

Problems and Improvement Measures in Practical Teaching of Preschool Education Major in Applied Undergraduate Universities

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Abstract: With the continuous development of society and the country, educational-related departments and families are paying more attention to students' preschool education, leading various universities to continuously strive to improve the practical teaching level of preschool education majors. During the process, it was found that the current teaching mode is disconnected from the future talent demand, there are issues with the quality and efficiency of teacher training, professional textbooks, and student cognition. Through exploring these issues, the following improvement directions have been summarized. Schools can implement mixed teaching mode in practical teaching, effectively develop and utilize practical training resources inside and outside the school, improve the quality of teaching materials, strictly select and compile standards, and develop and improve innovative employment courses. If the series of improvements can be achieved, it will promote a practical teaching model that deeply integrates theory and practice.

1. Introduction

Since 2020, application-oriented undergraduate universities have experienced a series of new developments in practical teaching, including the transformation of practical teaching concepts, the updating of content, the innovation of methods, the improvement of systems, and the establishment of evaluation systems. With the increasing emphasis on preschool education by most parents, the market demand for preschool education is also increasing. Many universities have also begun to make efforts in the construction of preschool education majors, continuously innovating and improving teaching and research, talent cultivation model, and gradually moving towards systematization, specialization, and scientification^[1]. These developments aim to adapt to the needs of society and technology better, improve the quality and effectiveness of practical teaching, and cultivate high-quality talents more in the field of preschool education. In order to meet the requirements of the times for talent cultivation, Hengxing University has achieved considerable results in the comprehensive implementation of "Industry-school connection, Production-teaching Integration, Work-study alternation, and On-the-job training" model. Teachers and students have achieved professional growth through practical teaching. However, to achieve the goal of deep integration of production and teaching, it is necessary to overcome problems continuously, that arise in the process of practice. In order to optimize the integration mode of production and teaching, this project aims to deepen the

integration of production and teaching, and based on the practical teaching experience of our school, explores the problems in the implementation process of practical teaching in preschool education and future improvement directions. After in-depth analysis of practical teaching in our school, and based on the research of future preschool education both domestically and internationally, the following two important issues have been summarized.

2. Problems in Practical Teaching of Preschool Education Majors

2.1 The current teaching model is out of touch with the needs of future preschool education

Through the analysis of the teaching models for multiple schools' preschool education majors, there is a significant gap between traditional theoretical teaching and the actual operational needs of preschool education institutions. The reason for this phenomenon is that the rhythm of theoretical teaching is inconsistent with practical teaching, and the theoretical courses in universities have not made corresponding innovations for future preschool education. During their internships in kindergartens or preschool education institutions, students constantly encounter new problems, but it is difficult to find timely solutions to these problems in university courses. The main reason is that university teachers lack sufficient knowledge of new issues, and the teaching model implemented by universities is unable to meet the challenges posed by these new issues.

2.2. The efficiency and quality improvement of teacher education

Another dilemma in the cultivation of preschool education teachers is the gap between their professional level and the expectations of enterprises and even society. It is reflected in two aspects. On the one hand, preschool education students cannot smoothly and efficiently transform into the first-line teachers that the industry urgently needs. More specifically, due to their insufficient abilities or unwillingness to enter the early childhood education industry, the low conversion rate of education to career in preschool education students indicates the inefficiency of teacher training investment. On the other hand, preschool education students generally have weak basic skills, lack the ability to integrate different disciplines and skills, and have not acquired professional expertise in multiple fields.

2.3 Problems in professional course textbooks

In practical teaching of preschool education, there are also some problems with professional course materials. Firstly, the content of the textbooks is too theoretical, lacking practicality and applicability. Some textbooks do not fully take into account the characteristics of preschool education majors, and the content is too focused on theory, lacking examples and case studies, which makes it difficult to understand and apply their knowledge. Secondly, the content of textbooks is slowly updated, divorced from actual educational needs. Due to the continuous update of educational concepts and teaching methods, the teaching content of preschool education majors also needs to be continuously updated. However, the content of some textbooks is too outdated, without timely updates, making it difficult for students to grasp the latest educational concepts and methods. Thirdly, the textbook lacks hierarchy and pertinence. Some textbooks do not take into account the needs of different levels and types of students, with a single or overly complex content lacking relevance and gradation. It makes teacher difficult to teach according to the actual situation of students in teaching, affecting teaching effectiveness. Fourthly, the quality of textbooks varies greatly. Due to the low threshold for the writing and publishing of preschool education professional textbooks, some low-quality and error-prone textbooks flood the market. These textbooks will not only affect students' learning effects, but

also mislead students and educational practice.

2.4 Cognitive issues for students

In the practical teaching process of preschool education, students do not pay attention to it, do not realise the importance of practical teaching, only as a supplement to theoretical teaching, rather than a necessary teaching link. Students lack understanding of the actual situation of children, and cannot carry out effective teaching according to the needs and characteristics of children. In the process of theory application, students cannot effectively apply the knowledge to practical teaching due to the lack of practical ability.

3. Improvement of Teaching Problems in Practical Courses for Preschool Education Majors

From the experience of practical teaching promoted by our institute, as Handelsman & Smith pointed out, conducting research based on students' observations, inputs, and understandings during the internship process can provide another aspect of analysis for relevant theoretical and practical needs^[2]. In the process of promoting practical teaching, the content of most students' observation logs gradually changes from an empty, streamlined record to a targeted observation, with significant improvement in quality, after being guided by instructors and undergoing multiple internship experiences. The process of students' practice in their positions has gradually shifted from pure adaptation and integration to meaningful learning. However, the substantiality of promoting the integration of industry and education under this teaching model is still limited. In response to this situation, the following solutions are proposed in this study.

3.1 Promote the mixed teaching mode of Flipped Classroom + Microlecture + Simulation Training Room

Teachers can encourage students to learn how to solve new problems in new ways in both theoretical and practical courses, and train students to become "problem solvers." Flipped classroom inverts traditional classrooms, enabling students to preview videos prepared by teachers before or outside of class to self-study basic knowledge. In the classroom, students are encouraged to participate in interactive or collaborative exploration with their own problems, and work together with teachers to find out solutions. Research by many scholars at home and abroad has shown that flipped classroom is a teaching method that can greatly promote students' creativity, improving fluency, flexibility, and originality. However, there are also some problems that cannot be ignored in flipped classroom, especially limited student preparation for this teaching method. Therefore, students must be prepared for flipped classroom. To compensate for students' learning burden and the problems of flipped classroom, providing meaningful "micro-lecture" is one of the key factors. In addition, to allow students to verify the problem-solving methods learned in flipped classroom in practical operations, simulation training rooms are needed for immersive practical training.

3.2 Utilizing our school's large-scale simulation training room——Children's Growth Center

Schools can use the "Child Growth Center" platform to promote integration within schools, look to the future, and break down barriers between disciplines and even professional areas. Ntuli has emphasized in many literature that from the perspective of "future preschool teachers", it has been found that these teachers who are about to become the main force of early childhood education have a significant impact on the understanding, cognition, teaching methods, and effectiveness evaluation of technology related theories in promoting teaching effectiveness^[3]. Therefore, it is necessary to

adjust curriculum plans and teaching models to improve the efficiency of preschool education teacher training. This approach allows students to learn by doing and integrate in the process, ultimately cultivating creative and versatile preschool education talents with expertise in multiple areas.

3.3 Improve the quality of textbook compilation and strictly selection criteria

In order to solve the problems that arise in professional course textbooks, it is recommended to pay attention to the following points when publishing and selecting preschool education textbooks. Firstly, during the process of textbooks writing, the emphasis should be on practicality and applicability. More examples and case studies should be included to help students better understand and apply the knowledge they have learned. At the same time, textbooks should be in touch with real educational needs so that students can apply the knowledge they have learned to real educational practice. Secondly, textbooks should be updated in a timely manner to keep up with the updates in educational concepts and teaching methods, so that students can master the latest concepts and methods. Therefore, textbook writers should pay attention to the latest research and practices in the field of education, maintaining sensitivity to educational changes.^[4] Thirdly, the hierarchy and pertinence of textbooks should be enhanced. During the process of writing textbooks, the needs of different levels and different types of students should be taken into account. Textbooks should be written based on the actual situation of students, increasing their pertinence and level. For example, textbooks can be divided into different levels according to students' admission level or learning progress to meet the different learning needs of students. Fourthly, to improve the quality of textbooks, it is necessary to establish strict thresholds for writing and publishing, strengthen the review and evaluation of textbooks. At the same time, textbook writers should pay attention to combining academic and popularity. The scientific and rigorism of textbooks must be guaranteed while also making them easy to understand and accept.

3.4 Develop and improve innovative job-oriented courses

By developing and refining innovative job-oriented courses that deeply connect with on-the-job internships, we can guide students to complete coursework during the internship process. Course design should be attentive to enabling students to better understand and apply the knowledge they have learned. Through practical application, students can gain a deeper understanding of professional knowledge, cultivate practical skills, and better adapt to the work environment in the future.^[5] The school can allow students to be exposed to real work scenarios during the learning process, to understand the practical operations and needs within the industry, and to develop practical skills and problem-solving abilities. By guiding students to participate in practical activities and encouraging them to independently explore and experiment, we can stimulate their innovation awareness and creativity. Encouraging students to understand the requirements of professional ethics and norms, we can cultivate their professional responsibility and teamwork spirit. The school should pay attention to the comprehensive development of students and improve the comprehensive quality and adaptability of students through interdisciplinary practice and communication.

4. Conclusion

Based on the problems and considerations in the practical teaching process of our school, the improvement methods proposed in this study aim to establish a foothold in future preschool education and solve new problems in new ways. On the one hand, students can subjectively connect theoretical knowledge points with practice by completing the task or question assigned by the teacher. When they encounter problems in practice, they can find corresponding knowledge to solve the problem.

On the other hand, in order to grasp the "new problems" currently existing in the preschool education industry, teachers not only need to continuously improve themselves, but also pay more attention to students' practical life. At this point, students are not only receivers of knowledge, but also "front-line observers" of teacher education, and even drivers of teaching innovation in universities. These efforts will promote the substantial and deep integration of theory and practice, teaching and research.

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