education curriculum is society. Jilin Li believed that society is an irreplaceable situation for students' knowledge construction, the most extensive classroom for students' learning activities, and the most vivid experimental field for students' comprehensive practice. If the knowledge that students learn is far from the society, and if the learning activities are isolated

from social life, it is impossible to truly understand the essence of knowledge, and learning will lose its true meaning.

Students actively develop in the context, knowledge is generated and constructed in the context, and social life reveals its value and significance in the context. As a result, the separation and opposition between students and knowledge and society, and between knowledge and society disappears, and the curriculum of the subject knowledge center no longer exists.

## **Four Areas of the Situational Education Curriculum**

### **Field Situation Curriculum**

Get out of the closed classroom and let students learn to communicate with their lives. Develop field education courses, link classroom learning with nature, combine symbolic learning with life, and gradually cultivate students' emotions towards nature, cherish life, pay attention to the environment, and promote the use of knowledge in practice. Through the development of field education courses, it not only provides inexhaustible scenes and rich resources for students' cognitive activities, language activities, thinking activities, emotional activities and will cultivation. It has built a broader platform for new types of comprehensive school activities and research learning.

### **Kindergarten and Elementary School Curriculum**

Take the first step in the happy learning of children in elementary school. Open a transitional situational curriculum with elementary schools in kindergartens. Follow the principle of combining indoor short-term and outdoor observation, reduce the slope, and carefully design the curriculum so that the learning content and learning form are close to the kindergarten and higher than the kindergarten teaching requirements.

### **Thematic Large Unit Comprehensive Curriculum**

Meet the needs of students' diverse development. Jilin Li realized that the progressive integration of the curriculum is the direction of the development of the situational education curriculum. Therefore, in the lower grades of elementary school, she optimized the structure of teaching content, uses the interaction between Chinese teaching elements, and adopted the strategy of "literacy, reading, and writing" to start at the same time, forming a multi-directional structure, reciprocating, spiraling course sequence. In the middle and upper grades of elementary school, according to the content of Chinese textbooks, "tools" and "humanities", "reading" and "writing", "training language" and "development thinking", "in-class" and "out-of-class" are combined to carry out "four combined thematic unit education". The teaching content focuses on the theme, classify similar content in the unit, and carry out concentrated training with the concept of mutual connection to help students to bypass the class and master the learning law. The

principle of “thematic large-unit comprehensive curriculum” is based on moral education, with language learning as the leader, all subjects blending, and the combination of internal and external sources. At the operational level, the various disciplines and activities are horizontally communicated with distinct themes, which run through the semester-level stage education center, complementing and promoting each other under the same theme, so that the educational content as a whole acts on children’s perception and mind.

**Core Area Discipline Situation Course:** The combination of subject courses and student activities. By rethinking the successful experience of classroom teaching in various situations of situational education for many years, Jilin Li proposed combining the subject curriculum with the student activities in the optimized situation, so that the students can act under the influence of suggestion, empathy, role and psychological field. With the emotions actively involved in the education and teaching process, active activities, cognitive activities, language activities, thinking activities, physical activities such as touch, imitation, and operation. Combining the content of the subject curriculum with the student activities will also make learning a subjective requirement for students. Students’ active learning will bring joy to success, resulting in fun of exploration, fun of aesthetics, fun of understanding, fun of creation and positivity.

## **Situational Learning Paradigm**

In the process of exploring the situational learning of students, Jilin Li learned from the “artistic conception” of Chinese national culture and refined it, summarizing the four key elements of “truth, beauty, affection and thinking” needed for children’s education. It is a common feature of children to think that beauty, affection, activity, and wisdom are hidden. In the process of situational education, seeking truth, seeking beauty, calling for emotion and inspiring can generate a kind of internal driving force to meet children’s learning needs. After 40 years of exploration, Jilin Li unveiled the secrets of children’s learning and built a paradigm of situational education.

## **The Basic Law of the Situational Learning Paradigm**

- (1) The paradigm of learning writing. Teachers should combine observation and situational language training, combine observation and situational thinking development, and combine observation with situational imagination to deepen students’ feelings about the picture in the situation and arouse the desire expressed by students. So, it is necessary to develop and design essay styles such as “observing the situation to speak, writing words”, “observing situational composition” and “imaginative composition”, so that the students’ work is sentimental and willing to express. This paradigm of learning and writing is also in line with the idea of “moving things with emotions and resigning with emotions” in the “artistic conception”.

- (2) The paradigm of learning reading. The process of students learning language and writing is the process of bringing the world to the front of them, and it is also the process of letting students enter the world and enter social life. Each text in the reading textbook almost shows a specific situation. The so-called "The author has content in mind" and the situational teaching in the reading class reproduces the situation described by the textbook itself. Teaching students to learn to read is to bring the students to the situation in the author's situation. When the students enter the situation described in the works, they will inevitably have a sense of intimacy, and will also combine the language symbols in the text with the situation. The abstract language also enters the students' consciousness with the image and emotional color.
- (3) The paradigm of learning mathematics. Mathematics comes from life. Teachers should guide students to discover mathematics in life, combine mathematics with life, and let students learn mathematics and use mathematics in real or simulated life situations. It is necessary to create a situation of inquiry, let students accompany happy emotions, use abstract images in the context to carry out abstract thinking activities, and combine image thinking with logical thinking to reflect that mathematics is the subject of "thinking gymnastics". Combine life presentation, physical demonstration and artistic means to reproduce the situation in which humans invented mathematical formulas, and to understand the cultural and aesthetic sensibility of mathematics. The combination of mathematics knowledge acquisition, mathematic skill and mathematic culture and mathematic aesthetics in mathematics education.
- (4) The principle of active learning for students in situational education. First, the emotion-driven principle. In the process of situational education, students can show a positive attitude, and then form a relatively stable emotional attitude, and encourage students to actively participate in learning activities. Second, the tendency principle. Students enter the situation created by teachers, produce unconscious psychological inclinations, stimulate strong emotions, and they cannot help getting themselves into learning activities. Third, the principle of role transformation. In the specific context of optimization, it contains the intent of the educator. It causes the students to enter the role, experience the role, and evaluate the psychological course. This process can be summarized as "entering the situation - acting as a role - understanding the role - experiencing the role - expressing the role - the same as the role - generating epiphany." Through this process, students are transformed from a passive accepting position to an active participation. Fourth, the principle of psychological field integration. The optimized situation makes the student's learning space no longer a living space in a natural state, but a learning situation with rich educational connotations, beauty, wisdom and children's tastes, that is, a psychological field. This psychological field can encourage students to learn through the whole body and mind, making the ideal realm of students' self-learning and self-education become a reality.

## **Create the Best Learning Environment**

- (1) Broaden the educational space. Create an open space for situational learning, allowing students to enter the real world and choose a space that is aesthetically pleasing and suitable for their growth.
- (2) Shorten the psychological distance. Through the creation of the “friendly, helpful, happy” teacher-student interpersonal situation and the “beauty, interest, wisdom” learning situation, shorten the psychological distance between students and teachers, peers, teaching content.
- (3) Guarantee the position of the subject. Situational learning should conform to the emotional drive of students and guide students to engage in a series of academic activities, so that students become the real learning subject driven by emotion and role consciousness.
- (4) Emphasize innovation practice. Students should be guided to innovate in contextual learning and achieve the greatest possible development.

## **The Operational Strategy of the Context Learning Paradigm**

- (1) Learning in the situation. In the context of students, the knowledge of learning is no longer an isolated, abstract symbol, but a scene, an event, a role, and a plot.
- (2) Doing in the situation. In the process of learning, students should get the most harmonious and coordinated excitement of their vision, hearing, touch, and limbs, and their whole body and mind are invested.
- (3) Thinking in the situation. Students should be guided to learn with imagination, through comparison, preference, classification, and consciously unfolding associations and imaginations.
- (4) Edification in the situation. Students should be guided to cultivate in the situational learning, to feel the beauty, to understand the beauty, to express the beauty and to create the beauty in the environment.

## **Commentary Perspective**

### **An Original Educational Theorist Who Came out of Educational Practice**

Jilin Li was an educator and thinker who has grown up from the front line of teaching. Each of her research results came from her hands-on practice and experimentation, which has had an important impact on teaching practice. In the course of the research, she often personally led the students to the observation site, hand-made teaching aids, and personally organized the students to carry out demonstration activities. Jilin Li be-

lieved that the teacher is not only a practitioner, but also a thinker. In the process of exploring the situational education, she went from the teaching scenes and cases she had personally experienced. She believed that from perceptual to rational, from individual to general, looking for similar things for abstraction and generalization. In the process of practice and thinking, Jilin Li also conducted extensive reading and learning, absorbed theories of traditional Chinese culture, modern psychology, brain science, and learning science, and integrated the theory of learning with her own practice to generate her own theory of situational education, and then put the formation of situational education theory into practice.

In this process of rethinking exploration, Jilin Li has formed a unique research strategy combining “thinking, learning, acting, and writing”. In order to record her own gains in practice, sort out thoughts, enlightenment, and write down the trajectory of thoughts, she almost gave up all the rest time, wrote hundreds of papers, and published 13 books. Professor Jie Lu of Nanjing Normal University said: “A person has been pegged to one problem for decades to study and find the answer is such a rare spirit to be praised”. Professor Mingyuan Gu, former president of the China Education Association, spoke highly of the “Jilin Li Education Thought Symposium and the Jilin Li Collection”, “We have finally seen our own native educators. Jilin Li is not only created in educational miracles in practice, but also cultivated a large number of high-quality talents. In the process of education, she diligently pondered and worked hard to explore and created a set of situational education ideology, enriching the treasure house of China’s educational theory.

## **It Has Solved the Worldwide Problem of the Unity of Cognition and Emotion**

The value of Jilin Li’s discussion and research on situational education is that it not only points out the drawbacks of traditional education, but also provides solutions. There are three logical sequences for the organization of school curricula: the first is knowledge-centered, the second is social-centered, and the third is child-centered. The traditional Chinese curriculum organization is mainly built around subject knowledge. Its greatest advantage is the systematicization of knowledge learning, but its inherent deficiency is the removal of contextualization. This way of removing the contextualized curriculum for students, they do not know where the knowledge comes from, why they should learn this knowledge, and therefore are generally not interested in what they have learned. Jilin Li discovered this problem. She first tried to create a meaningful situation in the language teaching of the lower grades of primary school, linking the surrounding world and real life with classroom teaching, stimulating students’ willingness to take the initiative to learn, and cultivating students’ imagination and creativity. She encouraged students to integrate their brain, body and mind into learning activities, which effectively promotes the overall development of students’ aesthetic, intellectual, emotional and moral, and makes “cognition and emotion” unified.

## A Model for the Organic Integration of Chinese and Western Cultures

At the beginning of the research, Jilin Li's situational teaching learned about the English situational teaching method through the introduction of his middle school English teacher. She found that through the creation of situations in English teaching, students can learn vocabulary and perform sentence-style training, which makes students learn vivid and very easy. She transplanted the situational teaching method in English into the primary school Chinese teaching, which formed the prototype of the situational teaching method. However, Jilin Li also realized that Western educational theories were nurtured in the Western cultural background. If you want to take root in the Chinese cultural background, you need to find the theoretical source from Chinese traditional culture. She absorbed the ancient literary classics "Carving the Dragon with the Heart of Culture" and "The Words of the World" about "the movement of the color of the object, so that the heart is also shaken", "the emotion follows the movement of the object, and the words are motivated by emotion". Combining the emphasis on "emotion" in traditional Chinese education with the emphasis on "situation" in Western education, it extracts the four elements of situational education such as "truth, beauty, affection, and thinking", and summarized the four characteristics of "reality, emotion, truthfulness, and reason." She combines the "artistic conception" of ancient China with the aesthetics and psychology of the West, and puts forward the five major operational principles as the "beauty" as the realm, the "thinking" as the core, the "love" as the link, the "children's activity" as the pathway, and the "surrounding world" as the source. It is this perfect combination of Chinese and Western culture that makes Jilin Li creatively construct a situational education theory and operating system with worldwide influence.■

### References

- Dong, Y. (2016) Rereading situational education. *People's Education*, (15)
- Li, J. (2017) "Ideology", guides the construction of children's situational learning paradigm. *curriculum, teaching materials, teaching methods*, (4)
- Li, J. (2010) 40 years of situational education innovation. *China Teacher's Daily*, 12.26
- Li, J. (1998) A teaching principle worthy of advocacy: aesthetic sensibility. *People's Education*,(4)

- Li, J. (1997) An effective way to explore the quality of children in an all-round way . Edu Res, (3, 4)
- Li, J. (2017) Building a children's learning paradigm for situational education. Chin Edu News,11.22
- Li, J. (1979) Developing students' intelligence in the teaching of lower grades in primary school. Jiangsu Edu, (1)
- Li, J. (1997) Development of situational curriculum. Curriculum Teach Mat • Teach Meth, (6)
- Li, J. (1994) Exploration and thinking of "situational education". Edu Res, (1)
- Li, J. (2003) I, a grown up child. People's Education, (17)
- Li, J. (2005) My path to situational education exploration. Basic Edu, (8)
- Li, J. (1981) My understanding and practice of situational teaching. Shanghai Edu, (1/2)
- Li, J. (2019) Situational education: a trilogy of the main melody. Renmin University of China Press.
- Li, J. (1987) Situational teaching and the development of children's thinking quality. Primary School Chinese Teaching, (8/9)
- Li, J. (2007) Situational teaching experiment and research. People's Education Press.
- Li, J. (2013) Situational teaching for happy learning of children. Curriculum Teach Mat Teach Meth, (2)
- Li, J. (1991) Situational teaching: an effective and effective way to learn. Edu Res, (11)
- Li, J. (1985) Starting from the whole, focusing on children's development. Edu Res, (1)
- Li, J. (2017) The construction of Chinese-style children's situational learning paradigm. Edu Res, (3)
- Li, J. (1981) The creation situation in Chinese teaching. Edu Res ,(8)
- Qian, M. (2014) Organizational form and operation mechanism of interregional educational research activities. Jiangsu Edu Res, (08A)
- Sun, Q., Chen, R. & Qi, Z. (2011) Li Jilin: life for children. Chin Edu News,7.20
- Wang, Y., Ding, L. & Wang, Y. (2015) Practical exploration and theoretical research on situational education. Jiangsu Edu Res, (01B)
- Wei, S. & Yin, X. (1980) Li Jilin, who used his heart and blood to promote the wisdom of flowers, People's Daily, 10.11
- Zhang, C. (2018) All for the children, a lifetime of education. Moral Edu Chin, (20)

*Received: 21 July 2019*

*Revised: 29 July 2019*

*Accepted: 10 August 2019*