

# Dilemma Breakthrough and Path Optimization of Educational Internships for English-Major Normal Students under the Background of Teacher Education Accreditation

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**Abstract:** The cultivation of English-major normal students is the core source of English teachers for basic education. As a key link connecting the theoretical courses of teacher education and the teaching practice of basic education, the quality of educational internships directly determines the development of normal students' teaching practical abilities. Since the Ministry of Education launched the accreditation work for the National Undergraduate Professional Teaching Quality Standards in ordinary colleges and universities, the English Major Demonstration Accreditation, with the core concepts of "student-centered, outcome-oriented, and continuous improvement", has put forward more clear standards for the goal-setting, process management, and outcome evaluation of educational internships for normal students (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2018). However, in the process of practice, the educational internships of English-major normal students in most colleges and universities have fallen into the practical dilemma of "high standards but difficult implementation"—problems such as weak internship base resources, imbalance between students' burden and ability improvement, and lack of front-line guidance are intertwined. This not only deviates from the original intention of the demonstration accreditation but also restricts the cultivation of normal students' core literacy. Based on this, this paper systematically analyzes the core dilemmas existing in the current internship link by combining practical cases of educational internships for English-major normal students in multiple colleges and universities, and proposes targeted optimization strategies from three dimensions: resource integration, process optimization, and motivation stimulation. It aims to provide a feasible path for improving the quality of educational internships for English-major normal students under the background of demonstration accreditation.

## 1. Introduction

Accreditation rules say "show us competent English teachers," but trainees still watch classes and chase forms. We unpack why and point to leaner, smarter ways to make the most of language learning. Accreditation promises quality, yet English interns leave with blank lesson logs. We diagnose the gap.

## 2. Core Dilemmas of Educational Internships for English-Major Normal Students Under the Background of English Major Demonstration Accreditation

The requirement of the English Major Demonstration Accreditation for the educational internships of normal students is essentially to ensure that the internship link can effectively support the core outcome of "normal students' teaching practical ability meeting the standards" through the closed-loop design of "goal alignment-process control-outcome verification" (Expert Committee on Normal Professional Accreditation, 2022). However, from the actual implementation situation, the educational internships of English-major normal students in most colleges and universities still have multiple contradictions. These contradictions stem from both the constraints of external resources and

the shortcomings of internal management, ultimately leading to the difficulty of achieving the goal of “improving quality and efficiency” in the internship link.

### **2.1. Weak Quality of Internship Bases, Failing to Meet the Practical Requirements of Demonstration Accreditation**

Internship bases are important carriers for normal students to contact real teaching scenarios and practice teaching concepts, and their teaching level and management model directly affect the internship effect. However, the current educational internship bases for English-major normal students in most colleges and universities generally have the problem of “insufficient quantity and uneven quality”, which cannot meet the requirements of the demonstration accreditation for “high-quality practical scenarios”. On the one hand, high-quality basic education schools (especially provincial and municipal key primary and secondary schools) have a low willingness to accept interns. These schools have a fast teaching rhythm and great pressure on further education. Teachers often lack sufficient energy to guide interns and are worried that interns’ participation in teaching will affect the normal teaching order. Therefore, interns are mostly positioned as “onlookers”, only allowed to attend classes, and not provided with practical opportunities in core teaching links such as lesson preparation, teaching, and lesson evaluation<sup>[1]-[2]</sup>. On the other hand, the schools that can accept interns are mostly ordinary primary and secondary schools in suburban or county areas. The English teaching in these schools still remains in the “traditional lecture-based” model. Teachers have single teaching methods and outdated teaching concepts—they neither practice the “literacy-oriented” teaching requirements under the new curriculum standards nor adopt modern English teaching methods such as task-based teaching and project-based learning, which is seriously disconnected from the “innovative teaching practice” concept advocated by the English Major Demonstration Accreditation<sup>[3]</sup>. When normal students intern in such bases, they not only cannot be exposed to the teaching models that meet the requirements of the demonstration accreditation but also may solidify the traditional teaching thinking, leading to the negative perception of “internship is just watching” and “no gain from internship”, which further weakens their enthusiasm for participating in internships.

What is more noteworthy is that in order to meet the formal requirement of the demonstration accreditation for “the number of internship bases”, some colleges and universities blindly sign cooperation agreements with multiple schools, but lack a dynamic evaluation and long-term management mechanism for the teaching quality of the bases. They neither clarify the guiding responsibilities of the base schools nor establish a collaborative communication mechanism between colleges and universities and the bases. As a result, the internship bases become “branded bases” and cannot provide a stable and high-quality practical platform for normal students<sup>[4]</sup>. This kind of base construction model of “emphasizing quantity over quality” makes the “scenario alignment” requirement of the demonstration accreditation for the internship link become empty talk, and also puts normal students in the dilemma of “no high-quality scenarios for practice”.

### **2.2. Excessive Burden of Standard-Alignment Materials, Falling into the Alienation Misunderstanding of “Emphasizing Form Over Ability”**

“Outcome-oriented” is one of the core concepts of the English Major Demonstration Accreditation, which requires the internship link to prove the achievement of normal students’ teaching practical abilities through specific materials. However, in actual operation, the requirements of most colleges and universities for “standard-alignment materials” have gradually become formalized, leading normal students to fall into the alienated state of “interning to fill in materials”. This not only increases the learning burden but also deviates from the core goal of ability improvement.

On the one hand, the “quantity requirement” of standard-alignment materials far exceeds the reasonable range. To meet the requirement of the demonstration accreditation for “process evaluation”, colleges usually design detailed internship manuals, requiring normal students to record the content of each class (including teaching objectives, teaching links, teaching methods, etc.), write teaching reflections every day, submit lesson plans and group discussion records every week, and submit internship summary reports and teaching practice videos after the internship. The original

intention of designing these materials is to track the internship process, but in the implementation process, they have gradually evolved into “quantity assessment”. In order to complete these “hard indicators”, normal students often spend a lot of energy on “supplementing records” and “making up the number of words” instead of focusing on observing classes and figuring out teaching methods. For example, some students only record every sentence of the teacher when attending classes, ignoring the thinking about the design logic of teaching links; some students’ teaching reflections are superficial, only repeating clichés such as “the teacher taught well” and “the students listened carefully”, and cannot analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching links in combination with the learned theories. This “material-first” orientation turns the internship link from “ability training” into “material production”, which runs counter to the concept of the demonstration accreditation of “taking the improvement of students’ abilities as the core”.

On the other hand, the “evaluation standards” of standard-alignment materials lack pertinence. The evaluation of internship materials in most colleges and universities still stays at the superficial level of “whether the format is standardized and the quantity meets the standard”, and does not establish an evaluation dimension directly linked to “teaching practical ability”. For example, the evaluation of lesson plans only focuses on “whether the links are complete” rather than “whether they conform to the students’ cognitive level and reflect literacy orientation”; the evaluation of teaching reflections only checks “whether the number of words is sufficient” rather than “whether there is theoretical support and whether improvement ideas are put forward”<sup>[5]</sup>. This evaluation method not only cannot effectively test the improvement of normal students’ abilities but also makes students form the wrong cognition that “as long as the materials are qualified, the internship is up to standard”, which further weakens their motivation to actively improve their abilities.

### **2.3. Lack of Motivation of Dual Subjects, Leading to “Two-Way Disconnection” in the Internship Link**

The effect of educational internships for normal students depends on the joint efforts of the “college-internship school-normal student” tripartite. However, there is currently a problem of “insufficient initiative of students and lack of teacher guidance” in the dual-subject motivation, leading the internship link to fall into a two-way disconnected state of “colleges cannot manage, bases do not take responsibility, and students are unwilling to learn”<sup>[6]</sup>.

From the perspective of normal students, their internal motivation to participate in internships is generally insufficient, and the core reasons are “unclear goals” and “lack of value perception”. On the one hand, most normal students’ understanding of the internship goal still stays at the level of “completing the credit requirement”, and they do not associate the internship with the “development of professional abilities for future teachers”. Before the internship, although they preview the internship content of the week as required, they only satisfy “knowing which class to attend” and will not take the initiative to consult relevant teaching theories and analyze the key and difficult points of teaching materials. During the internship, they are mostly in a state of “passive observation”, will not take the initiative to ask the guiding teachers about teaching problems, and will not try to combine the phenomena observed in the classroom with the knowledge of theoretical courses such as *English Teaching Methods* and *Curriculum and Teaching Theory* for analysis. On the other hand, some normal students find it difficult to obtain a “sense of gain from ability improvement” from the internship due to the low teaching quality of the internship base and the lack of guiding teachers. For example, in internship schools with traditional teaching models, normal students cannot see the application of innovative teaching methods and cannot experience the “joy of teaching practice”; in the absence of guidance, even if they encounter confusion, there is no one to answer, and they gradually lose interest in exploration, eventually falling into a negative state of “dealing with things perfunctorily”.

From the perspective of guiding teachers in internship schools, the lack of their guiding motivation also restricts the internship effect. Most English teachers in internship schools are faced with the practical dilemma of heavy teaching tasks and great pressure on further education. They regard guiding interns as an “additional burden” and lack the willingness to take the initiative to guide—

some teachers only briefly introduce the teaching content before the interns attend the class, and do not conduct lesson evaluation and communication after the class; some teachers allow interns to participate in lesson preparation but do not provide targeted guidance, only letting them take on auxiliary work. In addition, there is a lack of a “guidance incentive mechanism” between colleges and universities and internship schools. The workload of guiding teachers is not included in their performance evaluation, and they do not receive corresponding training or honor recognition. As a result, they lack the motivation to “actively align with the requirements of the demonstration accreditation and optimize the guidance method”, and eventually form a vicious circle of “perfunctory guidance”.

### **3. Optimization Paths of Educational Internships for English-Major Normal Students Under the Background of English Major Demonstration Accreditation**

In response to the above dilemmas, it is necessary to take the concepts of “student-centered, outcome-oriented, and continuous improvement” of the English Major Demonstration Accreditation as the core, and construct a systematic optimization path from three dimensions of “base construction, material optimization, and motivation stimulation”. While meeting the accreditation standards, it can effectively reduce the burden on students, improve the quality of internships, and achieve the two-way unification of “standard alignment” and “quality improvement”.

#### **3.1. Construct an Internship Base System of “Quality First, Collaborative Co-construction” to Solve the Dilemma of “Substandard Scenarios”**

The quality of internship bases directly determines the “alignment degree” of internship scenarios. It is necessary to break the traditional model of “emphasizing quantity over quality” and construct a high-quality base system through “precision screening, collaborative management, and resource feedback” to provide normal students with practical scenarios that meet the requirements of the demonstration accreditation.

First, establish an access and elimination mechanism for bases with “hierarchical screening+dynamic evaluation”. Colleges and universities need to clarify the core screening criteria for internship bases in combination with the requirements of the demonstration accreditation for “innovative teaching practice”: first, give priority to primary and secondary schools that practice the new curriculum standards and adopt modern English teaching methods, especially those that undertake provincial and municipal English teaching reform projects, to ensure that the teaching concept of the base is consistent with the requirements of the demonstration accreditation; second, require the base to have the condition of “special guidance”, that is, assign more than 3 English teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience and municipal or above teaching honors as fixed guiding teachers to ensure the quality of guidance; third, clarify that the base should provide “full-link practical opportunities”, allowing interns to participate in core teaching links such as attending classes, preparing lessons, teaching, and evaluating lessons, rather than just being “onlookers”. At the same time, establish an annual dynamic evaluation mechanism—through questionnaires to evaluate the teaching quality and guidance effect of the base by normal students, combined with the on-site inspection results of the supervision team of colleges and universities, conduct a “star rating” for the base. Terminate the cooperation with the base that has failed to meet the rating for two consecutive years to ensure the stability of the base quality<sup>[7]</sup>.

Second, promote the “college-base” collaborative co-construction to realize the two-way feedback of resources. To improve the willingness of base schools to cooperate, colleges and universities need to take the initiative to provide resource support for the bases and form a “mutually beneficial and win-win” cooperation model: first, regularly send English-major teachers to carry out teaching training for the base schools, covering teaching methods in line with the concept of demonstration accreditation such as task-based teaching and cross-cultural teaching, to help the base teachers update their teaching concepts and improve their teaching level, and gradually narrow the gap between the base teaching and the accreditation requirements; second, organize normal students to carry out “after-school service support” for the base schools, such as assisting in carrying out extracurricular

activities such as English corners and English drama performances, which not only provides practical opportunities for normal students but also relieves the work pressure of the base teachers; third, jointly develop an “internship teaching case database” with the base, sort out the high-quality lesson examples and teaching reflections of the base teachers into cases as preview materials for normal students’ internships, and at the same time feed back the excellent lesson plans and teaching practice videos of normal students to the base.

### **3.2. Design a Standard-Alignment Material System of “Reducing Quantity and Improving Quality, Ability-Oriented” to Solve the Dilemma of “Imbalance Between Burden and Ability”**

The core value of standard-alignment materials lies in “recording ability growth and supporting accreditation evaluation”. It is necessary to abandon the formalized requirement of “quantity first” and realize the unification of “reducing burden” and “improving quality” through “simplifying content, optimizing standards, and digital management”, so that the materials can truly serve the improvement of normal students’ abilities.

First, simplify the content of standard-alignment materials and focus on “core ability evidence”. According to the requirements of the English Major Demonstration Accreditation for the teaching practical abilities of normal students, redesign the internship material list and delete redundant content: change the “daily lecture record” to “3 key lesson records per week”, requiring normal students to focus on recording the three core dimensions of “teaching link design logic”, “student interaction mode”, and “teaching problem-solving strategy” instead of covering everything; integrate the “daily teaching reflection” into “1 in-depth reflection report per week”, requiring the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the lesson examples in combination with the *English Teaching Methods* theory and the proposal of improvement plans; cancel the “fixed word count requirement” and change it to “taking the clear presentation of ability growth as the standard”. Through “reducing quantity”, normal students can have more energy to focus on classroom observation and in-depth thinking instead of filling in materials mechanically.

Second, optimize the material evaluation standards and highlight the “ability achievement degree”. Establish a material evaluation dimension directly linked to the ability requirements of the demonstration accreditation, reducing the weight of “format standardization” from 50% to 20% and increasing the weight of “ability reflection” to 80%. For example, when evaluating lecture records, focus on examining “whether the matching degree between teaching links and ability objectives can be accurately identified” and “whether the impact of teaching methods on students’ participation can be analyzed”; when evaluating teaching reflections, focus on examining “whether theoretical knowledge is used to explain teaching phenomena” and “whether specific and operable teaching improvement suggestions are put forward”; when evaluating lesson plans, focus on examining “whether the teaching objectives conform to the students’ cognitive level” and “whether the teaching activities reflect literacy orientation”. At the same time, adopt the “dual-tutor evaluation system” (college guiding teachers+internship school guiding teachers) to score the materials from two dimensions of “theoretical application” and “practical feasibility”.

Third, implement “digital material management” to improve efficiency and convenience. Build a “digital management platform” for the internships of English-major normal students, convert paper materials into electronic materials, and realize “online submission, real-time feedback, and cloud storage”: normal students can view internship tasks and submit materials on the platform, and college and base guiding teachers can make online comments and scores.

## **4. Conclusion**

By pivoting from “more hours, more forms” to “right schools, right tasks,” we turn the English internship into a compact practicum that satisfies every accreditation metric while restoring trainee energy for real teaching.

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