



# Efforts to break the “score determinism” and transfer college enrolment from recruiting “scores” to “people”: The exploration and practice of comprehensive quality evaluation of general high school students in Shanghai

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## ABSTRACT

Shanghai has always led college entrance examination reform in China, and has piloted the new round of college entrance examination reform for 5 years. At present, the comprehensive quality evaluation of general high school students has been carried out on a regular basis, and the comprehensive quality evaluation information of graduates of the latest three years has been initially used in college enrollment. The comprehensive quality evaluation adheres to the “Education in Five Aspects”, reflecting students’ comprehensive and personalized development. Students actively participate in social practice activities and research-based learning, and use what they have learned to solve real problems in real life. People from all walks of life in Shanghai generally agree with the achievements and experience it has achieved in this reform. The united education system inside and outside the school has been initially established, students’ creative spirits and practical abilities have been strengthened, college and university enrollment has begun to change from recruiting “scores” to “people”, etc. On the basis of summarizing the problems existing in the comprehensive quality evaluation raised by some scholars, this paper proposes four action directions such as strengthening the feedback of comprehensive quality evaluation information, enhancing its normalized evaluation, paying more attention to students’ learning process, realizing the better combination of students’ social practice activities and research-based learning, and improving the ability of college enrollment selection.

## KEYWORDS

Comprehensive quality evaluation; college entrance examination reform; independent enrollment; comprehensive evaluation enrollment; social practice; research-based learning

## Introduction

As known, 15-year-old students in Shanghai outperformed in reading, math and science of PISA 2009 and PISA 2012, which attracts worldwide attention. To be noted, the share of students at top level in all those three domains are also highest compared to other participating countries and regions. Therefore, being acknowledged as one of the benchmarking education systems, education leaders and policy makers across the world are surging into Shanghai to explore and learn the secret of Shanghai model. There are underlying reasons behind PISA data result. Friedman, author of “world is flat” revealed that the secret of Shanghai lies in institution and

culture which are invisible and consistently embedded across the whole school system after his visit to schools in Shanghai, 2013. Although stimulating other country's great passion on learning Shanghai model, PISA triggered us to reflect our student assessment system. Because PISA offers us great opportunities to look inside the role and influence of national student assessment through international comparison. According to Shanghai result of PISA 2009 and PISA 2012, students' learning burden is extremely heavy and margin benefit of learning is diminishing with the increase of learning time which has aroused heated discussion in the education circle of China. In such context, education policy makers and reformers are rethinking and repositioning value and concept of assessment in education system. There is an old saying in China: assessment serves as baton for teaching and student learning, which is a tradeoff between selection role with absolute summative purpose and developmental role with more formative value. Our government has taken initiatives in reforming national student assessment toward a student-centered assessment system through redesigning arch of institution. In the year 2014, State Council of the People's Republic of China has officially launched *suggestions on implementation of deepening reform on student recruitment and examination policy*. According to this legislative document, comprehensive quality evaluation for student has been included firstly and formally with scope of national reform on student recruitment and examination policy. Such pioneer endeavors showed our government great resolution to tackle the most tough problem with our education system which is relying on unitality function of assessment based on student scores solely. This paper aims to present our grand national reform on student recruitment and examination system by introducing Shanghai's innovative and pioneer reform action and explore our further consideration and thoughts.

### ***Negative effect origins from national student assessment policy***

In China, unscientific guidance of education evaluation, which has brought a great negative impact on the teachers, students, schools and the whole education work, has become a hindrance to the development of quality education. Test scores are the criteria for student evaluation, test score rankings for teacher evaluation, and enrollment rates for school evaluation. This kind of exam-oriented education, which focus only on scores and enrollment rates, has damaged the good education ecology and distorted education goals. Therefore, we should fundamentally solve the problem of education evaluation baton and reverse the unscientific guidance of education evaluation.

Comprehensive evaluation is the focus and basis of the reform of the exam and enrollment system, and the inevitable choice to break the "score determinism". The comprehensive quality evaluation of high school students is the core of the new round of college entrance examination ("Gaokao" for short) reform. As one of the two provinces undertaking the mission of taking the lead in the Gaokao reform, Shanghai launched the new round of Gaokao reform in 2014. The comprehensive quality evaluation started from the senior 1 students who entered school in the autumn of 2014, and its information began to be used as reference in the college enrollment from these students when they graduated in 2017. At present, the comprehensive quality evaluation of high school students in Shanghai has been implemented normally, and the use of comprehensive quality evaluation information in college enrollment is being gradually promoted.

Some countries use national assessments to help evaluate school quality. Research suggests that using a single indicator, such as a school result on a national assessment, is not an accurate indication of a school or teacher(s) effectiveness since it does not consider contextual factors outside of the school's control (OECD, 2013). The practice of publishing school-level results or using them to issue rewards or sanctions can lead to the perception that assessments have stakes. This perception, in turn, can have unintended and negative consequences, such as test manipulation or influence on student enrolment distributions (e.g. parents may choose to send their children to schools with high results, which could lead to oversubscription in some

schools). However, when countries use assessment results in a balanced way and integrate results data with other school-level information, they can help benchmark school performance more equitably and meaningfully. In turn, this practice can help governments better identify and understand some of the factors behind low performing schools (or groups of students). Shanghai, for example, has developed a “green-indicator comprehensive evaluation for elementary and junior middle schools” which includes indicators in 10 main aspects of school performance, alongside other factors such as student health, socio-economic background, workload and the pedagogical practices used in the school (among others).

### ***Policy review of Gaokao reform***

In 1952, not long after the foundation of the People’s Republic of China, the independent enrollment of all colleges and universities ended, and a unified national college enrollment system was established. As Zhenguo and Zheng (2019) concluded, since the resumption of Gaokao in 1977, the reforms and innovations of system design and technical means have been continuously carried out, and continuous progress has been made around “scientific selection”, “fair selection”, “college selection”, and “giving full play to the positive guiding role of Gaokao on basic education”. However, as the positive role of Gaokao becomes more prominent, the negative role also becomes more and more serious. In order to correct its negative effects, the Gaokao in China has gone through such changes as from national test to provincial and municipal test, from “one year one test” to “one year two tests”, from all candidates taking the same subjects to different subjects, from “once-in-a-lifetime” to comprehensive admission with reference to multiple factors, from all colleges and universities investigating the same contents to different types of colleges and universities investigating different contents. Since 2014, a new round of comprehensive reform of Gaokao has been launched in China, and the “most profound Gaokao reform” was pushed in an all-round way. In 2014, Shanghai, along with Zhejiang, took the lead in implementing the Gaokao reform as pilot provinces (cities). In 2017, Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong and Hainan initiated the Gaokao reform. As of now, 14 provinces and municipalities across the country have initiated comprehensive the new Gaokao reform.

Shanghai has been playing a leading role in the national Gaokao reform. In 1985, Shanghai piloted Gaokao independent proposition. Since the new century, the Ministry of Education has further delegated the right of Gaokao independent proposition. However, since 2015, it had gradually tightened the Gaokao independent proposition right of provinces and municipalities. So far, the Gaokao independent proposition of Shanghai has lasted for more than 30 years. As Chongwen (2019) stated, after 1992, Shanghai began to enter a new stage of Gaokao reform, with the core of reforming colleges’ charging system and expanding their admission autonomy. In 1993, Shanghai adhered to the principle of “expanding colleges’ autonomy and implementing diversified selection of freshmen”, and tried out the reform of independent examination and admission system of at Shanghai University of Technology. The reform was expanded to all colleges and universities in Shanghai after 1996. In 2000, Shanghai took the lead in launching the spring Gaokao, endowing colleges and universities with more autonomy in enrollment, including self-determination of examination subjects, students’ selected subjects, admission standards, etc. In 2001, Shanghai was the first to introduce the “comprehensive ability test” reform, which examined the students’ ability to use basic knowledge to analyze and solve problems, with the aim to promote middle schools to implement quality education.

### **The development of students’ comprehensive quality evaluation in Shanghai**

Shanghai started to try out the newly formulated “*Shanghai Student Evaluation Manual*” from the 1999 academic year. The manual established the basic quality developing goals that reflect the

students' overall development in moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic aspects. It took students as the subject, combined ranking and qualitative description, and focused on the evaluation of students' overall quality. Since the 2003 academic year, high schools in Shanghai began to implement the *"Handbook for Students' Comprehensive Quality Evaluation in Shanghai (High School Trial)"*. Since the 2004 academic year, Shanghai began to try out the *"Shanghai Primary and Secondary School Students' Growth Record Book"*.

All these changes in the names of the printed carrier reflected the objective requirements of society for education as the time flowed. From the requirements of students' overall quality in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor aspects, the new "Record Book" put forward developing objectives from four periods: lower primary school, upper primary school, junior middle school, and high school. It attached importance not only to the evaluation of students' mastery of knowledge and abilities, but also to the development and changes of students' learning processes, methods, emotions, attitudes, and values. In the discipline evaluation section, the "discipline practice activity record" column was newly added to guide students to carry out research-based learning.

In 2006, Shanghai introduced the *"Comprehensive Quality Evaluation Scheme for Primary and Secondary School Students in Shanghai (Trial)"*, which has been piloted in Huangpu and Minhang districts, and three schools (1 elementary school, 1 junior middle school, 1 high school) in each of the other 17 districts since the first semester of the 2006 academic year. The scheme confirmed 4 first-level indicators, 12 two-level indicators, and 33 three-level indicators for the comprehensive quality evaluation. The first-level indicators included moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic aspects. The evaluation results of each indicator are recorded as "excellent", "good", "qualified", and "unqualified (or more efforts needed)". Upon graduation, the *"Shanghai (Primary, Junior and Senior Middle School) Graduates Comprehensive Quality Evaluation Report Form"* would be automatically generated based on the records of each academic year, reported to students and parents and provided to higher-level schools as reference for admission. In the summer of 2007, according to the trial situation, Shanghai Municipal Education Commission organized relevant offices and experts to revise the *"Shanghai Primary and Secondary School Students' Growth Record Book"*, released the new version, and completed the preparation and printing of "100 Questions and Answers on Comprehensive Quality Evaluation of Primary and Secondary School Students".

## **The practices of comprehensive quality evaluation of high school students in Shanghai**

As Jing et al. (2017) stated, to implement comprehensive quality evaluation of high school students in Shanghai is the need of the national and Shanghai education reform and development, cultivating students' core quality and promoting students' healthy growth. At the same time, it also conforms to the trend of world education development. In April 2015, Shanghai issued *"Implementation Measures for General High School Student Comprehensive Quality Evaluation in Shanghai (Trial)"*. After the implementation of two sessions of students, Shanghai issued the formal implementation measures (2018) on the basis of the trial version, and the comprehensive quality evaluation system of high school students stabilized.

### **The design of evaluation content system of "Education in Five Aspects"**

The content design of high school students' comprehensive quality evaluation adheres to the principle of "Education in Five Aspects" and the all-round quality education development. At the National Education Conference, general secretary Xi Jinping raised the original formulation of "Education in Four (moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic) Aspects" to "Education in Five

(moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor) Aspects”, and endowed the new connotation to students’ all-round development. In 2015, the Ministry of Education, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League and the National Youth Work Committee issued the *“Opinions on Strengthening Labor Education in Primary and Secondary Schools”*, which put forward the objectives of labor education, emphasized “education through labor” to strengthen the other four aspects, with the aim to achieve the effect of “cultivating morality, improving intelligence, strengthening physique, nurturing aesthetic and learning to innovate”, and promote the all-round development of students’ morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetic and labor.

As the policy documents illustrated, the main contents of the comprehensive quality evaluation of high school students in Shanghai include four modules: moral development and civic quality, study courses and academic achievements, physical & mental health and artistic literacy, and innovative spirit and practical ability. The module of moral development and civic quality mainly corresponds to the moral and labor aspects, recording mainly students’ compliance with daily behavior norms, participation in voluntary service, public welfare work, and Party and League activities, etc. The module of study courses and academic achievements corresponds to the intellectual aspect, recording mainly students’ academic level examination results, basic courses results, learning experiences of extended courses and research courses, etc. The module of physical & mental health and artistic literacy correspond to the physical and aesthetic aspect, recording mainly students’ test results of National Students’ Physical Health Standards, the experiences and performance level of participating in sports and artistic activities, as well as the extra-curricular physical exercises. The module of innovative spirit and practical ability covers all five aspects, recording mainly students’ participation in research-based learning, social investigation, scientific and technological activities, creation and invention, etc.

In addition, the main contents of the comprehensive quality evaluation also include the required personal self-introduction and the optional performance on school characteristic indicators. Learning from Western colleges’ student admission, which require candidate students to provide self-introduction materials, and domestic college autonomous enrollment, the comprehensive quality evaluation has included students’ personal self-introduction, so as to facilitate colleges and universities to better investigate students’ all-round and personality development. In the self-introduction, students can introduce their outstanding performance in the overall development of five aspects, such as social responsibility, professional aspirations, personality and personal hobbies. In order to promote high schools’ characteristic and diversified development, the comprehensive quality evaluation specially sets up the school characteristic indicator module, which can be filled in after being approved by the education administrative department. School characteristic indicators can be anyone of the five aspects. High schools can determine the meaning and performance evaluation standard of these indicators independently, and finally fill in the performance grade of each student in the characteristic indicator module.

### ***Students’ social practice activities have flourished***

In order to further promote high school students’ social practice activities such as volunteer services, Shanghai has selected a number of social practice bases and projects. At present, there are 225 certified municipal bases, 1786 certified district bases, and 21 certified projects. These bases and projects generally meet certain conditions as stated in *“Notice on the Selection of the First Batch of Recommended Places for the Social Practice of General Senior High School Students in Shanghai”* (2015). First, they have special department and personnel with education management functions responsible for student volunteer services, such as “Education Department” and “Education Commissioner”. Second, they have volunteer positions and an ever-increasing number of activities and practical courses suitable for high school students. Third, they are nonprofit to carry out student social practice activities. Fourth, they have safety and emergency plans for

students' social practices, guarantees the safety of the venues, facilities, and equipment, are equipped with security personnel, and set up necessary safety warning signs to prevent accidents.

Shanghai has required students to participate social practice activities in high school at least 30 days per academic year, with volunteer services no less than 60 class hours. The bulletin board of the "Shanghai Student Social Practice Information Recording Electronic Platform (<https://sj.21boya.cn/>)" shows that, to the end of 2019, the longest volunteer service time of one student is 532 hours. By September 2019, more than 260,000 high school students have participated in voluntary services under their schools' organization, with a total of over 2.35 million person-times and a total of over 12.1 million hours of services. Bases at all levels have provided a total of 764,000 volunteer positions and more than one hundred kinds of positions suitable for high school students, such as librarians, venue guides, venue commentators, village support teachers, one-day shop managers, subway station guides, and events volunteers at all levels.

The survey results of Research Group on the Survey of the New College Entrance Examination Reform Effect in Shanghai (2018) show that 82.41% of the investigated principals believe that students' enthusiasm for participating social practice activities has increased, of which 36.11% believe that there has been a significant increase. 15.76% of the investigated students said that there was a significant increase in their enthusiasm for social practice activities, and 37.38% said that their enthusiasm had improved slightly.

### ***Students have conducted research-based learning actively***

In recent years, Shanghai has created a good platform for research-based learning for high school students through the construction of innovative laboratories, the Maker Education Consortium, the Massive Open Online Research System, Research Guidance and Third-party Certification Platform for High School Students. Research-based learning is no longer an occasional teaching activity aimed at a few students to win prizes, but a regular form for all high school students. Most senior two students have research projects covering nearly all research fields, such as engineering, natural sciences, humanities and social sciences, technological innovation, environmental protection and finance. Students participate actively in social practice activities like voluntary services, pay more attention to social hotspots and real-world problems, and carry out research such as garbage classification, caring for special groups (the elderly, the disabled and the like), river management, shared bicycle, safe night running, and express packaging standards, etc.

According to the survey results of the Research Group, 77.78% of the investigated principals regarded that the students' enthusiasm for participating in the school's research learning had increased, of which 25% regarded that there had been a significant improvement. 15.48% of the investigated students said that the comprehensive quality evaluation significantly increased their enthusiasm for participating in research-based courses, and 37.66% of the students said that their enthusiasm slightly increased.

High schools have played a leading role in promoting students' research-based learning. The work high schools have done can be mainly divided into the following five categories. First, schools make full use of the existing resources, such as various innovative laboratories, showrooms and other hardware resources. Second, schools utilize social resources like communities and colleges and universities, and fully integrate resources inside and outside the school. Third, most schools have established working mechanisms such as project research committees to evaluate students' research results and prevent possible plagiarism of research results. Fourth, most schools have constructed project research guide teacher staff to provide students' project research with all-round guidance. Fifth, most schools have guided students to form project



research activity teams, giving full play to each student's expertise, and promoting the team to work together to push forward the development of each project research.

### ***Students' comprehensive quality evaluation information has preliminary application in some colleges and universities***

Some college and university enrollment began to refer to the comprehensive quality evaluation information of high school students from 2017. Because of the promotion of information technology, the final "General High School Students' Comprehensive Quality Evaluation Report" can be submitted to colleges and universities along with students' Gaokao results in electronic files, which provides a precondition for colleges and universities to refer to students' comprehensive quality evaluation information. Zhi et al. (2019) stated on the basis of investigation, as far as the referentiality of indicators is concerned, more than half of the admissions leaders believe that the study courses and academic achievements module is the most to be referred, which is the consensus of most investigated college admission leaders. 35.5% of the admission leaders believe that "innovation spirit and practical ability" module has the most reference value, while only few leaders agreed that the "moral development and civic literacy" and "physical & mental health and artistic literacy" modules have high referentiality.

Currently, Shanghai is expanding the use of comprehensive quality evaluation results. The pilot colleges and universities referred to students' comprehensive evaluation results through diversified explorations in the written materials review and interview sections of comprehensive evaluation admission, as well as campus open days, spring admission, and early admission. There are 23 colleges and universities in Shanghai participating in the spring admission and they admit all undergraduates in more applied rather than academic majors. There are basically two ways for these colleges and universities to refer to students' comprehensive quality evaluation information. One way is to refer to the information in the interview of college/university-based tests and the interview expert determine the final score of the candidates based on their comprehensive quality evaluation information and on the spot performance. The other way is that experts score the candidate's comprehensive quality evaluation information separately, and then this score is included in the total score of the college/university-based test.

In the unified autumn admission, students' comprehensive quality evaluation information is used in the independent admission, comprehensive evaluation admission, unified admission, etc. The information is mainly referred in colleges/universities' registration qualification review, college/university-based test interview, same-score admission, pilot class selection, major transfer in and after admission, etc. Combining statistics of different admission batches, as calculated by Xiuhua et al. (2017), the reference extent of students' comprehensive quality evaluation information in college admissions is as follows: in the college/university-based test interview, nearly 40%; for the same-score admission, more than one quarter; for major transfer in admission, nearly one-fifth; for preliminary qualification review, more than one eighth.

### **The achievements and experience in students' comprehensive quality evaluation in high schools**

The comprehensive quality evaluation of general high school students has been carried out for more than 5 years in Shanghai. Through the implementation of comprehensive quality evaluation, Shanghai has accumulated certain achievements and experience in guiding high school students to enter the society, fostering their social responsibility, promoting them to carry out research-based learning, and making full use of information technology to ensure the objectivity and authenticity of students' comprehensive quality evaluation information. According to the survey results of the Research Group (2018), 62.03% of the investigated high school principals

thought the comprehensive quality evaluation enhanced students' social responsibility, 54.63% thought it strengthened students' ability to solve problems, and 60.19% thought it helped schools to carry out their philosophy and characteristics.

### ***The united education system inside and outside the school has been initially established***

In order to support students to carry out comprehensive practical activities such as volunteer service and research-based learning, Shanghai has constructed a united education system inside and outside the school. Shanghai has fully realized that students' learning doesn't just happen inside the school, but extra-school activities and learning are of the same importance. In 2017, Shanghai issued *"The Three-year (2017–2019) Action Plan for Extra-school Education in Shanghai"* to strengthen the top-level design of extra-school education, build and improve the extra-school education governance system, further enhance the scientific and humanistic literacy of minors, and cultivate students' innovative spirit, practical ability and social responsibility. At the same time, Shanghai further developed the overall coordination function of the "Joint Conference on Young Students' Extra-school Activities" (hereinafter referred to as "extra-school association") to improve and optimize the corresponding organization at the district level.

From the perspective of organizational structure, Shanghai set up a leading group for the comprehensive quality evaluation of primary and secondary school students, entrusting the municipal "extra-school association" office to coordinate the Propaganda Department of Municipal Party Committee, the Municipal Civilization Office, the Municipal Science and Technology Commission, the Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Film and Television, the Municipal Sports Bureau, the Municipal Communist Youth League Committee, the Municipal Science and Technology Association and other departments to provide support for students' comprehensive practical activities such as volunteer service (public welfare labor), sports, art, science and technology activities, and research-based learning. The comprehensive quality evaluation involves an unprecedented number of government administrative departments, and the multi-sector cooperation provides institutional guarantee for education activities inside and outside the school.

At present, the social practice bases and projects for high school students are only incorporated into this united education system after they are certified. However, the number of junior middle school students and their need for extra-school resources is far greater. By the end of 2019, junior middle school had carried out more than 3300 social practice activities. Therefore, with the launch of the comprehensive quality evaluation of junior middle school students in 2019, the current united education system inside and outside the school will be further expanded. Public places which are often accessed by ordinary people such as grocery markets, subway stations, supermarkets, shopping malls, and canteens, will become places for students to carry out comprehensive practical activities such as occupational experience, social investigations and research-based learning.

### ***Students' creative spirits and practical abilities have been strengthened***

As two handles for promoting students' comprehensive quality evaluation in high school, social practice activities and research-based learning have strengthened the cultivation of students' innovative spirits and practical abilities. Social practice activities have forced students to enter into society, and research-based learning has encouraged students to deepen their thinking and research on issues they are interested in. In these activities, students are more likely to pay attention to real problems in real life and use what they have learned to investigate and solve these problems.



Most high schools have equipped students with tutors or instructors to conduct research-based learning, and even some high schools equipped students with such teachers in social practice activities (Lei, 2017). At the same time, social practice bases are also equipped with education specialists, some of whom can also be students' mentors and instructors. These teachers provide students with targeted guidance and assistance in each of the phases of research-based learning, including project establishment, scheme design, research implementation, report writing, conclusion phase, etc. In addition, the Massive Open Online Research System has "artificial intelligence tutors" to push relevant reference materials and suggestions to students according to their needs and characteristics (Zhi et al., 2018).

Some studies have pointed out that if research-based learning is implemented properly, it will not only improve students' learning attitudes, but also allows students to keep the knowledge and skills they have learned for a longer time. In students' comprehensive quality evaluation, their problem awareness and research abilities have been initially cultivated, so that they are better prepared for higher education. The municipality, districts, and high schools organize displays and exchanges of students' social practice activities and research-based learning results from time to time to strengthen students' sharing of results and experiences after learning. Shanghai holds "Future Cup" High School Student Social Practice Project Competition every year and the award-winning projects have good research themes and original research results.

### ***More high schools have characteristic and diversified development***

Although the reference for school characteristic indicators of high schools has not been clearly reflected in the college admission, with the continuous advancement of the characteristic and diversified development of high schools, the reference proportion of school characteristic indicators will gradually increase. To apply for the record of school characteristic indicators, schools must simultaneously meet the following four requirements. First, the school has a unique goal of educating people, which mainly reflects the characteristics of talents the school has developed. Second, the school has the characteristic course group, and only a single characteristic project or activity is not enough to form a characteristic indicator of the school. Third, the school's characteristic course group covers all or most of the students. Fourth, the characteristic indicator has specific standards of measurement and evaluation, so there is a solid basis for the evaluation of student performance ranking.

With the continuous promotion of the project of general characteristic high school cultivation in Shanghai, more and more high schools have been qualified to record students' performance in characteristic indicators, so that the contents of comprehensive quality evaluation have been further enriched. At present, Shanghai has named 9 general characteristic high schools, with characteristics covering language and cultural exchange, drama art, environmental literacy, science and technology literacy, financial literacy, maritime culture, engineering, technology and law. These characteristic high schools have led 56 characteristic cultivation schools to develop in characteristic and diversified directions. The characteristics of all these schools that have been named or are in the process of cultivation have covered almost all areas.

Comprehensive quality evaluation has greatly promoted the cultivation of high school characteristics, and further promoted the transformation of general high schools from hierarchical development to the combination of hierarchical and classified development. The characteristic and diversified development of general high schools can better meet the individual development needs of students, make students more clear about their areas of interest and expertise, and provide colleges with more comprehensive and personalized development student sources, which is conducive for colleges and universities to better and more scientifically recruit students suitable for different majors.

### ***Information technology is initially applied in students' comprehensive quality evaluation***

In order to conform to information technology development and ensure the objectivity and authenticity of the comprehensive quality evaluation information, Shanghai has established "General High School Student Comprehensive Quality Evaluation Information Management System" and "Shanghai Student Social Practice Information Record Electronic Platform" to realize online operation and management of the comprehensive quality evaluation. The use of information technology has greatly reduced the workload of high schools and students, and greatly raised the simplicity and convenience of comprehensive quality evaluation.

Prior to this new round Gaokao reform, many high schools have explored comprehensive quality evaluation and developed their own information systems. These systems were also retained afterwards, and data interface between these systems and the municipal system has been realized. These systems are developed on school basis, and are generally more personalized with school's characteristics. These schools master the comprehensive quality evaluation information of all their students, and provides timely feedback based on their own data and information.

### ***College and university enrolment has begun to change from recruiting "scores" to "people"***

The reference to students' comprehensive quality evaluation information has changed college and university enrolment. Colleges and universities can see the students' development in all five aspects and their personality and the majors they want to study instead of simple scores, so that the enrollment has begun to change from recruiting "scores" to "people". At present, the spring enrollment and the independent comprehensive evaluation admission in the fall enrollment can refer to students' comprehensive quality evaluation information conscientiously.

High school students and their parents, policy experts, and the general public are positive about what the piloting colleges and universities have done in reference to students' comprehensive quality evaluation information. The questionnaire survey conducted by the Research Group on 717 high school graduates in the city showed that, among the reference methods for comprehensive quality evaluation record report in college enrollment, 12.27% of students said that their comprehensive quality evaluation record report helped them enter their ideal college and major. Although the proportion of students affected is not very high, but considering it is in the early stage of reform, the enrollment methods with reference to students' comprehensive quality evaluation has had a good beginning. The research group found in the survey that the comprehensive quality evaluation information made colleges and universities have more comprehensive and profound understanding of students, and achieved the goal of "seeing both points and people", overcoming the problems caused by only seeing scores. At the same time, 58.34% of the principals agreed that there is the need to further expand the enrollment ratio of comprehensive evaluation admission.

## **Conclusion**

Although Shanghai has reached some achievements and accumulated experience in students' comprehensive quality evaluation in more than 5 years, there are still many problems. Along with the start of the comprehensive quality evaluation of junior middle school students, the comprehensive quality evaluation of middle school students began to form a coherent whole. Therefore, we need to think about these problems and next actions.

### ***The problems and deficiencies existing in students' comprehensive quality evaluation***

We must face the fact that there are problems in the implementation of students' comprehensive quality evaluation. Many experts and scholars have expressed their views on these problems.

In short, the main problems of comprehensive quality evaluation are: the scientific nature of the evaluation standards/indicators needs to be improved, the data collection dimensions are not comprehensive enough, the lack of process data of student learning activities, the fairness issues among high schools of different levels and locations such as urban and suburban/rural areas, the reliability of the evaluation results, the social integrity system is not sound enough, etc.

Many research results show that colleges and universities have failed to make full use of the comprehensive quality evaluation results of high school students during the enrollment process. The causes leading to this problem are various: the time for college enrollment (especially unified fall enrollment) is insufficient (Binglin & Xinfeng, 2019); colleges and universities are worried about the authenticity of students' comprehensive quality evaluation information, and the contents of students' comprehensive quality evaluation report cannot meet their reference requirements (Xiuhua et al., 2017). There are also reasons for insufficient college enrollment ability: college enrollment operators cannot evaluate students' comprehensive quality evaluation files, and the review expert teams cannot meet the "efficiency" requirements of enrollment (Yaqiao et al., 2019).

### ***Recommended Actions***

#### **Recommendation 1: Strengthening the feedback of comprehensive quality evaluation, providing more formative feedback to guide student overall development.**

The current implementation principle of comprehensive quality evaluation is "the one to evaluate is the one to use". Therefore, in general, high schools are only responsible for recording students' comprehensive quality evaluation information. In the next step, high schools should strengthen the analysis and feedback of students' comprehensive quality evaluation information, enhance the guidance function of comprehensive quality evaluation on student development, and carry out more targeted academic and career guidance.

#### **Recommendation 2: Improving normative mode of comprehensive quality evaluation with focus on process of student learning and development and making student's personal talent standing out.**

At present, the information collection of students' comprehensive quality evaluation is still once per semester, which cannot be entered normally. The follow-up development direction of students' comprehensive quality evaluation should be normalized recording and evaluation, which can disperse the high stake of this work and reduce the possibility of information fraud. In view of the fact that college enrollment values students' usual course performance, it is recommended that more high school give credits and grade points to reflect students' common course learning (Jiuming et al., 2019).

#### **Recommendation 3: Realizing the better combination of students' social practice activities and research-based learning.**

Currently, social practice activities and research-based learning are two different courses in high schools, which mainly deliver research-based courses to promote students' research-based learning. However, we can see that social practice activities can provide students with research ideas, research questions, and research sites to conduct surveys and interviews. The "service-learning" model in the United States provides a good reference, in which students use professional knowledge to provide services to the community and so on, and achieve two goals with one stone. Therefore, combining these two parts can not only improve the efficiency of school course teaching, but also continuously improve students' research spirit and ability to solve practical problems.

#### **Recommendation 4: Authorizing more autonomy to colleges and universities in selecting and recruiting students collaboratively work with high schools.**

Yuan Zhenguo (2017) thought that the improvement of college enrollment selection ability is key to deepen the college enrollment system, in which colleges and universities should enhance

not only the ability to identify and select students, but also the ability to manage enrollment. Colleges and universities need to reform their internal admissions system and mechanism to suit their own mission and development orientation, expand the overall planning, coordination, and management functions of the admission department, strengthen the construction of Admission Committee, and finally gradually realize the close integration between enrollment and talent development, major structure adjustment, teaching reform, and even their own orientation of mission and development. In addition, college enrollment must be linked to high schools. When formulating the method of referring to the comprehensive quality evaluation information, colleges and universities should fully listen to the opinions of high schools' principals and teachers, and at the same time emphasize the quality and competence which their talent development focuses on (Binglin & Xinfeng, 2019) to realize the unity of the general direction of talent development on both sides.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by authors.

## Notes on contributors

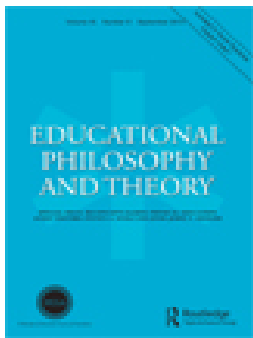
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## Efforts to break the “score determinism” and transfer college enrolment from recruiting “scores” to “people”: The exploration and practice of comprehensive quality evaluation of general high school students in Shanghai

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