



Educational Reform in Contemporary China: An Autobiographic Ethnographic Study of a Local University in Gansu Province

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the educational reform process in contemporary China based on an autobiographic ethnographic case study of Tianshui Normal University (TNU) in Gansu province. It examines the relationship between Chinese culture and education, probes the modern education model in China, and offers some operational suggestions for further education reforms in China. The author adopted qualitative research methods to study the critical issues related to educational reform in contemporary China and demonstrated the accomplishments of educational reform in China.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Chinese Culture, Educational Reform, Fuxi, Online Courses

China's education for all and lifelong learning have trained many talents to build a modern country to face the new world. Through continuous and in-depth educational reform, colleges have made Chinese excellent traditional culture shine brilliantly. Especially in the recent two years, the rising quality of online courses has played an essential role in the fight against the raging global pandemic.

INHERITED BRILLIANT ART OF MOGAO GROTTOES IN DUNHUANG

The course of life is directed by education. Schools are the best and most efficient places to impart knowledge in modern society. When I was younger, I was most excited and proud to be admitted to Tianshui Normal University (TNU) through a national college entrance examination. This modern university is located on the south shore of the Xihe River, Qinzhou District, Tianshui City, in Gansu Province. Around the university, many large green trees are thriving. It is the highest institution in the vast southern region of Gansu. The Xihe River, winding and flat, is a small tributary of the Yellow River.

The Fuxi Temple, standing north shore of the Xihe River, is a stately architecture of the traditional Chinese system. It is the most significant architectural complex in China for worshipping Fuxi, the ancestor of Chinese culture. The temple was founded during the Chenghua Reign Title in the 19th to 20th years (1483–1484) of the Ming Dynasty (Xu, 2015). Remote corresponding to the northern and southern banks of the Xihe River, modern university education meets the ancient Fuxi culture, and the contemporary cultural features of Chinese characteristics are distinct. Young students benefit from this more and more.

Look up Gorgeous and Magical “the Flying Apsaras”

The only Chinese culture in human history continuously passed on for 5,000 years has shaped every Chinese national ideology and consciousness. From 1978 to 1980, I studied at Tianshui

Normal University (TNU), across the Xihe River from the Fuxi Temple. Entering the university to learn is a crucial thing I dreamed of as a relatively younger person. In particular, passing the rigorous national college entrance examination and being admitted to the university in 1978 was a high goal achieved by only one in a hundred young people at that time, without exaggeration. During the nearly first semester, I majored in Chinese at TNU. The teachers of Chinese majors made a long reading list of books for the students. Over thousands of years, the various cultural schools that have emerged in China are rolling like a river. Countless classic books are like a galaxy of stars. I anxiously thought about how to maximize my learning benefits in a short period.

Professor Zhang Hongxun (1935–2016) taught Chinese Classical Literature to the students at TNU. He was born in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, China. In class, he introduced the arts of the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes in China in detail several times. The syncretic scenes of the cave architecture, painted sculptures and paintings are the most critical artistic feature of the Mogao Grottoes. They condense the history of painting, sculpture and cultural exchange between China and the West in ancient China for more than one thousand years (Research Institute on Cultural Relics in Dunhuang, 2011). The cultural confidence of a country first comes from its long history, which includes all others as the sea gathering a hundred more rivers, and also shows the charming mien of diverse national cultures. In this respect, Mogao Grottoes truly and perfectly demonstrate Chinese cultural confidence.

Professor Zhang Hongxun expounds on the connections between the Fuxi Temple's history and culture in Tianshui City and the Mogao Grottoes' long-drawn-out art in Dunhuang City. My thoughts, like waves, ebbed and flowed for a long time because of the teacher's lecture. It is only one purpose for us young students' studying hard to respect and set loyal service to our beautiful country. Cultural confidence inevitably leads to striving forward. After class, I used to ask the teacher for advice about complex academic problems during break time several times. No matter how busy he was preparing the lessons, the teacher always took the time to give me answers.

Although his talk was short, he still expressed many profound academic ideas. TNU's faculty members imparted and made me suddenly enlightened. Professor Zhang's lectures on Chinese Classical Literature, especially Mogao Grottoes' arts, were terrific, showing many more beautiful words, fantastic plots and profound philosophy through refined analysis. The course of classical literature thoroughly performs the function of cultivating the young students' sentiments. It guides us to retrospect Chinese history to enrich our minds with ideas about the world, nationalities and the future. Professor Zhang Hongxun was an expert in the research of Chinese Dunhuang Literature based on the cultural relics of Mogao Grottoes. He also served as a Vice-Chairman of the Tianshui Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Carved into the cliffs above the Dachuan River, the Mogao Grottoes are located 25 km southeast of Dunhuang City, Gansu Province, China. Mogao Grottoes were built in 366, the second year of the reign title Jianyuan in ancient China's Pre-Qin Dynasty (351–394). They were made for over 1,000 years by 10 Dynasties in old times. Broaching holes and molding statues for the Mogao Grottoes did not stop until the ancient Chinese Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) retired from history (Editorial Board [Universal Edition] of Encyclopedia of China, 2014). There are 45,000

square meters of murals, 735 caves and more than 2,000 colored statues of Buddha in Mogao Grottoes (Chang, 2022).

The academic value of Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes is inestimable. With filling burning love and great reverence, Professor Zhang Hongxun had been studying this Chinese cultural treasure house for decades before he retired from the university. The World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the Mogao Grottoes as “the largest, most richly endowed, and longest used treasure houses of Buddhist art in the world.” It also served as “a transit point for trade between the East and West as well as a junction of religion, culture and knowledge” during a long history (UNESCO World Heritage Convention, 1987). On December 11, 1987, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee audited the Mogao Grottoes by the “*World Heritage Convention*” regulations. It determined the Grottoes conformed to the selected standards of the “*World Heritage List*” (WHL) article (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6). The committee approved the inclusion of Mogao Grottoes in WHL, endowing serial number 440.

When he was a younger student at Lanzhou University, Lanzhou City, Gansu Province, Professor Zhang Hongxun read a book about the art of Mogao Grottoes. The exquisite Mogao Grottoes’ arts shocked his mind. In a published paper summarizing his academic philosophy titled “*A Road to research Dunhuang Popular Literature*,” Professor Zhang wrote that when studying at Lanzhou University, “I gradually pay attention to *Dunhuang Popular Literature*.” And then, little by little, a long-term research decision appeared in his mind. He wrote again in the paper: “After my interest shifted, I first wanted to know about the Dunhuang Grottoes and their remains. However, in the 1950s, it was challenging to find such a book. There was only one available book, *Dunhuang—A Great Cultural Treasure*, by Mr. Jiang Liangfu. He emphasized that the book was valuable for its thoughtful discourse. The main contents can be read from the “Synopsis” of the title page. The book contains some beautiful descriptions and analyses in the chapters (Jiang, 1956). Professor Zhang is fascinated with it.

It can be said that a senior and famous scholar-led Professor Zhang to explore the treasures of Mogao Grottoes. He praised the book summarizing “all the contents and essential values of the artistic Caves of Mogao Grottoes and their hidden ancient literary scriptures.” Then, he repeated almost the entire contents of the “Synopsis” in his paper. Professor Zhang appreciated the presentation of the book: “The book first explains a local history of Dunhuang, the artistic legacies of excavating grottoes, sculptures and murals, and discovery of a cave that hid many scriptures in Mogao Grottoes.” He also wrote that the book detailed the plastic arts, Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian classics that remained in Dunhuang to separate some special chapters into detailed narratives (Zhang, 2016). One of the distinctive features of Chinese refined traditional culture is that generations and generations pass on splendid national culture. Thanks to the inherited national spirit and culture from generations, the Chinese nation firm has stood in the world for more than 5,000 years.

A secret of Professor Zhang Hongxun’s brilliant lecture depends on connecting the past with the future. After graduating from Lanzhou University and gradually growing into a well-known scholar, Professor Zhang devoted much energy to study in ancient Dunhuang documents. He often shares his research with his classmates in class. Inheriting the earlier scholar’s ideas and arts, he teaches Chinese traditional cultural excellence to contemporary young students. The

5,000-year-old Chinese civilization is vigorous renewal and increasingly growing stronger. Every student is deeply educated and motivated by such changes.

Professor Zhang Hongxun had profound academic knowledge of Dunhuang arts. He lectured on it in high spirits many times. The most beautiful artistic image of Mogao Grottoes is the confluent creative work of "The Flying Apsaras." The Flying Apsaras originated from Indian Buddhist culture and finally came into being through the infiltration and baptism of Chinese Han national culture. It is an art coming from the gradual communication and amalgamation of ancient Chinese and Indian Buddhist arts and a human artistic treasure that was absorbed firstly and innovated secondly by China. The Flying Apsaras show wingless, gregarious, free unfurling flight characteristics and these creative images "endow Dunhuang murals with unique artistic conception and active vitality (Liu, 2022)."

Flying apsaras are female water spirits in Buddhist culture. They fly in the sky when the Buddha speaks, making incredible music and blooming beautiful flowers (Chang, 2022). Elegant apsaras are like the Gods of songs, music and dances in the Western paradise. Because their bodies give out fragrances, they are also named the Gandharva (Zhang, 2007). They stretch their arms and legs into the sky, their long multicolored scarves highly fluttering behind, manifesting orchestric vigor. We students seemed to be in the caves, listening to the teacher's excellent lecture, looking up at the beautiful ancient Chinese artistic paintings on the grotto domes. Our feelings spontaneously were full of admiration and pride.

Scholar Robert Watts believed that a person's beauty experiences could be meaningful and relevant to them. And he expressed that those could raise the knowledge level that children and adults think about the world. Magical art treasures were invaluable because visual and formal qualities contribute to the beauty of images. The scholar proposes that art educators should reappraise the value of beauty in art education and reflect on its potential for raising children's and adults' levels of engagement with the visual world (Watts, 2018). Professor Zhang Hongxun's classroom is a busy place full of old and rigorous knowledge but a vibrant environment that is an excellent place for young people to explore theory and try innovation. Romanticism cultivates a spiritual world, contributing to the educational development of literature and art in colleges. The Flying Apsaras in Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes are beautiful, and Professor Zhang spreads beauty in his teachings, and we students benefit from noble sentiment education. These are the reform of teaching methods and quality improvement, also exploring forward.

Reveal Charm of the Dunhuang Popular Literature

Since leaving Tianshui after graduating from the university in 1980, I have had the honor of reading several new books and papers by Professor Zhang Hongxun. I feel that the books are his teaching extensions, letting numerous students sincerely admire him for opening up a new academic branch of Dunhuang Literature—the *Dunhuang Popular Literature*. For example, he published a new scholarly monograph entitled "*An Introduction on Storytelling Scripts, Lyric Texts and Vernacular Narrative Prose of Dunhuang*" in 1993 (Zhang, 1993). According to some Dunhuang ancient documents that Chinese and overseas personnel excavated in several archaeological actions, the relevant researches are less. This book profoundly reanalyzes the real ancient Chinese society in Dunhuang and other places over 1,000 years ago, such as the

fundamental public lives, cultural activities and economic behaviors etc. In particular, the documents show vivid scenes of the East-West trade along the ancient Silk Road.

The book is quite pioneering because the subject has never been studied previously. For example, the rich formative artistic “Flying Apsaras” with some Chinese characteristics reflect Buddhist arts’ secularized process. The book especially reveals examples of the East-West trade along the ancient Silk Road, with profound analysis and vivid presentation. In Dunhuang academic circle, it is the first systematic and comprehensive monograph on the three types of Dunhuang Popular Literature Storytelling Scripts, Lyric Texts and Vernacular Narrative Prose. The book won the First Prize in Gansu Province Social Scientific Achievements of Colleges in 1994.

The great Greek philosopher Plato (427–347 B.C.), in his famous book *The Republic*, once wrote that citizens considered their experiences: Only seeing is accurate, and it is the natural material object, closer to a hypostatic object. There are many practical things a person needs to try to do in this world. So, he also stated that the idea of goodness, in the knowable world, meant a person must give dedication much more, and the result would be seen only in the end. Plato again wrote: But just seeing it, will be firmly believed that it is a cause of all beauty and justice (Plato, c. 380 B.C.).

Although written around 380 B.C., *The Republic* still appears to be an essential contribution to an age-old question of how better to build a society by the fairest possible method. It is a monumental book in the classical era and has laid the foundation for our many modern public policies. Daily life is vulgar and ordinary, but it is also the most real active scene of folks every day. A Chinese saying goes: “Opening the door for daily life, we immediately would dispose of seven trivial things: firewood, rice, oil, salt, sauce, vinegar and tea.” All human endeavors aim to achieve these things reasonably and efficiently. As Plato mentioned, the natural material object will be believed to be a cause of all beauty and justice.

Real life contains profound philosophical theories. In other words, a trivial and famous life is a carrier of the truth. Goodness and beauty in life are fairness and justice; Professor Zhang studied and initiated the *Dunhuang Popular Literature* and preached its social and moral code. Life cultivates academic idea, and academic concept serves life in return. Thus, the teacher’s speeches impart classical literature and moral justice to us students. Professor Zhang Hongxun has published dozens of academic books and papers. Those works are a very lingering charm and well style of writing. Reading them is like flying gently over the graceful literary landscape, swooping down each territory to enjoy an incredible, refreshing journey or taking a pleasant sip before setting off for other fields.

EXPOUND NATIONAL ORIGIN OF THE FUXI CULTURE

When first entering a Chinese majoring class at the university, which is presently called Tianshui Normal University, in the late autumn of 1978, I often profoundly felt that Professor Zhang Hongxun’s teachings and works were full of solid local characteristics. When describing the art treasures of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, he highlighted Cave No. 285, dug in 538. It is regarded as a typical artistic representative of Dunhuang grottoes. Two styles of Chinese and Western creative forms are integrated here, including creational ideorealm, mural contents, aesthetic ideas, painting techniques, etc. It is a meeting-point for cultural exchanges

between China and the West (Li and Xia, 2012). There is a mural painted by fantastical methods on the roof of Cave 285. One of the most notable characters is a figure named Fuxi (Chinese Pinyin : fú xī) in the mural, a humanistic ancestor of the ancient Chinese nation from generation to generation.

The second figure is Nvwa (Chinese Pinyin : nǚ wā). She was a goddess in ancient Chinese mythology and legend. Yang Lihui, a professor at the College of Literature, Beijing Normal University, China, expressed: “Nvwa is a prominent ancient goddess in Chinese national belief.” There are many Chinese folk tales to eulogize the vast extraordinary achievements of this creational goddess in ancient Chinese society (Yang, 1999). The State Council of China designated the Fuxi Temple *National Key Cultural Protection Relics of the Fifth Batch* in 2001. The Fuxi Temple and Modern Tianshui Normal University are located in the same Qinzhou District, Tianshui City, looking across the Xihe River each other. We students knew something about it. However, Professor Zhang familiarly narrated this Fuxi Temple and analyzed it more deeply. My thoughts, like a bird, were flying into the sky while sitting in the classroom for that short time.

Brilliant Reappearance of the Human Cultural Relics

The Fuxi Temple is located on the north shore of the Xihe River in the Qinzhou District. Facing south, this human cultural site includes the four courtyards connecting, vast, deep and quiet. Wen Yiduo (1899–1946), a far-reaching Chinese historian and famous poet, wrote a pioneering book entitled *Textual Research on Fuxi* in 1942, expressing a systematic demonstration and association of Chinese mythological images. He researched Greco–Roman mythology, Norse mythology, and others worldwide. Then, he considered Fuxi, a mythical hero who had been passed down from the primitive period to the present day by Chinese ancestors’ word of mouth. Some totems of the oldest clans and tribes in primitive society represent and uncover his actual existence.

The Fuxi clan and their tribal alliances made many important creations in prehistoric times, such as net netting, fishing, raising livestock, inventing gossip, creating musical instruments, etc. Therefore, Fuxi, the Chinese national ancient cultural ancestor, pioneered national development (Wen, 1942). Undoubtedly, Fuxi Temple in Tianshui carries heavy historical and cultural inherited functions. Through continuously excavating in archaeology from 1958 to 2005 in Wuying Township of Tianshui City, scientific and technical personnel uncovered and identified a prehistoric human cultural site covering a total area of 2.7 million square meters.

The ancient human active relic is entitled “The Dadiwan Site.” It was confirmed as a National Key Cultural Relic Protective Unit of the Third Batch by the State Council of China in 1988 (Gansu Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, 2006). According to the carbon–14 dating, that ruin was about 7,800–4,800 years ago. The Dadiwan Site, the Fuxi Temple, and related prehistoric myths and legends are crucial historical objects. They prove that Tianshui is the imperial hometown of Fuxi and an essential origin of ancient Chinese civilization.

Before speaking, Professor Zhang Hongxun asked us students if we were visiting the Fuxi Temple. How to think about it? I have ever lived and worked in Tianshui for more than ten years. As a child, I visited that magnificent temple with my elders, such as my old aunt Zhou

and listened to their story about Fuxi. However, limited by my superficial knowledge, I mainly remembered a statue of Fuxi but could not profoundly understand the meanings. From the figure, Professor Zhang explained some stories of Fuxi's creation, passing it down from generation to generation in China. During a long primitive society, the earliest human beings lived in cruel natural and social surroundings. The ancestor of genesis was a highly condensed artistic image of an entire nation working hard and surviving in harsh circumstances. Fuxi represented the historical developmental region, long history and culture created by the ancient Chinese country in the primitive tribal alliance era. Indeed, modern archaeological excavations and artifacts have proved what the teacher said.

At a place called Bullet Ku in the eastern suburbs of Changsha City, Hunan Province, some Chinese excavated the tomb of the ancient Chu State (?–223 B.C.) in 1942. One precious cultural relic was titled "*The Chu Silk Manuscript*," belonging to the old Chinese Warring States Period (476 B.C.–221 B.C.). It is a piece of silk fabric (47×38.7 cm), forming a rectangular slightly. This unearthed cultural relic is now in the Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. *Chu Silk Manuscript* is the earliest known and the only one of the Warring States Period. It also is the earliest ancient book in the sense of the Chinese classics (Li, 2017). It reveals diversified and rich information.

On the one hand, there are some ethereal pictures on the artifact; On the other hand, there are several passages of ancient Chinese characters. Both the graphics and characters feed into each other's narratives. It is inevitable for the relic that some old Chinese characters have disappeared because underground water and soil have eroded them significantly during a long historical period of two thousand years. But the overall meaning of the text remains clear. *Chu Silk Manuscript* expressed simple descriptions of the holy and magnificent universal creators, Fuxi and Nvwa, handed down age after age in China. The artifact "is the only ancient classic ever seen, combining the pictures and characters of creational myths (Li, 2020)."

According to *Chu Silk Manuscript· Chapter I*, Fuxi and Nvwa were the original gods of creation, appearing before all other beings. The original meanings of some ancient Chinese characters and paintings are as follows: In the universal beginning, there was chaos on all sides, but Fuxi and Nvwa already existed. The up above was dark with violent storms, and down—the earth was the flooding of rivers. Firstly, the two gods—Fuxi and Nvwa, reproduced many descendants. Fuxi married Nvwa and then had four children. Then, the sacred two did as great dominant heads. They led the populace to begin the grand creation (Cai, Zhang and Li, 2012).

Regarding the interpretation of the identity and behavior of Fuxi and Nvwa in *Chu Silk Manuscript· Chapter I*, contemporary Chinese academic circles have confirmed that it is a creation myth starting with the marriage of Fuxi and Nvwa (Liu and Ma, 2020). This historical mystery can be solved by using modern science and technology. *Chu Silk Manuscript· Chapter I* records a scene of primitive social history evolving into a beautiful myth, passing down thousands of years. During a period of faraway primitive society, the day was a violent storm, the night was pitching black, and rivers flooded everywhere. Thus, it may be possible to rationally understand the natural history the ancient human interactions with the environment. The sacred Chief Fuxi led their tribe, and the respected Chief Nvwa also led the tribe, they both aggregated together, and then they married each other to form a big tribal alliance. The

population multiplied continuously, and as a result, four new tribes began one by one. Under the leadership of two great gods revered by following generations, the members of a new and united larger alliance worked hard to create a new world. Professor Zhang Hongxun sincerely formulated that the myth of creation existed in every ancient nation. Indeed, there are stories about Adam and Eve in Europe and North America. In China, including some places in Eastern Asia, there are stories about Fuxi and Nvwa.

On the one hand, the different ancestral images in the East and West are the romantic expressions of the primordial inhabitants of the origin of human beings in different geographical environments; On the other hand, additional ancestral images in different cultures have the same spiritual incentive significance. The functions are to guide and encourage the national masses to be not afraid of difficulties, to help each other amicably, and to work hard to create a new life. The historical courses manifest that the ultimate developmental goal of all ethnic groups and countries is the same. Therefore, maintaining peace is the fundamental guarantee for sustainable development.

Fuxi's Cultural Spirit Torch Burning on

Professor Zhang Hongxun's enlightenment guided the discussion among the students. Many students said that they were always filled with reverence and admiration when visiting the Fuxi Temple. He nodded his appreciation and noted that ancestor worship was a behavioral consciousness passed down from one Chinese generation to another and was crucial spiritual support for the entire nation to thrive and maintain vigorous vitality. Ancient classic records and legends spreading among the public also were different formal historical data. The Fuxi Temple was a typical one reserved for more vital traditional characteristics. Chinese civilizational origin should be explored from many aspects. Archaeological relics unearthed, historical records in ancient books and myths passed along generations indicated one thing from different angles: Fuxi is a hero of creation and a national ancestor. At the same time, he also is a founder of Chinese culture.

Professor Zhang said the statue represented the Chinese national distinctive humanistic spirit though it was voiceless. The nature represented by this image could be specifically refined into more integrative models, such as the fearless spirit of creation, the heart of striving for self-improvement, and the flexible spirit of combining hardness and softness. Chinese humanistic spirit publicly declared to our posterity that creation was challenging. However, arduous labor must surely change the old and innovate the new. Therefore, Fuxi Temple was Chinese national historical heritage age after age and was a holy place for worship and admiration. Although the mythological Fuxi era was a distant historical stage, the creational spirits represented by Fuxi still vividly unfolded before one's eyes. The fact is just like what our teacher said. Presently, we have still gained benefits from the creation of our ancestors. "The Fuxi culture possesses a wide range of ethnic representativeness and is spiritual. It symbolizes national cohesion (Dong and Gan, 2010)."

Fuxi has become a spiritual link connecting Chinese people around the world. The public on both sides of the Taiwan Strait held a first standard ceremony for the worship of Fuxi in 2014. At 9:50 A.M. on June 22, 2022, with drums beating and bells ringing, the grand public memorial ceremony for Fuxi was officially held in the square in front of the Fuxi Temple in Tianshui City, Gansu Province (Gao, 2022). At the same time and day, with the gun salutes sounding, the

sacrificial ceremony for Fuxi also was held in Sanchong Xianse Temple in Xinbei City, Taiwan Province (Yue and Qi, 2022). The spirits of long, rich and diverse Fuxi culture unite Chinese worldwide. It directly benefits hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

Scholar Alihan Yonuk, at Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi, Lefkoşa/Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti, Professor Aysun Altunöz, at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi, Ankara/Türkiye and Doctor Hüseyin Özçelik, at Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara/Türkiye, together described the researches on some so-called sacred bird images such as Zümrüdü Anka/Simurg (or Phoenix in China), cranes and peacocks in sculpture and ceramic arts (Yonuk, Altunöz and Özçelik, 2021). Among them, all Persian Simurg and Chinese Phoenix are divine birds of mythology and literature, and both do not exist in nature:

Myths are narratives that have the potential to be considered the first oral literature product of human history. Especially the narratives about the creation are accepted as transmitted forms of myths. Especially the fact that the meanings of the images used in myths and legends have always corresponded in art makes it valuable to know which senses these images were used in the first narratives of humanity. Put more clearly, motifs such as the birds in mythology and legends have been included in the common heritage of humankind for centuries, including long adventures. myths and legends have been used in art with the same or similar meanings both in the past and today. They can be considered as an indication that the relationship between today and the past will be everlasting, especially in art.

Alihan Yonuk, Aysun Altunöz and Hüseyin Özçelik 2021

The facts show that the image of a sacred bird produced in national history is not false nonsense. Instead, it is a romantic cultural expression of the ancient national ancestors' willingness to risk everything to create a living environment. Seymour in Central Asia, or Phoenix in China, still plays a massive role in promoting economic development in the lives of specific ethnic groups. Undoubtedly, the Fuxi, an ancient Chinese national ancestor, is the spiritual source of a long historical nation that will forever nourish this nation.

Explore an Educational Reformative Path

I first listened to Professor Zhang Hongsun's lecture in the fall of 1978 after enrolling at the university. I gained two deep impressions: He actively solicits and carefully listens to the students' proposals meanwhile bravely exploring teaching reform.

Cultivate Talents to Create A New World

I still remember Professor Zhang Hongxun's first lesson in our class. He enthusiastically encouraged us as students to study hard, plow through many books on literature and art, and quickly master advanced science and technology. The students must build up faith and contribute capability to national modernization construction. He introduced his teaching plan in detail and said he would adjust and improve the teaching methods at any time by students'

distinguished learning basics and actual different needs. The teacher's careful and complete preparations and passionate speech left a deep impression on our class.

My classmates were very different in social circumstances before entering the university. Some classmates were over 30 years old because they had worked for ten years more. Some were just high school graduates under 20 years old—different experiences in life and different performances in learning. For example, the students with rich work experiences and those without work experience often showed different perceptions of the same social issues in their studies. Naturally, teachers had greater responsibilities for teaching and needed to spend more time preparing lessons. Professor Zhang patiently listened to students' opinions about instructions and tried to cooperate with the students' differences in their work experiences and learning processes. What did the students need? What were the basics of their respective learnings? His lecture made all of our classmates excited. He often used different methods to teach us as educational exploration in the following teachings. We talked it over in the classroom and dormitories many times.

Because on March 18 of that year, Deng Xiaoping, chief architect of China's reform and opening up, announced an important speech at the Opening Ceremony of the National Scientific Assembly in Beijing. Deng Xiaoping stated that we needed to do an excellent job in educational reform to cultivate diligent and enterprising young talents. He stressed that building a modern nation "must rely on our efforts, must develop our creation (Deng, 1978)." Deng Xiaoping's idea of "our creation" greatly inspired us young students. The idea of our creation contains profound meanings. Our faraway ancient ancestors were brave enough to create a new situation. Ancient Chinese history has four great inventions: the compass, papermaking, movable printing, and gunpowder. They have contributed Chinese wisdom to human civilizational development. Chinese people are still self-reliant in contemporary society, inventing and creating more new technological products.

Professor Zhang Hongxun was full of the creative spirit to build a modern country with educational reform. He put great efforts into teaching to train more students to become talents as soon as possible, leading them to create more and contribute more to modernization. He had rich experiences teaching ancient Chinese literature, especially classical Chinese and poetry of the Pre-Qin Dynasty Period (221–207 B.C.). However, he did not train to decide everything by one man's say and did not yet do fully cramming education, but take heuristic educational mode. He publicly stated many times that a teacher's ideas for the student should be like talking with a loved child, tailoring particular messages to him to help and support his future growth continuously. Setting a good example firstly, he took the trouble to tutor several students individually by repeatedly narrating esoteric classical Chinese. I received such a favor from Professor Zhang. I felt I had an epiphany.

To encourage mutual communication inside and outside the classroom, he inspired and guided the older schoolmates with work experience to do more voluntary services and help the younger schoolmates learn ancient Chinese classical writing styles and history. Educational important responsibility and great mission are to awaken students' subjective consciousness and inspire them to move from spontaneity to self-consciousness (Chen, 2012). The positive effects taught to the students with heuristics by Professor Zhang are apparent. Yao Ziru and Yang Zhaoshan, professors at the School of Media Science/ School of Journalism, Northeast

Normal University, Changchun City, China, briefly evaluated this teaching form: Through educational induction and inspiration, it activates students' subjective consciousness, forms the self-construction of students' ability, and creates conditions for students' further learning and sustainable development (Yao and Yang, 2014). Under the teacher's advocacy, we Chinese majoring students helped and learned from each other, forming a common practice.

Professor Zhang Hongxun repeatedly required his students to open their hearts and minds in his class, speaking their own opinions boldly. Whenever a student asked a contrary question that the content differed from the course, he praised without exception. He expressed that students put forward different ideas to show serious thought or a foreign concept as opening a new horizon, potentially producing unique opportunities. Professor Zhang said: "Chinese classical literature is blooming like a flower, and the world is changing at any time and thinking and doing it in one way never work well. It does not conform to objective law."

At the University of Limerick, Ireland, scholar Ian Grout considered it wrong to have a single way or concept in-class teaching. For instance, it was a negative typical for someone in education to often use a single means of engagement (why for learning), a single tool of representation (what for learning), and a single mechanism of action and expression (how for education). Because simplicity doesn't answer the question of "Why? What? How?" This single approach does not produce "necessarily supportive for all students, and in many cases, limits or prevents access to learning." In teaching, he proposed to apply multiple means now needs to be supported. This, however, is not necessarily easy to achieve. Teachers must have the courage to explore to improve teaching quality (Grout, 2022). Facts showed that Professor Zhang Hongxun courageously explored uncharted territory in education, insisted on reform, and achieved remarkable results.

Demonstrate Ways to Expand Higher Education

The fundamental task of the university is to train talents for society. In contemporary society, science and technology are developing increasingly and becoming the neck for industrial categories to be further refined and profoundly integrated. So, once separating industries into isolated departments, the borders blur under some conditions. Thereupon, university teachers' scope to express educational ideas and academic research benefits has expanded dramatically. In the 1980s, there were not many universities in China. Although many colleagues and friends of students majoring in Chinese had no chance to become full-time university students, many still overcame self-study difficulties. Several of my colleagues, still working in the factories then, specially entrusted me to relay the university teachers' lecturing data regularly. They either bought university textbooks or read my lecture notes. To this thing, I reported my colleagues' expectations to my teachers. The teachers, including Professor Zhang, immensely helped us in this regard.

Professor Zhang Hongxun praised the enterprise's workers and social youth insisting on self-study and actively helped supply the books needed by self-reflection. This help was great, like offering fuel in snowy weather then. He also gave specific advice on how aspiring youngsters take university entrance exams. Further, he talked more with students about how to speed up educational reform. Professor Zhang compared and analyzed some institutional settings and political implementations in Chinese university education. He fully supported the country's reform of the university admissions system at that time, hailing the dawn of a new era.

He advocated trying hard to create more social opportunities to satisfy the young's learning desire. A carefully arranged study plan might provide more feasible teaching methods for implementing higher educational and social coverage. The evaluation of full-time workers' learning efficiency should be opportunely relaxed to create an inclusive atmosphere. In other words, new universal educational ideas in higher education should carry out effectively. Explaining his proposals, Professor Zhang Hongxun stated that to eliminate some institutional inequalities, teachers could teach with many varietal methods and provide polybasic services to those who wanted to study more. He said: "We should build a university without walls to teach and expand students more." He expressed it was a difficult step to take. "Anyway, a key point is to take action." His opinion about "taking action" for educational reform is reflecting and learning.

Some students considered it an inspiring educational modality of a university without walls. It also would be a practical, step-by-step way for social youth to get learning opportunities. The teacher's suggestion, grounding in personal, academic, and professional experiences, meant universal education at the level of college. So, his offers provided issues for discussion and even debates on how to teach further and explored how to create social attentional atmospheres for complete – time workers' education. A group of classmates and me, holding working experiences over 10 the years, were excited and admirable deeply. While teaching in a small classroom, Professor Zhang put his heart into national educational reform.

In conclusion, his advice is to expand university education massively or to implement universal education as soon as possible. First, it will provide more opportunities in higher education to serve many youngsters who, for various reasons, do not become full-time students. Second, it is a critical task for us to cultivate and support many fresh forces of culture in a rapidly rising economic market.

Scholars Irina Zakharova et al. at the University of Tyumen, Tyumen Oblast, Russia, indicated that education must satisfy the student's needs and the labor market, and a strong focus must be put on students' educational trajectories. Teachers should pay attention to viewing and guarantee "the relevance of content, the flexibility of educational process and learning technology (Zakharova, 2022)." Many facts of China's reform and opening up manifest that a society carrying out the policy of shared prosperity cannot survive without general education. It is necessary to promote universal education. Professor Zhang Hongxun explored reformatinal educational issues and tried to find a solution for learning opportunities for young people. The teacher is a model for others. Our students admire him for his lifelong respect.

ONLINE COURSES BENEFIT THE PUBLIC

China's economic development needs many talents, and establishing "a university without walls" can significantly increase the number of students because such a situation may satisfy more persons' long – term willingness to learn and improve skills or lifelong learning willingness. Lifelong learning means expanding university education creates opportunities for the whole social public to study on the job and after retirement. Many teachers, including Professor Zhang Hongxun at Tianshui Normal University, have worked tirelessly to achieve this

goal. China's Ministry of Education also has formulated a series of reformation policies to guide and implement education for all.

Young or retired people increasingly participate in various scientific and technological knowledge courses and practice lifelong learning more and more. There are several impressive achievements of lifelong learning in Tianshui City. I have profoundly benefited from this educational impetus in my job. Mainly, I am grateful for the help of Tianshui University for the Aged in many aspects. This university has opened up a new local educational reform path by actively exploring to advance. Hundreds of thousands of people everywhere have benefited from education.

Pursue High Standards of Lifelong Learning

Modern free social atmosphere constructs a wide diversity in public perceptions and needs. This is a general historical trend. At the same time, it is also a marketable impetus for economic development to keep pluralistic consumptive incentives growing up. Lasting more than 40 years since 1978, Chinese reform and opening up has achieved rapid, productive growth, giving the public many freedoms to choose a fond career without age limitation while increasing social opportunities. Youngsters seize the changed marketable opportunity to start up businesses and try to seek financial freedom freely. Retired seniors also don't want to spend all day chatting or resting at home. They actively participate in scientifically guided fitness activities and learn new knowledge and skills to gain some abilities to do beneficial projects.

More and more residents are looking forward to taking part in lifelong learning, self-improvement and doing more good deeds throughout society. According to this situation, schools engaging in universal education or lifelong learning have emerged. Although graduating from university many years and have been working for decades, I have attended some lifelong learning schools in Beijing due to demand-driven demand. I keep a watchful eye on the information on non-academic educational institutions. My only goal is to complete my tasks through lifelong learning efficiently.

In addition, I often go on business trips to western China for research. Comparatively, Tianshui University for the Aged has reaped good social benefits in universal education or lifelong learning. This university has improved and enhanced the teaching function of the network platform and made a series of advanced educational courses. They have launched a pioneering lifelong learning program to tap society's potential and boost productivity. By participating in the teaching program organized by the university, the students have gained many more.

Tianshui University for the Aged (TUA) was founded in December 2002. The university headquarters is located in Jihe North Street, Qinzhou District. It is a non-academic educational institution for the elderly. Although the original program is to serve old-age education, TUA has practically expanded its enrollment to all adults. To some degree, TUA approaches are the traditional face-to-face teaching in the classroom. In the last few years, education has changed more due to the emergence and generalization of global high-tech information and communicational technology. The proportion of online courses increases year by year. One immediate result is that enrollment is way up continuously. In the spring of 2022, TUA

enrollment exceeded 200,000. The students are scattered all over the country. After enrolling in the university, new students learn their favorite quality courses.

Moreover, many younger students improve their commercial skills while older ones practice lifelong learning. The enrollment scale expands rapidly, and the number of training talents increases, significantly contributing to national construction. As a result, TUA won many honors: In 2009, it was awarded “National Advanced University for the Aged,” and the Gansu Provincial Bureau of Senior Cadres presented TUA with a certificate of merit titled “Demonstration University for the Aged in Gansu Province” in 2012, and so on.

Zhao Baoxian, Vice Principal of Network School in Tianshui University for the Aged and Editor-in-chief of *Jinhua Shellone* of WeChat Official Account to the School, is in charge of teaching and propagandistic operations. He has made outstanding achievements in exploring appropriate local educational methods as an older adult over 70. I got in touch with him in my works and also profoundly felt this spirited headmaster’s courageous exploration of educational reform. Setting up a fundamental principle of education for all, TUA has had this great foresight since its inception. Its teaching management is implemented by the actual-situation in China and the United Nations (UN) standards. Vice Principal Zhao and the managerial team currently focus on the layout and operation of online education.

Coordination and Unification of Chinese Characteristics and International Standards

Tianshui University for the Aged has apparent educational effects by showing Chinese characteristics and following UN rules. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, clearly stated: “Article 26. (1) everyone has the right to education.” National and regional administrative departments and social organizations should follow UDHR. All of us shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, to promote global activities for the maintenance of peace and economic development (United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 1948).

On March 5, 1990, The World Conference for Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand. This Conference was organized by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, United Nations Development Program, United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, World Bank, etc. The Conference discussed and adopted two documents: the *World Declaration on Education for All* and the *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*. The *World Declaration* addressed the relationship between “lifelong learning and human development.” It emphasized multiple measures to create a unified system: complementary and reinforcing for lifelong learning. The goal is that: Every person-child, youth and adult-shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.

Human beings require these needs, including being able to survive, develop their full capacities, live and work in dignity, participate fully in development, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions, and continue learning. One of the critical principles of the *Framework for Action* is actively enhancing the family and community environments for learning and

correlating primary education with the larger socio-economic context. It also stated: Because basic learning needs are complex and diverse, meeting them requires multi-sectoral strategies and activities, which are integral to overall development efforts. Many partners must join with the education authorities, teachers, and other educational personnel in developing primary education if it is to be seen, once again, as the responsibility of the entire society. Both documents represent the global public's aspiration and the actions needed to be taken collectively. To provide primary education, we must mobilize international support and resources to achieve this goal.

According to China's national conditions and relevant UN resolutions, The C.P.C. Central Committee and the State Council promulgated "*China's Educational Modernization 2035*" in February 2019. This national-level strategy has been implemented throughout the country. This program aims to build a lifelong learning system to serve all. The State will "establish an institutional environment for lifelong learning for all" and also "expand the supply of communal educational resources, to accelerate the development of urban and rural collaborative education for the elderly, and to promote the construction of various learning organizations," and so on (C.P.C. Central Committee etc., 2019).

Tianshui University for the Aged has comprehensively completed the national educational modernization program. TUA's faculty and staff have overcome difficulties and devoted themselves to offering high-quality courses to the community. Because of the dual reasons for study and research, I participate in and understand lifelong learning cause in Tianshui City. Education in TUA, on the one hand, the lecture on modern network technology presents many teaching advantages; On the other hand, it inherits the excellent traditional culture. For example, TUA's existing campus covers nearly 4,000 square meters, with 24 classrooms and offices, a reading room, an advanced multi-function hall and a respective exhibition hall for painting and calligraphy.

The university offers more than 20 majors, including calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, vocal music, dance, computer, yoga, piano, electronic organ, etc. The university has established a troupe titled *Red Rosy Clouds Art*, composed of a choir, a folk orchestra, a dance and a model team. This form is in line with international standards. There is still a batch of higher grade T.V. network equipment in TUA, carrying out network teaching to the students everywhere. Students can freely study in class or online, depending on their preferences and teaching needs. Public education is a leap forward in combining computer-programmed informational transmission with teachers' classroom lectures. The international educational community is blended learning (B.L.) and electronic learning (E-learning). More and more institutions and students like and use them widely. This approach can be traced back to the 1920s– Supervised Correspondence Study (Ates, 2009). In America, 2006, Curtis J. Bonk, professor of educational psychology as well as instructional systems technology at Indiana University, and Charles R. Graham, an assistant professor of instructional psychology and technology at Brigham Young University, U.S.A., together published a book entitled *The Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs*. In *Part One: Introduction to Blended Learning*, they introduced readers to the emergence of blended learning in detail. They defined it as B.L. systems combining face-to-face teaching with computer-mediated instruction. It is a concept widely used in academic circles at present. According to the professors, the advantages of B.L. systems

can be summed up in three aspects: improving pedagogy, adding page view and flexibility, and increasing cost-effectiveness (Bonk and Graham, 2006).

It is “blended learning” for students and “blended teaching” for teachers. So, B.L. is a secret of Tianshui University for the Aged, welcomed by students of different ages across the country. An efficient managerial team and a group of devoted teachers of them are guarantees of outstanding university education. Under the new B.L. system, many graduates from Tianshui Normal University have taken TUA “blended learning/teaching” courses after retiring. The curriculums designed by Vice Principal Zhao are modern and practical. Students actively learn new things and boldly create recent achievements. I also learned TUA online courses and got benefits very much

Exquisite Courses for better Lifelong Learning Effects

History never stops moving forward, and new things and knowledge keep emerging. Everyone should become life-long learners. It is a traditional Chinese virtue for every citizen permanently to save individual energy in learning. Ancient Chinese great philosopher and educator Confucius (551 B.C.–479 B.C.) once said: You should meditate on what you have learned, study with indefatigable zeal, and never keep tired of teaching others (Confucius’ Disciples, c. 540 B.C.–400 B.C.). Since ancient times, many Chinese intellectuals were never really too old to go on learning. Under primitive social conditional background, the socially wise elders continued to study more and combine their accumulated life experiences to create the invention. To carry forward the excellent Chinese traditional culture, TUA’s executive team has persisted in implementing a relatively adequate blended learning method for many years. They have sought and accumulated many valuable experiences. Therefore, those valuables are worth further study and promotion.

The most crucial guarantee to achieving the goal of blended learning is that the university tries hard to provide high-quality courses to serve society. Only high-quality cultural practices can sit at the table in a competitive, marketable environment. Any relevant educational small thing should be done to pursue perfect educational productive quality. In addition, a teaching detail may make the teacher victoriously achieve the ideal lecture goal but also make the teacher suffer unsuccessful pain. Detail is a key to the teaching process, so mastering it means holding the quality. Notice it is a joyful event for teachers and students to prepare exquisite courses and take them into class in teaching and learning.

A combination of colorful life and new technology often creates countless working opportunities in the market. Local farmers around Tianshui City look forward to studying new skills to capture new jobs or create new markets to make money. More and more persons from other provinces and municipalities also want to acquire commercial opportunities there. Some graduates from Tianshui Normal University expect to study new skills to get extra temporary business after retiring and also want to learn a new regimen to keep healthy. In recent decades, driven by hi-tech informational and communicational technologies, two types of university teachings, academic and vocational, have significantly changed. It is an invariable rule that continuous and expected fission development is vital in any industry and role.

More and more personages of all circles pay close attention to TUA about playing an important role of educational responsibility in lifelong learning. Due to online education showing great

strength day by day, students expect to learn high-quality online courses. Vice Principal Zhao Baoxian emphasized that our managerial team had a duty to provide lifelong learning to hundreds of thousands of residents. To enhance the benefits of lifelong learning for our students, we should try to satisfy their demands for quality courses. Administrators at TUA needed to set up an efficient implicational mechanism of network facility to serve the growing number of students who live and work in different provinces and cities. Our job was to overcome all difficulties and produce the best courses the market needed. Fact indicating they mean what they said.

Urgent Response to the COVID-19 Challenge

At the end of 2019, coronavirus disease (COVID-19) broke out globally. The COVID-19 took fiercely hazardous challenges to people's health and economic systems worldwide. The unexpected pandemic has disrupted original educational forms since that tough time. Coping with challenges is above all else.

Recognize Dangers in Serious Epidemic Spread

From the end of 2019 to 2022, the whole society has to implement strict physical isolationist precautions to resist the rapid spread of disease. Normally operating, face-to-face teaching in the educational system three years ago is banned more rigorously under many conditions. Teachers and students cannot gather together in the classroom to exchange academic ideas. Some courses that needed to be taught on-site have to discontinue, such as music, dance, technical operations, etc. Philosophical principles and economic theory etc., implemented online courses in the early years. However, some critical chapters still need to be taught in the classroom because teachers and students should ask questions and answer each other on the spot. Leaving the platform, a teacher may lose half of his/her on-site teaching enthusiasm—meanwhile, students' inspiration generated by the teacher's stimulation shows hardly and slowly.

Moreover, the epidemic's impact has seriously damaged a person's mental system. At one stage, some teachers and students of Tianshui University for the Aged appeared to have psychological maladaptation or panic. Some persons were very anxious and uneasy; some panicked and fidgety; some were impatient and dysphoric; some even were scared and acted in extreme ways. After a short period of hesitation, TUA's executive team has seriously taken the matter of the pandemic's impact on education at home and abroad and sought methods to cope with it.

Scholars Sneha Mantri and Elizabeth J. Berger et al., at Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell, Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, U.S.A., were surveyed by the special questionnaires. Based on the Moral Injury Symptoms Scale for Health Professionals (M.I.S.S-H.P) etc., they administered simple queries via an online survey to a global sample of 1831 H.Ps between April and October 2020. Those values of the symptoms—M.I.S.S-H.P—increased from 27.4 (standard deviation [S.D], 11.6) in April to 36.4 (S.D, 13.8) in October [$p < 0.001$]. In April, 26.7% of respondents reported that they suffered moderate functional impairment in Moral Injury at least, increasing to 45.7% of them in October [$p < 0.001$] (Mantri, Song, and Berger et, al., 2021).

Undoubtedly, this protracted crisis has caused a severe impact on the workings and lives of various countries' residents from all walks of life, including their psychological healthy-being and the influence on their academic trajectories. Because only material forces become more robust by increasing production, more effective and powerful methods can be implemented to solve the crisis. So, education plays a vital role in cultivating talents to elevate the economy in emergencies. Vice Principal Zhao Baoxian believed that challenges went together with chances, and difficulties coexisted with hopes. He persisted in one solid point: Rapidly adapting to the urgent new environment will be a crucial springboard for innovation in the educational fields. Many examples also showed that further global physical objective limitations accelerated the online learning environmental improvement comprising both asynchronous and synchronous distance education.

Overcome Present Difficulties Steadfastly

The managerial team of Tianshui University for the Aged has actively carried out the national policies to cope with the new severe challenges calmly. In February 2020, China's Ministry of Education issued instructions: The government should lead, the university should assume primary responsibility, and society should participate in a joint mission; namely, they all work together to implement and safeguard the network instruction in colleges during a period of preventing and controlling the COVID-19. The Ministry of Education explicitly required colleges to "positively put effect into online teaching and learning activities based on various network tools such as online course platform, campus area network, etc. at all levels." This mobile critical step is to "ensure the progress and quality of teachings during a period of the epidemic (Work Leading Group Office, 2020)." To target the solution of complex problems, TUA's managerial leaders immediately executed investigations and research. Some students graduate from Tianshui Normal University and then register to practice lifelong learning at TUA. If they have offered sound advice, they willingly work with others to overcome difficulties. Students from other provinces and cities also presented good proposals through the Internet.

Vice Principal Zhao Baoxian noted that we should think from a comprehensive perspective of students, teachers and university three aspects for solving crucial problems. He expressed that one specific task was to enhance the operational functions of online components while properly arranging several indoor dance and music courses under morbid prevention and control. In particular, he gave examples of how to identify the underlying problems and perfect the online teaching business. Pooling financial resources and workforce to create an upgraded digital platform was conducive to setting up a content-rich learning environment. The digital platform could assist face-to-face teaching under special conditions, making the online course approach a plan item of efficient "Blended Learning." Over a while, the challenges encountered by teachers under network conditions mainly manifest as the followings: anticipative network time out of control, poor teaching effects in the classroom, and lag research on students' emotions.

Meanwhile, the operations of improving self-regulation and using learning technology are the key challenges students face. Some students reported that they met the challenges of weak self-regulation skills. These skills included inexpert manipulation of computer equipment and inefficiently studying online courses; Some even felt they were isolated, removed from their previously relatively convenient learning condition. The related problems and difficulties are global at present.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, online education worldwide has increased quickly and dramatically. Based on literature research, scholars Ted Brown, Luke Robinson and Kate Gledhill et al. at the Department of Occupational Therapy, School of Primary and Allied Health Care, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Frankston, Victoria, Australia, comprehensively signified: "There is evidence that abundant minimal face-to-face contact online learning can lead to isolating social feelings, raised anxiety levels, lack of support, and sub-optimal peer-peer and student-collaborative educator relationships." They considered that it was necessary to adopt various combinational means, that was, the blended educational approaches could solve the existing problems (Brown, Robinson and Gledhill et al., 2022).

Vice Principal Zhao emphasized that online education meant an enhanced role for teachers as they must first master advanced network technology and assume greater responsibility for teaching. Through extensive investigations and research, he made sure to put the impact ranking of teaching methods on students at the forefront of the factors involved in teaching evaluation. He used a standard scale-the effect size-to rank the practices in education. It was one of the essential and fundamental standards to evaluate teachers' effectiveness and whether they could improve students' performances. The managerial team adhered to the idea that academic performance is not just an 80 on paper. The best result is often associated with social, economic and cultural development. For example, in *Red Rosy Clouds Art*, leading performers coming from urban students have played and promoted the Fuxi culture many times, winning acclaim. Many rural students have set up cooperatives or companies to sell local agricultural products to domestic and international markets. The didactical core goal is to train versatile talents so that they can fully serve economic and social development.

President Xi Jinping summarized that the vast number of scientific and technological workers should write their papers on the land of the motherland and apply their scientific and technical achievements to the great cause of realizing modernization (Xi, 2016). Along this road, university education will develop better and better. In a word, TUA has gathered good suggestions from various aspects and implemented unique plans, and the results are very effective. As an online course student, I have benefited from improved learning from these new policies.

Observe and Relieve Students' Tension

All forms of progress and development in modern society must never part with knowledge and technology. Only the public's lifelong learning and large-scale, high-quality teaching can widely spread and apply scientific and technological expertise. Learning ability is a very complex psychological activity. Each one has personal characteristics, and he/she understands the objective law through individuality. At first, I took part in Tianshui University for the Aged course with doubt. Because the students came from all walks of life and each other's knowledge structure was different. The actual lectures reassured the other students and me. Furthermore, many persons, including students, were anxious and even frustrated under the extremely pervasive harms of the epidemic. How would the educational manager logically arrange challenging courses in such a situation?

TUA's executive team follows an excellent Chinese traditional cultural theory of "teaching students by their aptitudes," carrying out teachings. The teachers at TUA pay close attention to students' inner emotional activities, enact precise teaching plans, and guide them to study

absorbedly. Some students work with tourism about Tianshui scenic spots and historic sites. So, Vice Principal Zhao Baoxian has edited the most representative video tutorials on the Fuxi culture. The accompanying tutorials also include the Maiji Mountain Grottoes, enrolled in “*China’s Preparatory List of Natural and Cultural Heritage*” in 2006 as one of the first beauty spots. This scenic spot was listed as a national 5A tourist attraction in 2011.

The previous paragraphs have explicated that the ancient Fuxi culture overlaps with the prehistoric human remains of the Dadiwan in time and space. The Dadiwan’s relics reveal the early agricultural productivity invented by ancient humans. Therefore, this economic foundation is the material guarantee for the Fuxi culture’s generation. Educational videos are beautiful and informative, linking with Fuxi culture. A succession of brightly unfurling flowers and swaying green leaves displayed on screen make the scenic spots and historical sites become some fascinating places, quite magical.

Students strongly resonate with the sophisticated hi-tech curriculum. After shooting in campestrial landscapes, the site scenes are digitally enhanced again, so the network courses are full of teachers’ and managers’ work skills and impressive enthusiasm. For students, scientific emotions are like sea tides surging in their heads. Under normal circumstances, students’ learned emotions and feelings are invisible. Motivated by high-quality teaching methods, students’ ideological changes appear in visible learning activities. Knowing the psychological needs of students, the teaching result of targeted blended learning becomes better and better. Professor John Hattie, Director of the Melbourne Educational Research Institute, University of Melbourne, Australia, and Chair of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, formulated a theory of “visible learning.” Its essential viewpoint means: Learning is often in the head, and the teacher aims to help and make this learning visible. The constant teaching goal expounded by the theory is to improve students’ learning results.

Because a visible thing is often easy to recognize and handle, Professor Hattie summarized over 800 explored comprehensive studies covering more than 80 million students. He believed that the more feasible blended learning methods were available, the more students could improve their learning results (Hattie, 2012). A “visible learning” method has formed in the teachings. They start with the local students’ actual situation. Compared with the same process overseas, it shows the developmental exchange trend between Chinese and foreigners. This outcome is a result of Chinese deepening educational reform. Naturally, it is one of the fundamental reasons that TUA got praised.

Additional Intellect Power to Revitalize Countryside

Accelerating rural economic and social development is the financial foundation for China to build a modernized country. Tianshui University for the Aged mobilizes all resources to provide academic support for the rural economy.

Duty-bound to Serve Rural Economy

The population structure of Tianshui City showed that the whole city’s permanent resident population at the end of the year was 2,956,500 in 2021. Among them, the rural population was 1,576,400, accounting for 53.32% of the permanent resident population. The per capita disposable income of rural residents in the city was ¥10,034, an increase of 10.6% over the same value in the previous year, 3.3 percentage points higher than the growth rate of urban

residents' per capita disposable income. But compared with the per capita disposable income of the city's urban residents, the proportion was 31.11% (Tianshui Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Undoubtedly, it is highly crucial to improve rural productivity and help farmers increase their wealth.

Karl Marx indicated: Visibly productivity is the result of a person's applicative ability, but this ability itself depends on their conditions, depends on the productivity that has been achieved previously, and depends on the social form that existed before them, created by none of them but by a generation ago (Marx, 1846). People's productive applicative abilities are synthesis, including mastering scientific knowledge, operating equipment skills, etc. Whether educational programs are of high quality and application or low or even poor, they depend entirely on the current social-economic developmental level. Only by education can one acquire knowledge and skills.

There is a large rural population in Tianshui City. Due to history, geography and other factors, economic development is relatively backward, so there are various restricted disadvantageous conditions for setting up higher education in rural areas. As a result, most farmers have no need or opportunity to go to university. They cannot learn hi-level scientific knowledge and skills to enhance their applicative ability and then apply advanced equipment in production. Tianshui University for the Aged has bravely undertaken educational tasks and recruited peasant students for many years. Some students are employees of state-owned units and rural farmers from the forest region of Xiaolongshan Mountain, where the noted Maijishan Grottoes are located.

Tianshui' Maiji District, located in the east section of Xiaolongshan Mountains, belonging to the vast mountain ranges of the West Qinling Mountains, is the biggest regional industrial park with many factories. The Qinling Mountains' generalized western end originating from the magnificent and towery Kunlun Mountains in the western Chinese interior stretches across central China for more than 1,600 kilometers from west to east. The Qinling Mountains are the most crucial geographical dividing line between the subtropical climate in the south, the warm temperate climate in the north of China, and the boundary between China's famous Yangtze River and Yellow River systems. Therefore, the Qinling Mountains are an essential "Chinese Ecological Gate." The continuous Kunlun Mountains are located on the northern edge of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, and the Plateau is regarded as "The World's Third Pole."

The ecological evolution of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is described in detail in an earlier chapter. It has the environmental function of a planetary scale, affecting the whole earth through its natural circulative evolution. Therefore, the Xiaolongshan ecology is an integral part of the entire ecosystem. Due to my professional research on ecological protection, I focus on developing ecological undertakings in Xiaolongshan. I have been to Xiaolongshan's forest area many times to investigate and live, and I am familiar with some counties, townships and villages there. The forest farms under the jurisdiction of Xiaolongshan Forestry Experiment Bureau are distributed in Tianshui City, Longnan City and Dingxi City, Gansu Province. There are 89 townships (towns) and 1920 administrative villages in forest area and forest margin area, with 1.269 million people.

Researchers Xu Yingxia and Wang Hongli collectively and explicitly expressed that: “There is an extensive forest resource of a total of 828,700hm², belonging to 21 state-owned forest farms in the Xiaolongshan mountains.” Researcher Xu worked at Xiaolongshan Forestry Investigation and Planning Institute of Gansu Province, and researcher Wang worked at Jiang Luo Tree Farm of Xiaolongshan Forestry Experimental Bureau. The broad forest areas are distributed on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River and the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River. Green tree resources in the forest zone play a key role in maintaining the ecological security in the southeast of Gansu Province and take a vital strategic significance for constructing China’s Silk Road Economic Belt connecting Central Asia and Europe (Xu and Wang, 2016). In organizing the students from Maiji District, TUA’s executive team has encountered many difficulties. But they grasp the nettle and open up a new teaching situation.

New Performance from Blended Education

Explanation in the classroom is the most fundamental teaching method in the university. Tianshui University for the Aged has long paid attention to the compilation of multimedia short films with many informational contents and pursued high-quality standards for implementing teaching plans. Vice Principal Zhao Baoxian has formed a team to produce multimedia instructional videos for a long time. The videos contain much modern scientific and technological knowledge and strong local economic and cultural characteristics. For example, some teaching videos vividly show that if the public maintains a virtuous ecological cycle, we can get increasing financial returns. In the Xiaolongshan mountains, because of the extensive forests cultivating groundwater, there are clear streams to irrigate the fields, and farmers can get a bumper harvest.

Meanwhile, persons in the forest areas explore the production of carbon sink commodities and participate in carbon sink trading under the UN Clean Development Mechanism. Regional economic prospects are better. Vice Principal Zhao’s pioneering educational video, as a serial part of “the Local Characteristic Economy” supported and tutored by the Tianshui municipal administrative office, has disseminated the anticipant knowledge to the registered students, including many young living in many towns and villages in Maiji District and the wider remote Xiaolongshan mountain areas. Those “techno-courses” display rich knowledge and environmental protection, are more humorous, represent exchanges and markets, etc. He often photographs natural woods, streams, farmland and factories as materials for his educational videos and then creates and modifies them in hi-class analog and digital forms. Beautiful videos play an essential role in spreading knowledge. In his view, an assiduous goal is how to advance students’ comprehension by drawing their fond technological works linking with some skills about exactly treating objective things.

Multimedia lass-teaching shows that the synchro of the teacher’s explanation and the short film play is very effective. Theoretical concepts are abstract, but screen images are visualized. So, some stodgy contents suddenly are fresh and clever. Students from the mountainous areas said that this “blended learning/teaching” approaches made things understood clearly. “It is wonderful!” Some cheered for it. In the blended approaches, the screen images teach farmer students how to form strategic decisions and address new technological challenges. The screen courses detailed teach the students practical, productive market skills and how to achieve the best cost-profit balance in the market in the short term etc. The pictures synthetically explain typical cases to students on how to beautify the rural living courtyard and exercise a strong

body. Compared with the blended learning/teaching methods the above Australian scholars expounded, Chinese Tianshui's educators have endowed many new elements. Cultural exchanges are without borders and work for hand in hand for shared prosperity.

Colorful National Cultures Edify Sentiments

There are generally fewer cultural and entertainment venues in rural areas than in urban areas. However, the villages retain some folk culture handed down for thousands of years in Xiaolongshan. The beautiful sounds of ballads transmitting through successive generations often ring out from the deep mountains and on the shoreside of streams.

A comprehensive historical book titled *The World* was published in the Zhao State (403–222 B.C.) during the ancient Chinese Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.). According to the book, Fuxi, born in today's Tianshui district, created several musical instruments and tunes. Fuxi made the first Se and Qin instruments (Song, 222). Ancient Chinese "Se" (zither) was a twenty-five-plucked stringed instrument, and old Chinese "Qin" was a seven-stringed plucked instrument. Ancient Chinese Qin has improved and is still played on the stage. Undoubtedly, those music and dance are precious national historical heritages. Therefore, Tianshui University for the Aged has focused on improving students' qualities in music and dance. TUA has set up many dance and music courses and guided students to choose them to cultivate their elegant behaviors. TUA's versatile *Red Rosy Clouds Art* has choreographed many ethnic and local songs and dances for public performances by the teaching plan.

I was honored to watch and study some songs and dances through video and other means. In the performance, the students once wore costumes of the ancient Chinese Tang Dynasty (618–907), dancing gracefully, flowing in colorful skirts and flying long sleeves, which were very pretty and charming. The stage background was full of green trees and flowers, fresh and beautiful. I thought while appreciating. One ancient Chinese book, *The Book of History*, was compiled by scholars in the Pre-Qin Dynasty (before 221 B.C.). This book was a constellation of ancient Chinese national history and culture. The book expressed a profound and grand idea, such as the following: "The heaven and the earth are the parents of all things, and human beings are the lords of creation (Scholars in the Pre-Qin Dynasty Period, 256 B.C.)." It still shocks my mind in our modern society. China has beautiful surroundings, and millions of people have made ongoing efforts to create a better life. It has been the true meaning of Chinese society since ancient times.

Another Chinese classical *Qin* played a solo. Its melody was cadenced like "Yin" and "Yang" together. The ancient Chinese Taoism concept expresses "Yin," originally meaning feminine gender and "Yang," meaning masculine gender. Here indicates rhythm, "Yin" means low voice, and "Yang" means high voice. Their interlacement plays beautiful music. *Qin's* melody was rhythmic, long, and thick. In addition, the sound quality was clear and high. An ancient Chinese song of the Pre-Qin Dynasty Period titled *High Mountains and Running Water* was played. The music was sometimes lively and light, occasionally lyrical and lingering. A picture immediately appeared in front of the audience: green covering higher mountains, vast and obscure pine forests, mountain streams flowing with a jingle, and deep love friends each other, continuousness for a long time. The universe was extensive, and man and nature coexisted in harmony. I could not help but think of a string quintet titled *The Four Seasons (Le Quattro Stagioni)* by famous Italian composer and violinist Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741).

The music vividly depicted the magnificent beauty of spring, summer, autumn and winter, the cycle of four seasons with rich melodies. Scholar Nicholas Lockey admiringly pointed out this beautiful music coming from Vivaldi's pairing of sonnets with concertos and the aesthetic factors behind his choice of narrative topics, showing a vibrant and graceful performance. Composer and violinist Antonio Vivaldi "used diverse textures and sonorities to create powerful contrasts that heightened the emotional impact of the aural imagery." The expressive cycle of violin concertos dramatized the beautiful scenery of the four seasons. Elegant music represents nature's power and humanity's complex physical and emotional relationship (Lockey, 2017). Music is nature. All things live in harmony with each other.

The Chinese folk music and dance introduced by TUA vividly illustrate this truth: The more national art, the more global art. Authentic national arts transcend all time and space. Friendships and exchanges endure forever. As a result, those courses enhance the students' accomplishments. As an audience, I have enjoyed astounding artistic beauty while having harvested philosophical concepts.

Adhere to the Correct Educational Direction

Lifelong learning is a goal advocated by the United Nations and set by the Chinese government. The social circumstances for achieving this goal have changed dramatically during 2020–2022. The spreadable and damaging impacts of COVID–19 globally intensify very much. The fierce market competition at home and abroad makes some people suffer heavy economic losses due to systematic imbalances. At the same time, the rapid developmental informational technology puts forward higher requirements for network teaching. Affecting external things, Tianshui University for the Aged faces a new situation. On the one hand, the vocational scale expands much more, and students look forward to the hi-high quality course; On the other hand, educational funds are insufficient, and many conditions to guarantee blended learning are not yet complete.

Keep Educational Ship Rudder Steady in knowledgeable Sea

The knowledge ocean is vast. More and faster training talents are like how to choose the best channel for sailing in the knowledge sea. The educator needs to keep the rudder of the tremendous educational ship steady and avoid yaw. During a period of the global severe epidemical outbreak, Tianshui University for the Aged stopped all classroom teaching. Some of the more practical courses require face-to-face instruction such as special skills, dance and music, etc. However, all classes involved in the teaching schedule were forced to stop altogether. When the knowledge ocean encounters a sudden violent storm, it is a crucial point for a higher educational ship to choose its right channel and steer its course better.

TUA's all faculty feel that work is like doing something under the pressure of a mountain. For example, some students who live in mountainous villages in Tianshui's Maiji District face more trouble in the current harsh times. There is an original shortage of educational equipment in mountainous areas, which is getting worse now. The students now have more difficulties connecting to the Internet by operating computers at home solely. So, the general curriculum is challenging to solve the rural students' needs. Under normal circumstances, extra funds must be paid to deal with related matters.

Financial, instructional, organizational and other difficulties have come one by one. The Internet speed in a few places that once were available for study is slower now, making online learning very difficult. If the teacher were going to do on-the-spot teaching by the original plan, more funds would be inevitably spent on epidemical prevention and control. Furthermore, TUA will have to buy more expensive, high-end technology to operate newer online educational programs. There is a debate about educational solutions under pressure. "Do we control the market and make high profits to keep the school operation by conveniently using network technology? Do we always insist on cultivating society's economic and cultural talents as the priority?"

Vice Principal Zhao Baoxian's moment-to moment thinking on social and justiciable responsibilities and economic benefits is obvious and suitable. He said an interweaving of multiple demands and insufficient managerial funds indicated that our university education for the aged was flourishing. By taking every possible method, we were able to solve the difficulty. Above all other objectives, we must firmly steer the educational ship forward in the right direction to cultivate talents for society and serve the overall situation of social peace and harmony. Indeed, under the market economy and competitive conditions, a unique criterion measuring the success of a university is whether it can satisfy solid social developmental needs. On December 30, 2020, China's Ministry of Education defined one of the essential goals that education must train students in to serve the national primary strategic needs, industrial and regional developmental needs. At the same time, all kinds of colleges should shape the university spirit and cultural construction on campus and educate students to inherit excellent Chinese traditional cultures (Ministry of Education etc., 2020). In any case, the practical tendency must be abandoned. Education in university must follow moral principles. In the world, it is the right direction for famous universities to stick to their faith, set ethical rules, deal with complex problems by regulations, and cultivate talents more and more.

Scholars Yuriy Timofeyev and Oksana Dremova pointed out a high congruence between beliefs and individual behaviors. Those receiving more social and family education are typically more ethical in judgments and actual behaviors. Moreover, Scholars Timofeyev and Dremova teach students at the Higher School of Economics, National Research University, Moscow, Russian Federation. The scholars emphasized that the university should develop an ethics center and formulate moral codes for faculty and students. The ethics center should be their guidance in situations of ethical dilemmas (Timofeyev and Dremova, 2022). TUA's executive team follows the trend of overcoming difficulties and serving society with education. High-quality online teaching is the first step now.

New Curriculums for Students in Mountainous Areas

Tianshui University for the Aged has developed some curriculums teaching combine practice with theory. The improved curriculums analyze classic cases in depth. One new course introduces a new approach to improving local characteristic agricultural products' production, sale and quality. It also carefully examines the various obstacles encountered by farmers in operating commodities. The blocks involve managerial ideas in a significant measure, such as blind decision-making, family management, short inventive consciousness and slow productive upgrading, etc. Through online training programs, TUA's teachers help young rural farmers overcome obstacles and encourage them to start new businesses in the market. The students feel that those new courses have explicit theories and typical examples. They are

easily understood in class and try hard to operate in a short time after class. At the same time, the teachers have absorbed the students' good suggestions and elevated their lectures. They continue to explore new curricula to serve rural students.

Online courses popularly and generally transmit two kinds of messages: specific methods to make money in the marketplace and a belief in sticking with high-quality service for consumers. That particular techno-products come to matter through the network manager's manipulation of space and time and are warmly welcomed by the registered students. Naturally, they attract a myriad of others with visual attention. TUA online courses can give students the knowledge and expertise they need and help them get noticed and advance in their careers. Regardless young rural farmers are looking for developmental opportunities or simply trying to learn new skills for daily life. More than ever, digital tools and platforms break through the severe disruptions of COVID-19 to advance students' decision-making capacities and skills. Thanks to education, these students mastering some technical applied abilities can strengthen themselves in the economy and contribute to new social development production.

Update Online Courses Continually

Global agricultural supply, especially food production, has encountered serious challenges. The spread of COVID-19 is a very extreme big event. A critical step is to promote farmers' productive ability to apply science and technology in planting fields as soon as possible to ensure national agricultural production. However, many farmers everywhere, including those living in the mountains around Tianshui, do not have a high applicative rate of new technologies in agricultural production. Limited by the serious epidemical situation, some regional organizations face difficulties establishing unique educational platforms and rural platforms of entrepreneurship and employment to educate farmers (Cao and Guo, 2021).

However, Tianshui University for the Aged has risen to the challenge. They are taking advantage of the current situation; TUA concentrates on implementing unique significant network teachings. From the students' perspective, there is a pre-arranged "flow" to each lesson. Some fundamental preconditions lead to this flow-starting with good planning. They are up-to-date knowledge, suitable techniques, exciting content, etc. Other aspects relating to lesson "flow" are the initial conditions, such as building optimal learning surroundings, teachers' understanding of students and choice of teaching methods, and the percentage of online conversations between teachers and students. Especially in remote mountainous areas lying behind in economic development, those supportive intellectual elements can do much to stimulate and encourage progress for the young peasant generation.

On January 24, 2019, China's State Council started to carry out *The Implementational Scheme on the National Vocational Educational Reform*. According to this scheme, colleges should serve the rural revitalization strategy, train the practical rural talents to show some new professional agricultural skilled features as the main body for the vast rural areas, and speed up the agricultural and rural modernized process industriously (State Council, 2019). The above facts about Chinese educational reform indicate that TUA's teachers have successfully explored the combination of new ideas and technologies on the website. Those reveal suitable methods for cracking some difficulties in learning problems, and no one else uses the same approaches/techniques. TUA high-quality textbooks and practical teaching methods have

brought satisfactory results. Peasant students amusedly raise their eyebrows anytime while looking at report cards with 70 or higher.

Scholars Dian Muhimmatun Ma'rufah, Sri Ngabekti and Ning Setiati together deemed the first task was to prepare high-quality teaching materials before guiding students to learn scientific and technological knowledge. They teach students at Pasca Sarjana Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia. "This work needs to be raised and done well in learning one of them through the development of teaching materials based on socio-scientific issues." Through experiments and research, they concluded credible experiences and ideas that high-quality textbooks and innovative teaching methods stably achieve better benefits. The response of students and teachers in readability is excellent, and the reaction of students and teachers in practicality is efficient (Ma'rufah, Ngabekti and Setiati, 2021). TUA educational reform undoubtedly has achieved the same favorable effects with more Chinese characteristics. Many students from rural areas have learned the skills and knowledge they need in Tianshui. It's a fantastic result for them to think and learn many skills. The students did not receive those good results in online professional developmental training. Presently, a group of new rural practical talents is growing. They have played a vital role in cultivating the characteristic forestry products in the Xiaolongshan mountainous area, such as Wulongtou with the scientific name of *Aralia Chinensis* L., which is a best-selling for export. Some remote mountain villages have become increasingly wealthy because of some green agricultural products for export.

I have learned more from my study and research. Education of Tianshui University for the Aged can be summarized as a sentence: It is a goal for TUA to identify some ordinary persons with strong plasticity, elevate their knowledge structure through scientific methods, and cultivate them as excellent talents. The aim is to keep these best students ahead of the world competition. Tianshui Normal College and Tianshui University for the Aged are in the same city together. The former is academic education, and the latter is lifelong learning, so they can be called a single lotus with twin-flowers. Educational flowers are flourishing in the land of China. The country thrives in talent and then grows in the economy.

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