

The Construction of "Experiential Learning Circle" Teaching Mode in Innovative Practice Courses: Cultivation of Core Competencies for Psychology Teacher Trainees

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Abstract: With the rapid development of society, mental health is a common concern, and the cultivation of innovative practice ability of psychological teacher trainees becomes particularly important. However, according to the preliminary return visit, the graduates cultivated by the traditional teaching mode need help in two-way interaction with the employment organizations. In this paper, we analyze the teaching quality of the innovative practice classroom through the Questionnaire of Applied Course Experience to further clarify the specific problems of the creative practice course for psychology teacher trainees based on exploring the teaching practice of the mental health education course. Through exploring mental health education courses, we've created an "experiential learning circle" teaching model. Under the guidance of "student-centered, output-oriented, and continuous improvement" principles, this model stimulates students' innovation and practice. By revamping our teaching concept, method, and evaluation, we've fostered teaching reform and talent cultivation for teacher education. Moreover, we've provided technical paths and case studies to promote innovative practice classrooms.

Teacher training colleges and universities should train qualified graduates with professional competence and actively devote themselves to the work of mental health education. However, from the teaching practice and graduates' return visits, we can find that there is a certain degree of two-way interaction difficulties between graduates and employment units, graduates are relatively weak in innovation and practice, and the process of linking theory to practice is rather tricky after entering the workplace. Graduates who go to the workplace still take extended learning and growing up, and the "student-centered and output-oriented" teaching concept has not been implemented.

This paper addresses the challenges in innovative practice classrooms, analyzes their causes, and outlines the process and effectiveness of creating such classrooms. It offers path exploration and

case studies to aid in developing efficient, innovative classrooms in higher education institutions.

1. Pain Point Problems in the Construction of Innovative Practice Classrooms

Efficient classroom refers to a school where the efficiency or effectiveness of education and teaching can have a reasonably high goal to achieve. Specifically, it relates to a classroom where, based on an effective classroom, the efficiency of completing the teaching task and attaining the purpose of teaching is higher, the effect is better, and a higher impact of education and teaching, social benefits are achieved.^[1]

To evaluate if the new applied course meets efficient classroom standards, the instructor uses Gu Zhixin's "Applied Course Experience Questionnaire" ^[2]for teaching quality analysis, considering students' specific course schedules. The 2020 Psychology students serve as the experimental group for the "Mental Health Theme Activity Design" course reform, while the 2021 Psychology students serve as the control group, not taking this course. Pre-test and post-test data from both groups are collected before and after the course respectively.

Through the descriptive statistics of the pre-test data to see the specific experience scores of the experimental group and the control group on 31 questions and eight dimensions, the results were obtained is as shown in Figure 1.

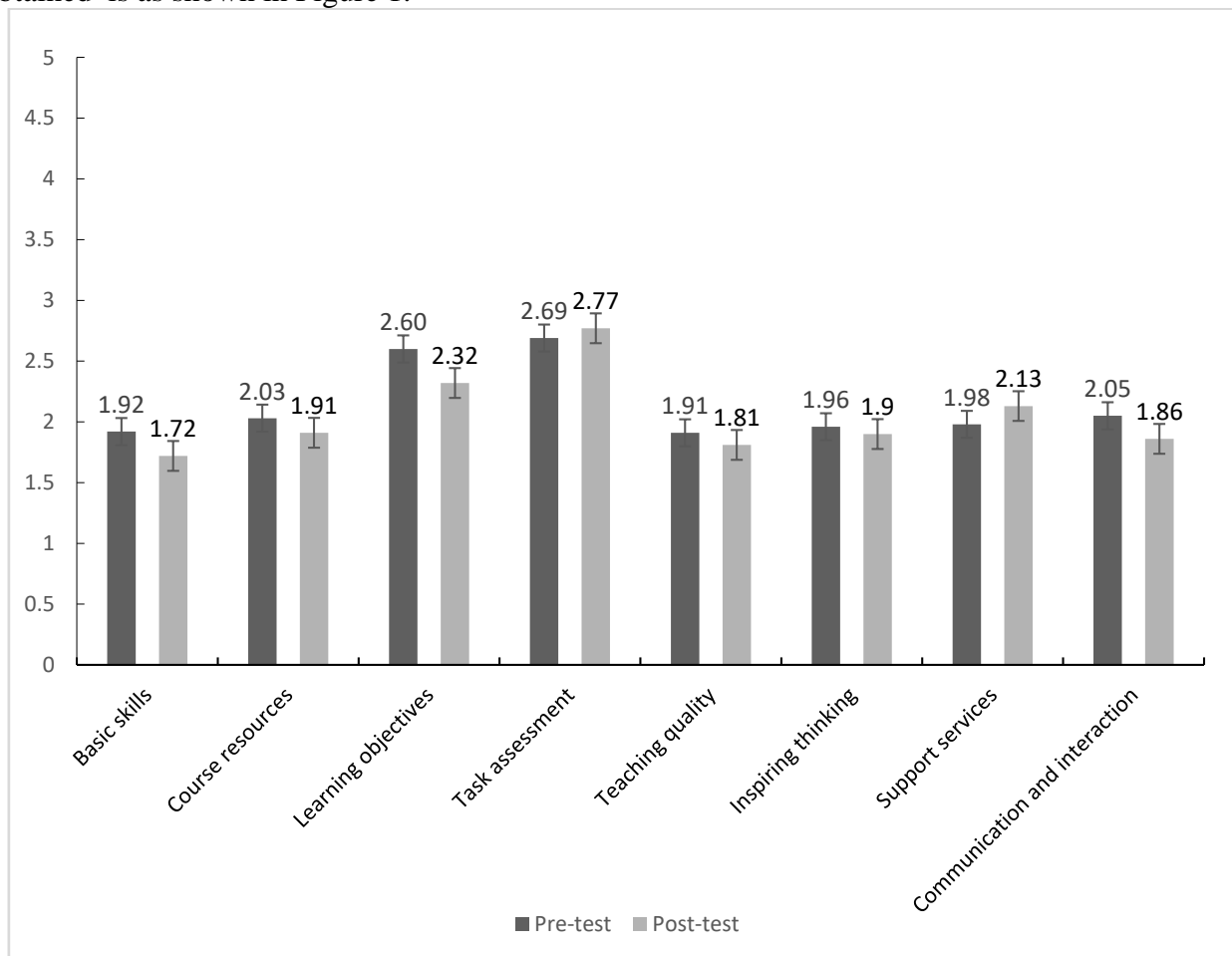


Figure 1: Dimensional Rating Chart for Experiential Learning Courses

From the evaluation results of the pre-test data of the experimental group and the control group, there is no significant difference between the ratings of the two groups of students in the eight

dimensions; in the previously applied courses, the experimental group and the control group were relatively more agreeable to the two aspects of "Learning Objectives" and "Assessment of Tasks." In contrast, the experimental and control groups performed poorly in the six elements of "Basic Skills" and "Course Resources." The experimental group and the control group were relatively more favorable to "learning objectives" and "task assessment" and performed poorly in six aspects, including "basic skills" and "course resources." The results show that the learning experience of applied courses could be better in the key influencing factors, and the advantages of the systems still need to be fully developed.

The reasons for the possible occurrence of the above problems are explored below by examining the teaching of the original curriculum against the requirements of the program:

1.1 The concept of teaching activities needs to be more advanced.

The curriculum focuses on "teacher-centered," although it is an application-based curriculum, it still emphasizes theoretical output and neglects the feelings and experiences of students as independent individuals.

1.2 Students need to be sufficiently motivated to practice innovation.

The program emphasizes the basic competence of teachers in teaching and neglects to set the stage for students, and the development of students' competence needs to be more comprehensive.

It is the lack of core competence training for students to become qualified mental health teachers; the curriculum relies too much on summative assessment, and the lack of monitoring of students' independent learning and group work in the actual operation of the program makes it easy for the "diffusion of responsibility" effect and the "free-rider" effect to occur. The lack of monitoring of students' independent learning and group work in actual operation is prone to the "diffusion of responsibility" and the "free-rider" effects, which will bring about a lack of strength in classroom effectiveness.

To sum up, "Mental Health Theme Activity Design," as an innovative, practical course, focuses on cultivating students' spirit of inquiry and innovation ability and tries to move from teacher-led to "interactive dialogue learning." However, these models are also based on students' self-knowledge construction based on their existing knowledge. They are still based on the traditional positive direction of serving the teaching content, which is a discipline- and content-oriented teaching mode, without focusing teaching on the output of students' ability or linking these process outputs to students' course assessment. Based on the above thinking, in the process of building an efficient and innovative classroom, we introduce the "experiential learning circle" model^[3], which allows students to transform from bystanders to experiencers, participants, designers, and evaluators. This change in identity promotes classroom engagement, enhances the efficiency of teaching and learning, and helps to improve the professional competence of psychology graduates.

2. Construction of a curriculum model based on "experiential learning"

Under the guidance of the "student-centered, output-oriented and continuous improvement" concept, the course has constructed an "experiential learning circle" teaching model. With the help of in-depth integration with information technology, it has built an online and offline blended teaching mode, aiming at establishing an all-rounded curriculum system and enhancing students' core competence in serving the social psychological system. The aim is to cultivate students' mental health innovation and practice ability and improve their core competence in serving the social psychological system.

2.1 Innovative teaching concepts to promote the spiralling of students' abilities

We are innovating the traditional concept of "teacher-centered" into experiential learning based on the student body. In the teaching concept, the "experiential learning circle" teaching model is introduced through the four teaching components of experience - observation, reflection - systematization, theorization - action. Through the four teaching components^[4], we cultivate students' "knowledge, ability and quality," organize and carry out teaching around students' final "results," and reverse design the teaching process to master clear and comprehensive abilities. The teaching process is designed in a reverse direction with the explicit goal of getting complete competence, i.e., through teaching, we can effectively improve the professional quality of mental health education and students' ability in mental health education.

Compared with the traditional "lecture" mode of teaching, the conventional way of learning is like learning to swim on the shore, and experiential learning is like swimming in the water. In traditional education, through teachers and books to explain the correct posture, the learner has more difficulty learning to swim without personal experience in the water, while the experiential learning circle lets the students personally in the water, in the fumbling and practice in the continuous summary; the main body of learning is the students themselves, genuinely student-centered. Based on task-driven experiential learning circle mode, the "Mental Health Education Theme Activity Design" course module cuts into four in-class practice units. Through the wave-like advancement of the experiential learning circle (figure 2), it stimulates the students' desire for knowledge and gradually forms a virtuous cycle of mental activities, cycling from the primary task to the higher-order study, cycling from the in-class process to the out-of-class process, and cultivating students' ability to find out the problems and solve the issues, problem-solving ability and promote the development of students' practical knowledge.

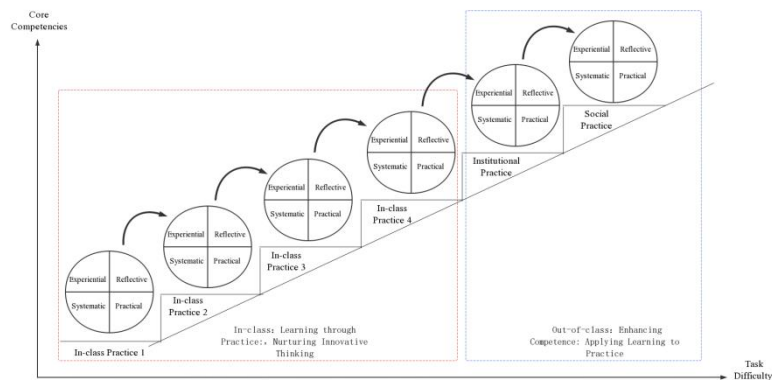


Figure 2: Practical Modelling of Experiential Learning Circles in the Curriculum

2.2 Innovative teaching methods, blended Learning Motivates Student Engagement

The traditional mode of "teachers talk, and students listen" is innovated into a literacy-based training focusing on comprehensive abilities. ^[5]The course "Mental Health Theme Activity Design" has undergone innovative, practical reform. Based on students' most pressing issues and professional development goals, we designed four practical activities: selection and implementation of activities, thematic activity string design, activity adaptation and creation, and large-scale thematic activity design. These activities were executed using a blended teaching method with detailed teaching and learning designs.

Teachers build online learning carriers for courses on online platforms such as "Classroom Pie" and "Rain Classroom," make full use of ready-made online resources such as catechisms, teaching

videos, teaching courseware, web links, and others, and guide students to construct self-realized learning communities under the task-driven approach. We thoroughly use group cooperation, simulation teaching, brainstorming, extracurricular practice, and other means to study and explore the creation of innovative practice opportunities for students. Based on the law of the development of students' practical ability, we take students' experience and thinking as the starting point of teaching and use group tasks as the driving force so that students can have clear goals, generate motivation for learning, and devote themselves to the process of learning and practice. Through the construction of the teaching mode and the innovation of the teaching method, the students' subjectivity and participation are increased, and the innovative practical ability is improved. The specific process is as shown in Figure 3.

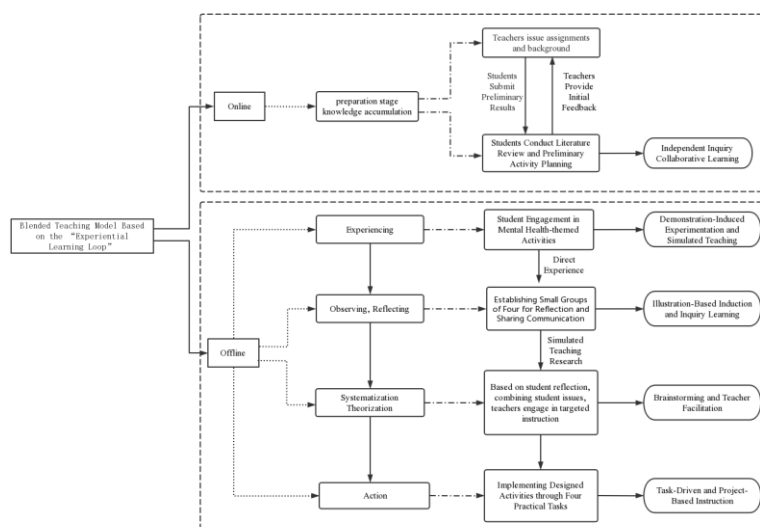


Figure 3: Flowchart of the curriculum model

2.2.1 Adequate preparation before class to enhance the key knowledge reserve.

Online, teachers release the course tasks and the main content of the course, and students develop a preliminary design plan through independent inquiry and cooperative learning; they do an excellent job of internalizing the reserves of critical knowledge by consulting information and mastering theories.

2.2.2 Focus on inspiration during the lesson to promote the transformation of generative knowledge.

Offline, the teacher leads or guides students to simulate teaching and other students' experience, enhancing the individual direct experience and perceptual understanding; this is the initial learning to teach. Through experience, observation, and reflection, students raise questions that influence teaching and research. Teachers provide targeted instruction based on these reflections. Through brainstorming, teachers summarize and systematically sort out the issues raised. Through task-driven, project-based teaching, students are guided to deepen their understanding and apply it in practice.

2.2.3 Summarising and reflecting after the lesson to consolidate the core competency development.

A new round of experience builds on the actions of the current band, and so on. The "experiential

learning circle" will cycle the difficulty of the tasks from lower to higher levels and cycle the training content from inside to outside the classroom to continuously improve the students' core competence as prospective mental health teachers.

2.3 Assessment and evaluation innovation enhance the original power of practical innovation

The "single-oriented teaching evaluation" assessment form has been innovated into a diversified assessment and evaluation mode with student participation. The course actively adopts the evaluation mode of open-ended questions, structured evaluation, the combination of process evaluation and summative evaluation,^[7] and competence evaluation as the dominant evaluation mode, which not only attaches importance to the usual performance, theoretical knowledge learning and application but also emphasizes the performance of students' innovative and practical abilities, and carries out a comprehensive assessment and scoring.

The Mental Health Thematic Activity Design Programme ensures that students achieve the intended learning objectives through a 4-stage, 5-level assessment process, namely: demonstration of activity selection and implementation (Level 1 Beginning Level Assessment), demonstration of thematic activity string design (Level 2 Intermediate Level Assessment), thematic activity adaptation and creation (Level 3 Higher Level Assessment), design of large-scale thematic activities (Level 4 Final Level Assessment), and classroom reflection and evaluation (Level 5 Milestone Level Assessment). End-of-term assessment results), classroom reflection, and evaluation (Level 5 milestone assessment results). The course assessment takes the form of group self-assessment, group mutual assessment, and teacher grading, and the final grades are proportionally assessed, fully reflecting the process evaluation of the course and avoiding the "free-rider" effect and dispersal of responsibilities.

3. Effectiveness of the classroom model based on "experiential learning" and its promotion value

3.1 Effectiveness of curriculum development

Under the guidance of the teaching philosophy of "student-centered, output-oriented and continuous improvement," solved four problems through the construction of the "experiential learning circle" teaching model and blended teaching.

3.1.1 What Learning Outcomes Are Expected Of Students?

Presenting the appropriate program and content through theme selection and leading, theme activity string design, activity creation and adaptation, and large-scale theme activity design to form the final learning outcomes. The outcomes of the first session are, in turn, the starting point for the next session, and the outputs of the learning outcomes are entirely in line with the outcome-orientated principle, considering future students' career development pathways.

3.1.2 Why is it important for students to achieve these learning outcomes?

Under the guidance of "output orientation," students should not only improve their theoretical skills but also their practical abilities and value choices are essential parts of the program, which should do an excellent job of bridging the gap between theory and practice as an innovative and practical course, this program requires students to achieve the purpose of independent design, interactive evaluation, and creative enhancement.

3.1.3 How can we effectively help students achieve these learning outcomes?

They were giving full play to the concept of "student-centredness" through the design of teachers' teaching methods and students' learning methods, returning the classroom to the students, letting the students be the masters of the school through group cooperation, reporting, and displaying, and evaluating the process, and others, providing students with the ability to adapt to the future development and to return to the literacy orientation practically.

3.1.4 How to Know That Students Are Achieving These Outcomes

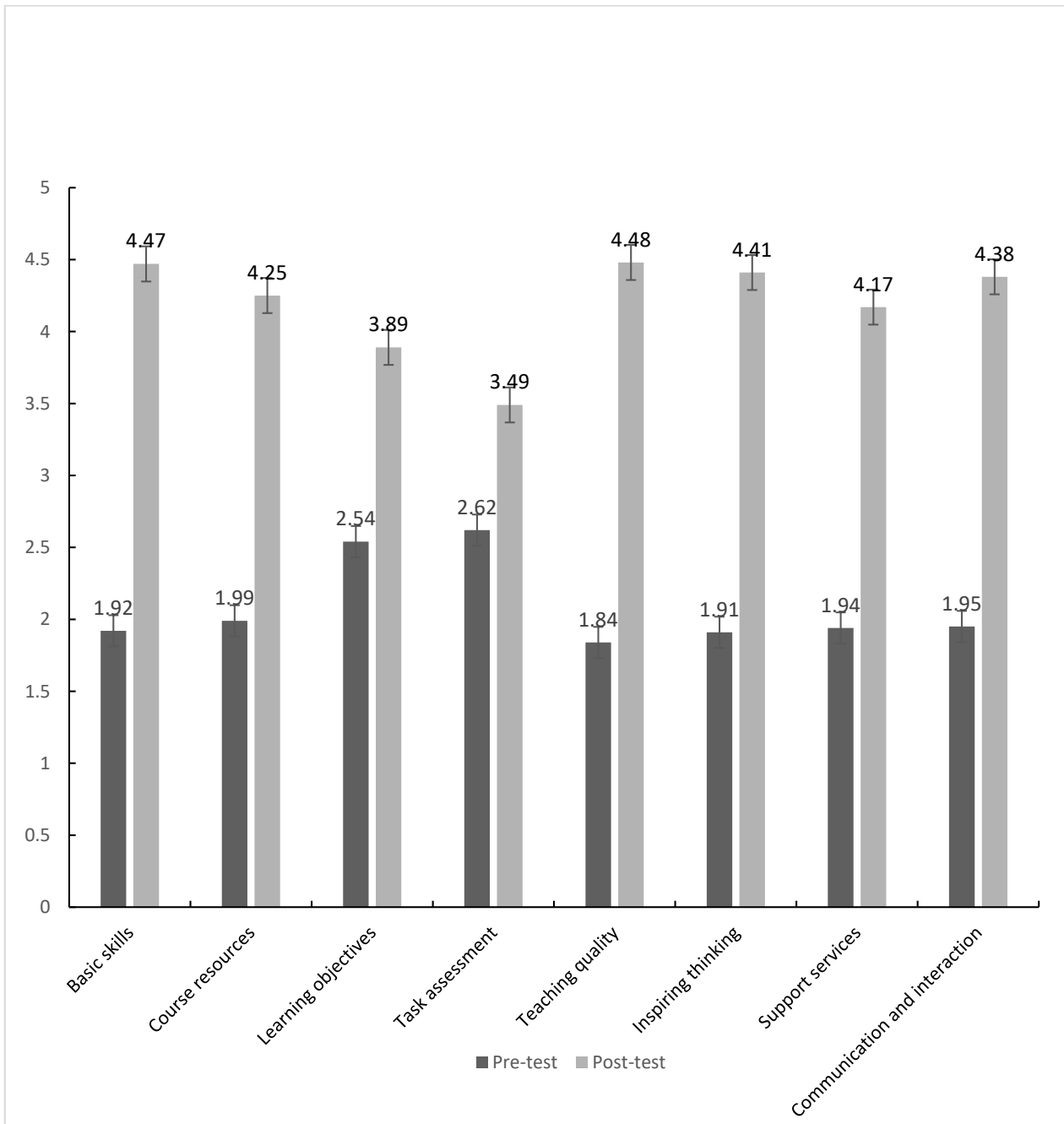


Figure 4: Pre- and Post-Assessment Score Chart for Applied Learning

The results of extensive student practice are closer to the actual student learning experience

through reporting and simulation of teaching and research, both content and skills, from the final results of the inverse of the student milestones, with the results of the learning process to test.

Based on teaching innovation, the results of the post-test on the applied course experience for the 2020 undergraduate psychology students are shown in Figure 4.

From the results of the post-test evaluation, students' experiences in the applied courses were significantly improved in eight aspects, including basic skills ($t=-21.821, p=0.000$), course resources ($t=-16.178, p=0.000$), teaching quality ($t=-22.012, p=0.000$), inspiring thinking ($t=-18.538, p=0.000$), support services ($t=-13.610, p=0.000$), and communication and interaction ($t=-18.954, p=0.000$) in six post-test areas. 0.000), support services ($t=-13.610, p=0.000$), and communication and interaction ($t=-18.954, p=0.000$). The post-test scores of these six aspects are significantly higher than the pre-test scores, which proves that the course has been generally recognized in these six dimensions; there is still room for further enhancement in the aspects of learning objectives and task assessment, but these two aspects have been recognized by the students as well.

3.2 Replicable experiences in curriculum development

3.2.1 Innovations in teaching concepts can be replicated: teaching by learning

The construction of the Mental Health Theme Activity Design course establishes a student-centered approach, adheres to the principle of student subjectivity, and fully respects the student's subjective position. Through classroom teaching, students can not only experience the process of activities as the main body and help college students learn to deal with psychological disturbances but also carefully design according to the physical and mental characteristics and developmental rules of students, cultivate good professional practice ability of college students, to effectively improve the effectiveness of the course.

Through the positive guidance of the course, the psychology teacher trainees can give full play to their inner potential for self-improvement and realize the perfection of their qualities; they pay attention to the positive aspects of human nature, disseminate positive energy, and learn to look at the problems and positively face the life so that they can go to the workplace and be the guides of the students.

3.2.2 Innovations in teaching methods that can be replicated: learning by doing

By blending online and offline teaching, utilizing group cooperative learning, demonstration courses, and simulation teaching, we ensure maximum student participation throughout the system. Even in demonstration courses, we design practice tasks with varying difficulty levels, from low to high, based on the law of students' practical ability development.

In addition, students' practical assignments, as an essential part of the teaching and learning content, are subject to targeted tutorials, feedback, and summaries by the teacher; students are guided to critique their practical assignments and reflective discussions within and outside the group.

3.2.3 Appraisal and evaluation innovations that can be replicated: promoting by evaluation

The assessment method of the program focuses on diversified and process evaluation to ensure that all students will have the knowledge and competence needed in the future at the end of the program. Still, they are optional to achieve them simultaneously and in the same way, based on which the assessment focuses on the student's competence indicators. ^[6]The marking of the practical part of the Mental Health Thematic Activity Design Course is based on a model of self-assessment, self-assessment, and teacher's comments, which avoids "diffusion of responsibility" and

"free-riding" and promotes in-depth learning by the students.

4. Conclusions

Through the teaching model of the "Experiential Learning Circle," we will carry out teaching innovation and practice, produce a batch of replicable results, improve students' professionalism and core competence, and further apply the effects of curriculum innovation in the process of educational apprenticeships, educational internships, and educational practices, to lay a foundation for cultivating qualified teachers of mental health education. To serve the construction of the national mental health system, we will enable applied talents in psychology with innovative and practical abilities.

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