

# Compare Theory of Vygotsky to Banking Approach to Understand the Barrier to Learning that Affects ASD Students in Mainstream Primary Schools in China

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## Abstract

With the comprehensive implementation of the “inclusive education” policy in China, a growing number of Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) students are enrolled in mainstream schools as part of their regular classes. This essay compares the theory of Vygotsky and the banking approach to understand the learning barrier is that ASD students lack professional assistance of teachers in the learning process in mainstream primary schools in China. In terms of social justice, there is inequality in the assessment system. There are different forms of discrimination for ASD students accepting education in mainstream schools, the result of such discrimination is the inequality of their participation as well as development opportunities. Based on the theory of Vygotsky, social interaction disorder and language disorder limit the cognitive development of ASD children. As for the banking approach, teachers struggle to accurately measure ASD students' ZPD, which affects effective scaffolding. The banking model of mainstream primary school is not conducive to the needs of ASD children. Vygotsky's theory provides insight into the underlying causes of autism learning disabilities in mainstream schools, while banking approach analyses the external causes of autism learning disabilities. In other words, professional support from teachers has a greater impact on children with ASD than the mode of education in class.

## Keywords

Barrier to Learning; Social Justice; ASD Students.

## 1. Introduction

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of disabilities' learning barrier in the mainstream educational system. Since 1980, China has been working on “learning in regular classrooms”, which is an educational policy for children with disabilities in regular school classes and is often categorized as integrated education. This essay aims to compare the theory of Vygotsky and the banking approach to understand the barrier to learning that affects Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) students in mainstream primary schools in China. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is broadly considered to be a neurodevelopmental clutter characterized most strikingly by shortages in social communication and the nearness of confined interface and repetitive practices [1]. The learning barrier is that ASD students lack the professional assistance of teachers in the learning process. In terms of social justice, there is inequality in the assessment system. There are different forms of discrimination for ASD students accepting education in mainstream schools, the result of such discrimination is the inequality of their participation and development opportunities. Based on the theory of Vygotsky, social interaction disorder and language disorder limit the cognitive development of ASD children. AS for the banking approach, teachers struggle to accurately measure ASD students' zone of proximal development, which affects effective scaffolding. The banking model of mainstream primary school is not conducive to the needs of ASD children. Vygotsky's theory

provides insight into the underlying causes of autism learning disabilities in mainstream schools, while the banking approach analyses the external causes of autism learning disabilities. The article consists of three sections, (a) the barrier to learning that affects ASD students in mainstream primary schools in China and two aspects of this issue related to social justice. (b) have a deep understanding of this issue based on two theories. (c) Compare the theory of Vygotsky and the banking approach to build an argument for why one approach offers more explanatory power for this particular issue.

## **2. The Issue and Two Aspect of This Issue Related to Social Justice**

### **2.1. The issue**

Lack of understanding of the barrier to learning that affects Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) students in mainstream primary schools in China has existed as an important educational issue for many years. The learning barrier is that ASD students lack the professional assistance of teachers in the learning process. Educating students with autism spectrum disorders is a tremendous challenge requiring high levels of skills, expertise, and support. However, in mainstream primary schools in China, the overall picture of teachers' expertise on ASD is not promising.

On top of that, there is a lack of relevant background in special education in terms of academic qualifications among mainstream primary teachers. According to data from a survey conducted in Jinjiang primary school, all 79 teachers on staff were teacher training graduates and there were zero special education majors [2]. Furthermore, there are limit in-service training opportunities for ASD professional knowledge. Teacher training related to ASD is usually once a semester basically short-term training, which may be related to the heavy teaching load of teachers and less free time. The inability to intervene effectively when students with ASD have some problems in their learning in addition to this makes their education in mainstream schools less effective. children with autism and Asperger's disorder have shifting degrees of disability in communication and social interaction such that, on the occasion that they are to be effectively included in all viewpoints of classroom life, they require extra bolster. Students with ASD may find classroom-focused instruction challenging, especially when the content is not relevant to their specific areas of interest [3]. If the teacher does not understand this characteristic assuming that the student has no sense of rules, easily leading to no intervention or intervention incorrectly. Therefore, the disadvantaged academic background and lack of in-service training result in teachers' inadequate knowledge related to ASD students, which leads to sufficient understanding of the characteristics and patterns of physical and mental development of children with ASD.

### **2.2. Two aspects of the issue related to social justice**

Social justice is described as advancing a society that is fair and evenhanded, valuing differing qualities, giving rise to openings to all its individuals, independent of their inability, and guaranteeing fair assignment of assets and back for their human rights. There are two aspects of the issue related to social justice.

There is inequality in the assessment system. The mainstream primary school assessment system in China mainly consists of the new curriculum standards and examinations. The new curriculum is a set of subjects and the standards of courses used by compulsory primary and secondary schools in China, it presents the standards children should reach in each subject. The new curriculum standards set learning objectives based primarily on the cognitive development of children in general and do not take into account the specificities of children with ASD. The cognitive development of children with ASD is disadvantaged compared to that of the general population and it would be unfair to students with ASD to assess them on the

same criteria. In terms of another form of assessment, year-end and term-end tests are used to measure the learning outcome. There is inequality using the same level of difficulty test. Intellectual ability is significant for student achievement, while approximately two-thirds of people with autism spectrum disorders have co-occurring intellectual incapacity which is characterized by significant limitation in intellectual working [4]. It is relatively challenging for ASD to gain an advantaged score in tests Comparing with general students.

There are different forms of discrimination for ASD students accepting education in mainstream schools, the result of such discrimination is the inequality of their participation and development opportunities. Discrimination is manifested in both visible and invisible discrimination. Firstly, Visible discrimination is reflected in the inequitable distribution of teacher resources and ignorance of participation in schools. On top of that, less experienced and less competent teachers are often assigned as resource teachers to supplement the education of students with disabilities. The Resource Teacher regarded as the bridge between special education and general education is responsible for individual tutoring and remedial teaching of children with special needs, as well as providing advisory and support services to teachers and parents in the general classroom. Without relevant professional support from resource teachers, children with ASD are likely to face barriers to learning and social interaction. Moreover, students with ASD are denied the right to participate in group activities, and schools assume that students with disabilities are limited in their ability to perform tasks that normal students can perform. Students with disabilities are asked not to participate in group activities for the reason that they might create problems in the process, and this disregard for students with disabilities gradually marginalizes them in the educational process. For example, students with ASD are often excluded from school trips for the reason that the school considers them unable to participate in activities. Second, Implicit discrimination exists when teachers are unable to meet the specific needs of students with ASD and tend to give attention and opportunities to other students. According to the National Research Council (2001), the appearances of ASD change impressively over children and inside a person's child over time. Special needs in learning are related to the type and level of their ASD, and each pupil's special needs are expressed differently [5]. As a result, the educational resources they need are often not recognized and met accordingly, and their learning and development potential is easily overlooked. As a result, students with disabilities are often treated unfairly in terms of their opportunities for expression, attention from teachers, personality, aspirations, and character development.

In sum, the learning barrier is that ASD students lack the professional assistance of teachers in the learning process. There are two aspects of this issue related to social justice, including inequality in the assessment system and visible and invisible discrimination for ASD students accepting education in mainstream schools, the result of such discrimination is the inequality of their participation and development opportunities.

### **3. Explain How Each Theory's Concepts and Arguments Might Relate to The Issue**

This section will present the theory of Vygotsky and the banking approach to have a deeper understanding of the issue.

#### **3.1. The theory of Vygotsky**

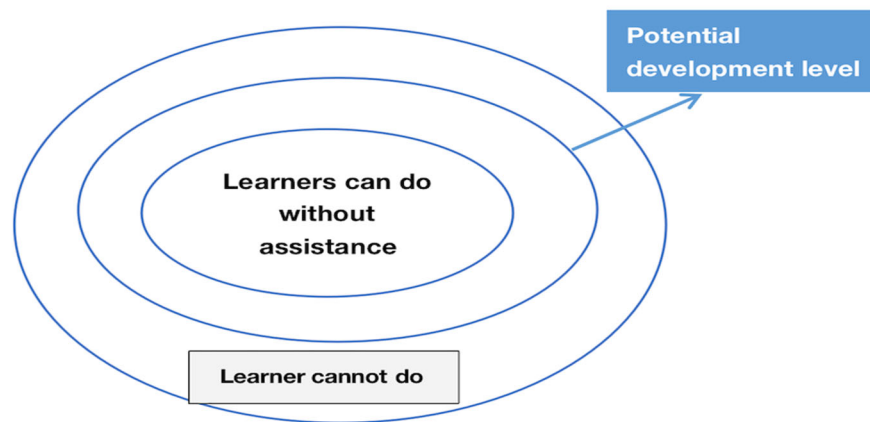
According to the theory of Vygotsky (1978), social interactions lead to cognitive development when children interact with more knowledgeable others in his or her zone of proximal development. Zone of proximal development is defined as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential

development with the assistance of more knowledgeable others [6]. This part will discuss the theory of Vygotsky contributes to a deeper understanding of the barrier to learning that affects ASD students in mainstream primary schools in China.

The social interaction disorder and language disorder limit the cognitive development of ASD children. Firstly, the social interaction clutter limits the cognitive improvement of ASD children. Vygotsky argues learning happens through social interaction with other more knowledgeable others. In mainstream school, more knowledgeable other can be students' peers and teachers. ASD students struggle for understanding other people's intentions and emotions, sharing interests and pleasures, having an appropriate relationship, and cooperating in activities. Almost every aspect of the classroom involves social interaction. In the classroom, ASD students may not fully understand the content and emotion of the teacher's lecture, affecting the understanding of the subject matter. For example, they are unable to understand the content of a classical poem and the emotion that the author gives to this piece. During interactive classroom question and answer sessions, they show difficulty in participating in what appears to be ignoring the teacher's instructions, when in fact they may not be able to understand the teacher's instructions and have difficulty responding correctly to them. Language impairment affects social communication and ultimately hinders cognitive development. Secondly, language impairment is one of the main features of autism and is mainly attributed to physical neurological impairment. Vygotsky points out that language arises initially as a means of communication between the child and the people as a means of communication. Language and cognitive development are in a dynamic relationship. Additionally, intellectual development is a prerequisite for the development of language, and language development, in turn, facilitates cognitive development. The relationship between social interaction and language use is a crucial issue in the development of children with autism. They are simply unable to express their intentions and emotions during peer interaction activities or do not actively express themselves through verbal and non-verbal behavior. Instead, shouting and screaming to express their related needs or feelings of discomfort can lead to the rejection of autism in peer relationships. Mainstream schools may seem to offer autistic people a great deal of opportunity for social interaction, but in fact, they often feel frustrated in the process of affecting their language development, which in turn affects their cognitive development.

Teachers struggle to accurately measure ASD students' zone of proximal development, which affects effective scaffolding. The zone of proximal development (Figure 1) is in a dynamic process of constant change. At the end of a certain stage of the teaching and learning process, the child's potential level of development can, under certain conditions, be transformed into a real level of development in the next stage, which will produce a new potential level of development from and on top of the new real level of development. The next stage creates a new potential developmental level based on the new realistic developmental level and creates a new zone of recent development that is higher than the original zone of recent development. The teacher needs to make dynamic assessments of students' learning and set appropriate learning targets According to Murray and Arroyo (2002), the ZPD of learners can be measured mainly by analysis of pretests, task performance, direct communication (as in "I'm confused") [7]. Due to the disorder of social interaction of ASD students, teachers cannot use direct communication to measure their ZPD comprehensively. Understanding student's ZPD can help teachers plan more targeted instruction for your whole class, small groups, and individuals. Van Der Stuyf, (2002) believed that scaffolding instruction is the role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to potential development level. Scaffolding is closely related to ZPD and it is only within the ZPD that effective scaffolding instruction can occur [8]. Teachers who lack the relevant expertise are unable to predict the learning goals of students with ASD, setting goals that are unattainable beyond the potential development level and scaffolding that does not occur below the potential

development level. Therefore, lack of understanding the ZPD of ASD students appropriately, effective scaffolding cannot happen.



**Figure 1.** The zone of proximal development

### 3.2. Banking approach

The banking model of education is described as an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor [9]. This part will provide a deep understanding based on the banking approach.

The banking model of mainstream primary school is not conducive to the needs of ASD children. The banking approach implies the learners' receiving knowledge passively as empty vessels from the teacher, who is supposed to be a storehouse of knowledge, in the traditional teacher-centered classroom. In China, mainstream primary schools are traditionally organized through a teacher-centered teaching mode which means the teaching model is similar to the banking approach. Mainstream school students have the same assessment criteria and students need to meet the new curriculum standards. The banking model in teaching allows for a highly structured delivery of knowledge to students, maximizing the knowledge capacity of each lesson to meet the teaching objectives. Within the 'banking' model of learning, information is made as another product to be exchanged as proficiently as conceivable from sender to recipient. However, this model, in which teachers impart undifferentiated knowledge, does not meet the psychological needs of children with ASD and accommodates the specific behavioral characteristics of ASD. Only a small proportion of existing teachers in mainstream primary schools have specialist knowledge of preschool children with special needs, and the majority of them have not received training in preschool inclusive education for children with autism themselves, although this may be true have been purposefully exposed to relevant content since the arrival of children with autism in their classrooms. Teachers have little knowledge of the psychological and behavioral characteristics of children with autism and are often overwhelmed and helpless in dealing with the special needs of children with autism, and tend to ignore the psychological needs of children with autism. Concerning behavioral characteristics, the lack of a sense of rules among students with autism makes it more difficult for teachers to control the classroom. Attention span is a challenge for children with autism. They are easily distracted by stimuli that are barely even noticeable to non-autistic individuals, including the texture of clothes, bright lights, sounds, etc. Autism has difficulty distinguishing important information and teachers need to emphasize the most important concepts repeatedly. Students with ASD can become easily overwhelmed with all the information presenting in the mainstream classroom, while teachers may not disrupt the structure of the lesson plan program to meet this requirement. As a result, teachers in this model see ASD as a

problem for teaching and classroom management and may ignore their special needs to marginalize this group in their classes.

In sum, the social interaction disorder and language disorder limit the cognitive development of ASD children. Teachers struggle to accurately measure ASD students' ZPD, which affects effective scaffolding.

#### **4. Compare theory of Vygotsky and Banking Approach to Build An Argument**

The theory of Vygotsky and the banking approach both contribute to understanding the issue. This section will compare Vygotsky's theory with the banking approach.

##### **4.1. Compare two theories**

Vygotsky's theory provides insight into the internal causes of ASD students learning disabilities in mainstream primary schools. Vygotsky's theory focuses on internal disorders of ASD affect cognitive development and requires professional support from the teacher at all points in the process. As mentioned before, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is defined as a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication and language. In Chinese mainstream schools, all forms of learning process involve social interaction, mainly classroom teaching, collaborative group discussions, activities. During these sessions, it is difficult for ASD students to understand the intentions and emotions of others and to participate and interact with their fellow teachers. Without the professional support of the teacher, students with autism tend to be neglected in the learning process, which is detrimental to cognitive development. At the same time, the social disorder makes it more difficult for teachers to assess dynamically and to accurately predict the potential development level of students with ASD to give effective support. Teachers should provide professional support when assessing the developmental level of children with ASD. The Picture Exchange Communication System enables children to communicate effectively with others. It is particularly useful for children who do not speak, limited to use a functional communication system in the school environment [10].

The banking approach analyses the external cause of mainstream education model struggle to meet the special needs of ASD students. The banking approach exists in the form of classroom teaching in mainstream schools. The class content of mainstream primary schools is highly structured, this mode of delivery allows students to meet the new curriculum assessment standards efficiently. If the special needs of ASDs need to be met, professional support from teachers and a little more time and energy allocated to them in the classroom are required. However, the attention and time are limited due to achieve the standard of the New Curriculum. the teacher's undifferentiated instruction and limited energy make it difficult to meet the special needs of students with autism. Autism has difficulty distinguishing important information and the teacher needs to repeat and emphasize the most important concepts. Students with ASD can become easily overwhelmed with all the information presenting in the mainstream classroom, while The teacher may not disrupt the structure of the lesson plan program to meet this requirement. As a result, teachers in this model perceive ASD students as a problem for teaching and classroom management and may ignore their special needs to marginalize this group in their classes.

##### **4.2. An argument for why one approach offers more explanatory power for this particular issue**

Vygotsky's theory provides underlying causes of autism as a learning disability in mainstream schools, while the banking approach analyzing the external causes of learning disabilities. In other words, Professional support from teachers has a greater impact on children with ASD

than the mode of education in class. Firstly, The model of education in the classroom can be modified, but improving teachers' ASD-related expertise is the fundamental solution. The banking approach Can be improved by adding interactive classroom formats, although this may be true banking approach does not fully reflect the school's learning model but most learning forms involve social interaction. Compared to traditional banking education, Feire presented the problem-posing education which is formulated through dialogue and interaction. The essential form of the learning process is the acquisition of knowledge through social interaction, including an interaction between teachers and peers. Teachers need to adopt interventions to help autistic learning. The essential form of the learning process is the acquisition of knowledge through social interaction, including communication between teachers' peers. However, Enhancing teachers' expertise on ASD is what will best support students with ASD and address their barriers to learning. Teachers need to adopt interventions to help ASD students learning. Gavaldá and Qinyi (2012) believe that the teachers are a very important factor with primary children with ASD and that their role can even be a more determining factor than a school's characteristics [11]. On top of that, the care and assistance of teachers can give children a psychological safety zone and provide for the development of socially appropriate behavior. Within the school context, teachers act as an authoritative presence, influencing children's development through their words and actions. In the micro-system of primary schools that facilitate children's socialization, the absolute authority of the teacher over the child, the emotional support displayed by the teacher, including verbal and behavioral support, subconsciously influences the child through this 'authority' status and becomes the dominant force in helping the child to integrate into the school. For many children with autism who have repetitive stereotypical behaviors, the changes in their environment are often devastating, and the combination of mild or severe social communication difficulties and the non-initiative nature of their interactions can make it take longer for them to adjust to primary school life. This is why the emotional support of teachers is particularly important to help them build a sense of familiarity with their unfamiliar environment and is the basis for learning other content. A caring and supportive teacher can give children a psychologically safe zone for the development of socially appropriate behavior. Moreover, the teacher's educational behavior and the development of children's social interaction behavior is a dynamic, two-way interactive relationship. The relationship is dynamic and two-way. In the home environment, parents guide children's development and help them to develop their interpersonal skills. In the school setting, however, children's interpersonal skills are enhanced through teacher-student communication and peer interaction. For example, the teacher communicated with a student in class through Picture Exchange Communication System [12]. Children can learn common requests and their corresponding pictures for use in the general education classroom. The request to use pictures should be consistent with the expectation that pupils should be able to express a variety of voices orally.

In sum, Vygotsky's theory provides insight into internal causes of ASD students learning barrier, while the banking approach analyzing the external causes of learning disabilities.

## 5. Summary

### 5.1. Summary

To sum up everything that has been, this essay compares the theory of Vygotsky and the banking approach to understand the learning barrier is that ASD students lack professional assistance of teachers in the learning process in mainstream primary schools in China. In terms of social justice, there is inequality in the assessment system. There are different forms of discrimination for ASD students accepting education in mainstream schools, the result of such discrimination is the inequality of their participation as well as development opportunities.

Based on the theory of Vygotsky, social interaction disorder and language disorder limit the cognitive development of ASD children. As for the banking approach, teachers struggle to accurately measure ASD students' ZPD, which affects effective scaffolding. The banking model of mainstream primary school is not conducive to the needs of ASD children. Vygotsky's theory provides insight into the underlying causes of autism learning disabilities in mainstream schools, while banking approach analyses the external causes of autism learning disabilities. In other words, professional support from teachers has a greater impact on children with ASD than the mode of education in class. In the future, it is important to promote the improvement of primary school teachers' expertise on autism in education policy. Comply with the developmental status of special education to meet the development of inclusive education for children with autism. General teacher training colleges should include special education in their curricula and teachers should be equipped to understand the developmental characteristics of children with special needs and support them accordingly. In addition, schools provide high-quality in-service training in special education to create specialist teachers who meet the needs of children with ASD and establish appropriate evaluation mechanisms. Schools provide in-service training on the developmental characteristics of autism and interventions to help teachers improve their professional knowledge. The training is followed by a presentation of the results by the teachers and an evaluation of the learning outcomes by professionals.

## 5.2. Hasdfhask

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