

The Real Problems and Path Analysis of Teacher Excellence Training

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Abstract: In order to continuously promote the reform of teacher education, improve the quality and level of teacher training, and cultivate excellent teachers to achieve "better education", the Ministry of Education has launched the "Excellent Teacher Training Program". However, in the process of training excellent teachers, we are facing the difficulties of ambiguous objectives of teacher training, low quality of teacher training students in general, difficulties in learning to apply, and the disconnection between theory and practice. Therefore, we should improve the level of teacher excellence training by reasonably positioning the objectives of teacher excellence training, optimizing the source of teacher trainees and dynamic evaluation, and relying on curriculum optimization, which can improve the quality of teacher excellence.

1. Introduction

Teachers are the foundation of education, the basis of education, and the source of strong education. Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and other developed countries have paid close attention to teacher excellence training, and international education also attaches great importance to the comprehensive reform of teacher excellence training to improve the quality of education^[1]. The need for teacher excellence is not merely a stopgap measure for the development of education, but a necessity for the historical development of education, the objective status quo of teacher training, and the realization of the goal of training innovative talents.

2. The Meaning of Excellent Teachers

What is teacher excellence? Many people prefer to use general or descriptive language to understand that teacher excellence is synonymous with "excellent teachers"^[2], and that teachers of excellence should have a deep knowledge base, subject matter expertise, and a love of teaching and learning. When they make such generalizations or descriptions, they do not have a thorough understanding of what it means to be a teacher of excellence, but only at the level of experience or comprehension. The first criterion for teacher excellence, according to scholars, should be determined by the level of a teacher's ability to teach, that is, a teacher who can play a leading role in the subject he or she is teaching. The second criterion is that teachers should be identified in terms of their level of professional development, i.e., those who are at the highest level. There is also a third criterion, which considers a teacher of excellence to be a teacher who pursues excellence. Different subjects have different understandings and perceptions of teacher excellence, and as times change, society progresses, and education develops, the concept of teacher excellence is constantly updated and changed, and there is no once-and-for-all way to become a teacher of excellence^[3].

3. The Real-life Dilemma of Teacher Excellence Training

How to properly position the teacher excellence training program. First of all, it is an inevitable question to clarify what is teacher excellence. Although the cultivation of teacher excellence in primary and secondary schools in China has been supported by the government and has become a national policy. For example, the national education administration promulgated professional standards for primary and secondary school teachers in 2012, but these standards are only qualifying

standards, not criteria for determining teacher excellence. There is no definitive answer as to which is an exceptional teacher. Many universities are confused, even perplexed, about training teachers of excellence. Due to the uncertainty of educational policies, there are still some problems in the training of teachers of excellence.

3.1. Vague Objectives of Teacher Excellence Training

The key to training excellent teachers lies in the formulation of standards, but currently there are no unified evaluation standards for excellent teachers, which has led to the problems of training "excellent teachers".

First, the definition of "teacher excellence" is not clear at the pre-service stage, and the evaluation criteria are not clear enough, so that colleges and universities can only set their own evaluation criteria and training goals to cultivate teachers of excellence. In terms of training targets, some teacher training institutions implement "teacher excellence training programs" for all teacher training majors. Although it is ideal to train all teacher-training students to the standards of teacher excellence, in practice it is not possible to do so. Trying to train all teacher-training students to become teachers of excellence not only defies the original design of the teacher excellence policy, but also defies common sense.

Second, the homogeneity of pre-service "teacher excellence" training norms is prominent. Although many teacher education institutions differ in terms of regional distribution, academic origin, and level of operation, there are certain similarities in the teacher excellence training specifications developed by these institutions^[4]. On the surface, it is a homogenization of training that arises from the common characteristics of inter-school exchange and teacher excellence training; at a deeper level, it is the equivalence of teacher education institutions' standards for teacher excellence training and those for teacher excellence candidates.

3.2. Shortcomings in Source Screening and Selection

The teacher excellence program is based on the source screening and selection of exceptional teachers. Teaching is a special profession in which students' knowledge systems and values are largely influenced by the level of competence and values of teachers. Therefore, schools need to be careful in every aspect of the selection and training of teacher candidates and should be significantly differentiated from the admissions practices and criteria of other professions. For a long time, with the progress of the times teacher training opportunities have become more available and the qualifications of teacher trainees have become higher, but the selection of teacher trainees has remained unchanged, and the quality of teacher students has declined as they are evaluated only on the basis of their scores in the entrance examinations and thus ignore their teaching ability and willingness to teach.

In terms of the professional identity of teacher trainees, there are some problems in the selection of teacher trainees in China. There are some problems with the selection of teacher-training students in China. First, the teacher training program is not attractive enough to attract outstanding students. Second, the selection mechanism of teacher-training students is not sound. Data from various studies show that the primary reason why most teacher trainees choose education is not their "interest" in education, and the "willingness" and "learning goals" of teacher trainees are at The "willingness" and "learning goals" of teacher educators are at an average level^[5]. For many years, the selection model of "score first" for teacher training students in China has been adopted, and the interview mainly focuses on the knowledge test, which mostly remains formal.

3.3. Learning is Difficult to Apply and Theory is Disconnected from Practice

The understanding of the relationship between theory and practice is related to the degree, level and quality of professional development of outstanding teachers. However, the survey shows that front-line teachers pay more attention to "tools" than "ways" when facing teaching theory and practice, and it is difficult to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned to teaching practice.

3.3.1. Learning Theoretical Knowledge Deviates from Practice

In the training of excellent teachers, the teaching method is relatively single, and the classroom is dominated by teachers' traditional lectures, lacking practical activities for theoretical knowledge. Students have fewer opportunities to use theoretical knowledge in practice, so the learning effect is not obvious.

3.3.2. Practice and Theory Cannot be Combined

Front-line teachers are prone to ignore the meaning and value of theoretical knowledge, moreover, they have a blind admiration for practical knowledge with operability, lack the ability to integrate theory into teaching practice, and have no initiative to raise practical knowledge to the level of theory. After all, it is much easier to focus on practical knowledge than to improve the quality of one's theoretical thinking. But theoretical knowledge comes from practice, and theory is born with practice. This is the "two sides of the same coin"^[6].

3.3.3. The Formalism of Teacher Excellence Training is Obvious

This is contrary to the unification of theory and practice mentioned above, which puts teacher-training students in the unfavorable situation of "learning not using, using not learning".

Therefore, to test theory in practice, to use theory to guide practice, to use practice to improve theory, and to form a virtuous cycle between theory and practice, is the situation that teachers must face in their pursuit of excellence. Only in this interactive cycle can teachers improve the quality of their theoretical thinking, accumulate practical knowledge and wisdom, and stand out from ordinary teachers by surpassing their level of thinking.

4. Exploration of Paths to Improve Teacher Excellence Training

4.1. Reasonable Positioning of Teacher Excellence Training Objectives

The training goal is the stipulation and pre-determination of the kind of people to be trained in the future. It directly affects curriculum development, student evaluation, educational development, and students' future abilities and levels. Therefore, the key to cultivating teacher excellence lies in reasonably positioning the training goals together. It is not a one-day process to train teacher education students to become exceptional teachers, and different stages of growth should have different training goals.

4.1.1. Pre-service Preparation

Pre-service preparation requires students to be prepared for their future educational careers, a foundational stage in the professional growth and development of teachers. The most important thing at this stage is to develop subject competence and pedagogical ability of outstanding teachers. At the same time, a practical teaching model that integrates apprenticeship, research and internship is designed to continuously develop teacher trainees' educational and teaching abilities so that they have proficient and flexible teaching skills^[7].

4.1.2. On-the-job Growth

In-service teachers have certain teaching experience, and teachers face changing actual educational situations and problematic contexts, and they become increasingly experienced in education. Compared with the pre-service stage, what in-service teachers need more is to update their professional knowledge and educational philosophy with the changing times in order to continuously improve their existing educational experience.

4.2. Preferential Selection of Students and Dynamic Assessment

4.2.1. Preferential Selection of Students and Improvement of Student Quality

In the 1980s and 1990s, some local teacher training colleges optimized their students' goals for further education by using early and advanced admissions. In 2014, the Notice of the Reform Project

of the Excellent Teacher Training Program proposed "multiple ways to select outstanding students for teacher training, such as independent enrollment, setting up interview sessions, and conducting secondary selection after admission". For example, Beijing Normal University has adopted the participation in undergraduate independent admissions questions to strengthen the recruitment publicity and further evaluate the basic quality of students. East China Normal University has explored ways to stimulate the potential of teacher trainees to be "fit for teaching", and the interview process consists of expert interviews, podium experiences, psychological tests, and team interactions^[8].

4.2.2. Establishing a Dynamic Evaluation Mechanism

According to the training objectives, the comprehensive quality evaluation mechanism for teacher training students and the evaluation mechanism for teacher excellence training have been constructed respectively. The former requires the formation of evaluation systems such as competition in lieu of examinations, skill level examinations, teacher excellence tracking evaluation and file bag evaluation, in order to understand the quality of students in a comprehensive, systematic and realistic way, dynamically manage students in teacher excellence classes and ensure the quality of teacher excellence training, while the latter is based on self-evaluation and adopts other evaluation methods that are supplemented by evaluation^[9]. The latter adopts an evaluation method that is mainly self-evaluation and supplemented by other evaluation, which can be adopted in the form of teacher-student interaction platform of teacher excellence class, training program demonstration meeting, and stage results report meeting.

4.3. Optimizing the Curriculum to Enhance the Quality of Excellent Teachers

4.3.1. Optimize the Curriculum with a Practical Orientation

The cultivation of excellent teachers requires continuous integration of curriculum resources, creation of curriculum modules, and improvement of curriculum efficiency. From the perspective of curriculum resources, it is necessary to realize the deep integration of disciplines and teaching professions, appropriately increase the curriculum of educational disciplines, broaden the scope of specialties, add comprehensive courses, advocate the system of major remedial courses, and improve the knowledge and ability structure of teacher-training students. In terms of curriculum, the teacher training excellence curriculum includes three modules: general education courses, teacher development courses and professional education courses. The ratio of courses in different modules should be adjusted strictly according to the professional curriculum standards for teacher education. Among them, the teacher development curriculum system is crucial. From the perspective of curriculum efficiency, short-term single-subject training for teachers, skills competition for young teachers, quality undergraduate education programs, educational teaching reform and quality improvement programs need to be carried out to improve curriculum efficiency, and there are preferential policies for teachers who participate in teacher training programs for excellence^[10]. Therefore, the curriculum for training teachers of excellence should be based on a logical starting point towards practice, combining theoretical knowledge with practice.

4.3.2. Collaborative Innovation of Teacher Education and Teaching Practice sSystem

The implementation of a diversified teaching practice curriculum is the key to the cultivation of excellence in teacher teaching ability. By organically integrating the advantages of local government administration, educational research in higher education institutions, and teaching practice in primary and secondary schools, the tripartite collaboration in developing and designing teaching practice courses aims to address the weaknesses and deep-seated problems in teacher training and to achieve the integration of teacher excellence training, training, research, and service .

4.3.3. Strengthening the Enhancement of Educational Wisdom in Learning Contexts

Teachers are strengthened to reflect on and summarize their educational experiences, to generate learning through interaction with the activities they engage in, to guide them to put themselves in the

right position, to train them to establish the ability to summarize and induct ideas and thinking in the teaching process, and to reflect deeply on the causes behind their teaching practices^[11]. Teachers should learn to learn from their teaching practice, summarize the commonalities and regular solutions of different educational events, give full play to their educational resourcefulness, and enhance their educational and nurturing wisdom.

5. Conclusion

The cultivation of teacher excellence is a systematic project that not only trains in-service teachers, but also strengthens the training of teacher trainees, takes teacher trainees as the starting point of teacher education, and explores a tiered training path to enhance the professional competitiveness of teacher trainees while also promoting the professional development of in-service teachers.

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