

# Teaching Practice Mechanism for Prospective Primary School Teachers in Light of Outstanding Scheme

Chengche Qiao  
*School of Languages and Communication Studies*  
*Beijing Jiaotong University*  
 Beijing, China

Xiaodong Huang  
*Capital Normal University*  
 Beijing, China

**Abstract**—As the compulsory part of prospective primary school teachers of normal universities and colleges, teaching practice facilitates their understanding and cultivation of students as well as their self-development ability, which will in turn, contributes to their sustainable development. Many normal universities and colleges begin to attach importance to teaching practice and increasing its proportion in the curriculum. The Ministry of Education stipulated “Opinions on the Implementation of Outstanding Teachers Training Plan” in 2014 and proposed to “carry out standardized teaching practice”. However, a set of complete, effective and easy to implement teaching practice plan, in particular the plan for prospective primary school teachers, has yet to be formed. This paper analyzes the whole process of teaching practice and proposes a set of targeted measures, so as to promote the formation of prospective primary school teachers teaching practice plan.

**Keywords**—*outstanding scheme, prospective primary school teachers, teaching practice*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education stipulated a programmatic document entitled “Opinions on the Implementation of Outstanding Teachers Training Plan” on August 18, 2014. In this document, the Ministry of Education, in line with the characteristics of primary school education majors, proposed to “focus on exploring the training mode of general teachers on the basis of the actual need of primary education so as to cultivate a group of outstanding primary school teachers who love primary education, have broad knowledge and comprehensive abilities and are able to meet the needs of multidisciplinary teaching in primary schools.” In order to train outstanding primary school teachers, the Ministry of Education clearly pointed out that “standardized practice teaching shall be launched which will run through the whole process of training. Goals in segments shall be set to ensure the effectiveness of

practice.”

A stable guarantee mechanism of teaching practice base and teaching practice funds shall be established to practically implement the system of no less than one semester practice in primary and secondary schools for normal students. Standardized teaching practice norms shall also be established to provide clear requirements for the whole process.

The Ministry of Education promulgated “Ministry of Education’s Opinions on Strengthening the Educational Practice of Normal Students” in 2016, which required normal universities and colleges to guarantee the teaching time of prospective teachers and implementation of “Double tutor system”. Importance has been attached to the guidance of university instructors to interns. “Double tutor system” which means that teachers in normal universities and colleges as well as teachers in primary and secondary schools collaborate together to guide normal students shall also be implemented [1]. Through this document, the Ministry of Education ensured the importance and necessity of teaching practice, stipulated no less than one semester teaching practice time as well as put forward the whole process (pre-practice, practice, post-practice) requirement.

Currently, there are many studies on teaching practice. Han Cuiping, Li Jing and Huang Shuzhen analyzed the existing problems on teaching practice mode of primary education majors in normal colleges, and put forward the idea of establishing teaching practice guidance center so as to build lasting and stable cooperative relationship with the practice school [2]. Kong Lingbing proposed to establish a cooperative training mechanism between normal colleges and primary and secondary schools [3]. Lian Xin emphasized the need to effectively improve the sense of social responsibility of normal school students [4]. Gan Tao proposed “classified practice” mode [5]. Lu Xingnan and Guo Wenliang analyzed the problems concerning educational evaluation which provided reference for the evaluation of teaching practice [6]. Qi Chunxia and Liu Ping affirmed the key role of educational practice in the growth of pre-service teachers, and analyzed the characteristics of teaching practice in Long Beach, California State University and the insights on teaching practice in China [7]. Zheng Donghui introduced the form

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**Corresponding Author:** Xiaodong Huang, Capital Normal University, Beijing, China.

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and significance of students' teaching practice and evaluation in America [8]. Zhu Hongcui et al. suggested establishing practice evaluation system drawing on the PGCE Teacher Education Project in Britain [9]. Given all this, it is of great significance to explore a prospective educational model which is suitable for Chinese normal university students according to their actual situation. Therefore, this paper comprehensively analyses the whole process of prospective teaching practice of primary education major, so as to find an effective prospective primary teacher education and training mechanism in light of the outstanding scheme.

## II. CURRENT TEACHING PRACTICE MODEL OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS MAJORING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

At present, many normal universities and colleges are actively exploring a teaching practice model that can effectively train primary school education major students and prepare them for their future career. The aim of the teaching practice is to familiarize the prospective primary school teachers with the future professional activity so its importance cannot be overemphasized. The mode of teaching practice plus educational probation are mainly used now.

### A. Educational Probation

Educational probation mainly refers to students majoring in primary school education in junior grades (freshman and sophomore) going to primary schools for teaching observation. In this period, three parts are included: understanding school running concepts, classroom teaching observation and class advisor work probation. It also provides a good teaching practice platform for students majoring in primary education to understand primary school tentatively. Students can, through close observation of teaching process, know basic professional skills necessary for primary school teachers and truly perceive professional ethics and professional qualities of primary school teachers. Meanwhile, students can also basically know the psychological and physiological characteristics of primary school students which will lay a solid foundation for the forthcoming teaching practice. Educational probation usually lasts about two weeks.

### B. Teaching Practice

Teaching practice mainly refers to students majoring in primary school education in senior grades (junior and senior) going to primary schools for teaching practice activities after having studied subjects in pedagogy, psychology and other related teaching methodology. This process includes integrated connection with primary schools, classroom teaching practice, management work as class advisers and so on. In this process, normal universities or colleges usually specify that students must complete a certain number of class hours' teaching practice and participate in the management work as class advisers in order to serve primary schools after graduation. Teaching

practice usually lasts about 12 weeks.

During educational probation, normal universities or colleges usually assign a leading teacher for probation guidance. In teaching practice, since students should carry out a certain number of class hours' teaching practice, universities or colleges will arrange professional teachers to attend students' demonstration classes in order to find problems, give comments and guidance in time and ultimately help students improve their teaching ability.

## III. PROBLEMS IN TEACHING PRACTICE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS MAJORING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

The authors have actively participated in the teaching practice of students majoring in primary school education for many times. Through interviews with students and primary school teachers as well as questionnaires, it is found that there exist the following problems concerning teaching practice.

### A. Preparation for Educational Theories before the Teaching Practice

In addition to courses in pedagogy and psychology, primary education major students are usually arranged to learn related teaching method courses before the teaching practice in primary schools, especially before the teaching practice in senior grades. However, due to the strong integration of primary school curricula, many interns are required to teach not only the courses of their major, but also other subjects. Therefore, before the teaching practice, interns should learn related professional courses and contents of other concurrent teaching courses. At the same time, normal colleges should offer modular and selective curriculum and teaching method courses, such as primary school mathematics curriculum and teaching theory, primary school Chinese curriculum and teaching theory, primary school English curriculum and teaching theory, primary school science curriculum and teaching theory, primary school information curriculum and teaching theory and so on.

### B. The Connection between Universities and Primary Schools during Teaching Practice

At present, primary schools will assign accepted interns to experienced front-line teachers as assistants. We conducted a questionnaire survey of 1532 prospective primary school teachers in order to know their feedback on educational probation and teaching practice. According to the questionnaire, 83% of interns thought that many front-line teachers had doubts about the teaching ability of interns, so it was commonplace that interns didn't get many classroom teaching opportunities. Meanwhile, 95% of interns said that they spent much energy helping front-line teachers correct homework, guiding students to learn and organizing student activities. And 89% of interns thought that courses in pedagogy, psychology and other related teaching methods which they had studied were not properly implemented in primary schools. Therefore, it is necessary

to strengthen the communication between universities and primary schools about the purpose of teaching practice. Universities teachers, especially leading teachers during teaching practice, should discuss with front-line teachers of primary schools so as to form a consensus and guide students to complete the teaching practice..

### C. Teaching Evaluation after Teaching Practice

The evaluation of teaching practice is to judge the value and effect of it by means of evaluation activity. Its purpose is to find enhancing ways and make reasonable choice through the analysis of problems arising from teaching practice, and then, guide and adjust teaching practice as well as improve teaching practice's quality. If the results of evaluation can be given to interns in an appropriate way timely, interns will benefit from the feedback as much as possible, form objective and comprehensive understanding of themselves and make greater progress. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of evaluation will also be maximized.

At the beginning of the internship, normal universities and colleges will distribute practice manuals to students and require leading teachers from universities and colleges and instructors from primary schools to evaluate the work of interns. However, the leading teachers usually have their own teaching tasks besides bringing students into primary schools for internship. So they may not be able to give accurate and appropriate teaching evaluation to interns in time. What's worse, primary front-line instructors also can hardly spare much time and energy to have in-depth communication with interns after normal teaching activities, so they cannot give effective evaluations to interns in many cases. Ultimately, the teaching evaluation only comes from students' experimental self-conclusion and self-summarization.

## IV. TEACHING PRACTICE MECHANISM FOR PROSPECTIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN LIGHT OF OUTSTANDING SCHEME

Teaching practice facilitates prospective teachers' understanding and cultivation of students as well as their self-development ability, which will in turn, contributes to their sustainable development. At present, normal universities and colleges have basically formed teaching practice mode. Based on the *Outstanding Scheme*, normal universities and colleges should actively explore teaching practice mechanism for prospective primary school teachers.

### A. Before the Teaching Practice

Students should have basic theoretical educational knowledge before teaching practice which can be acquired through courses in pedagogy, psychology and teaching method lessons. Theoretical learning accounts for a large proportion in teachers' education, but now, many normal universities and colleges scatter their teaching method teachers to various departments. Reintegration is beneficial to modular teaching. As for primary school education majors, teaching method teachers usually teach lessons in

accordance with their disciplines. For example, students majoring in Chinese will be guided by teachers who specialize in Chinese teaching methods. However, when primary school education major students go to primary schools for teaching practice, they are often required to teach other courses apart from their own discipline. For example, when the authors lead students to conduct practice in some primary schools in Beijing, many schools require students to teach Chinese and mathematics at the same time. Obviously, primary school education major students are not adequately prepared in terms of teaching methodologies. So they can only make belated efforts by teaching and studying at the same time, which in turn, affects teaching effect. In view of these problems, the authors suggest that teaching method lessons in all sub-fields provided for primary school education major students should be scheduled at different times, so students can select teaching method lessons they want to study accordingly. In addition to stipulating that students should study teaching method lessons of their own major as obligatory courses, the normal universities and colleges should also encourage students to take other teaching method lessons as selective courses. At the same time, teachers from different disciplines can also be gathered to explore common problems existing in various disciplines, which will help students fully understand the characteristics of primary school teaching.

Currently, in many normal universities and colleges, there are some disparities and discrepancies between teaching method teachers' the concept and understanding of teaching practice and that of front-line teachers. Students majoring in primary school education are often confused when they find that front-line teachers in primary schools and the teachers in charge of methodology instruction impart different ideas. Teachers in charge of methodology instruction should communicate with front-line teachers at regular intervals so as to give targeted guidance and help to students. On the one hand, teaching method teachers in normal universities and colleges can offer systematic theories, but it is hard for students to put these theories into practice. On the other hand, front-line teachers in primary schools have accumulated rich experience, but they do not know how to abstract and summarize their knowledge into an organic system.

### B. During the Teaching Practice

"Outline of National Medium- and Long-term Program for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)" proposed to renew talent cultivation concept and improve talent cultivation system. The document pointed out that we should "establish systematic cultivation concept, advance the organic connection of primary schools, secondary schools and universities as well as the close integration of teaching, scientific research and practice." [10] At present, most students majoring in primary school education can only have front-line teachers as faculty advisers after they go to primary schools. However, these primary school teachers usually have too many teaching tasks to have

enough time to guide these prospective teachers in the 2 to 16 weeks of educational probation or teaching practice. Therefore, prospective teachers cannot take advantage of or sufficiently learn from the rich teaching experience of front-line teachers. The guidance for prospective teachers is a long term work and should not be limited to the short period of teaching practice. However, the current situation is that many prospective teachers often go to different primary schools for their educational probation and teaching practice and receive guidance from different teachers. So students are not able to get complete and unified guidance for their teaching practice.

In order to form a complete system for prospective teachers' training process, in view of the existing problems, the authors think that we can apply the "double tutorial system" presented by the Ministry of Education in the *Outstanding Scheme*, that is, primary school education major students should be assigned their front-line advisers at the beginning of their study in normal universities and colleges. Students should meet their advisers regularly and report their learning situation and confusion about primary school education. Advisers should give targeted guidance to students' problems. Meanwhile, it should be guaranteed that students enter the school in which their advisers work during educational probation and teaching practice. Thanks to the targeted guidance beforehand and relatively smooth communication, teaching practice can really be effective. Furthermore, in order to ensure that primary school front-line advisers can give students complete and unified guidance, normal universities and colleges should hold regular training sessions and symposiums, inviting teachers rich in teaching experience from primary schools to deliver lectures and organize workshops, the purpose of which is to improve and enhance the evaluation system and fully regulate and guide primary school advisers in various dimensions. Meanwhile, the communication between advisers and students should not be limited to one-to-one mode. Professional complementary team of advisers should be gathered by primary schools to provide joint guidance for prospective teachers' teaching practice.

"Double tutorial system" facilitates the teaching practice of prospective teachers. Front-line teachers from primary schools offer students more realistic and pertinent guidance. After listening to lectures, attending workshops as well as primary school teachers, students not only have improved their teacher competency but also found topics for their graduation thesis. Furthermore, the participation of primary school teachers provides a lot of convenience for students' questionnaires and interviews for their future research.

### C. After the Teaching Practice

The evaluation of after teaching practice includes the evaluation given by the advisers and the self-evaluation of students. After the teaching practice, the internship advisers and all the team members will hold a seminar, giving each student the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and listen to other people's comments on their teaching. This kind of arrangement is conducive to mutual learning among

students. Furthermore, it is an important way to cultivate students' self-reflection ability, which is undoubtedly beneficial to their future career.

Most of advisers will give relatively general and vague qualitative evaluation which can only be known by students when teaching practice is drawing to a close. The authors suggest that advisers' evaluation of students should be standardized, which means specific evaluation, including formative evaluation and summative evaluation, should be given for each part of teaching. But this cannot be realized now because advisers have limited time and energy. Therefore, the cooperation between normal universities and colleges and primary schools should be taken into consideration. During the teaching practice, front-line teachers should not be given too many teaching tasks, so that they can spare energy to guide prospective teachers. At the same time, normal universities and colleges should communicate with advisers in advance to let them know what kind of evaluation is mostly needed and what kind of suggestions will be constructive. Evaluation of teaching practice should include quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation. Quantitative evaluation is conducive to the statistical analysis of data and can ensure accurate and rigorous results. However, for the aspects which are difficult to quantify, such as prospective teachers' air and manner in lectures, qualitative evaluation system should be introduced. The evaluation should not be only given by individual advisers, but by the whole guiding team through collective evaluation, which can make sure that the evaluation is fair, objective and impartial and can provide better guidance for students.

## V. CONCLUSION

Teaching practice can bridge the gap between prospective teachers' subject knowledge and their education and teaching knowledge, thus effectively improving their teaching expertise. The integration of before, during and after teaching experience can guarantee that the teaching practice be conducive to the preparation of being a teacher. The optimized allocation of time can deepen prospective teachers' understanding of educational theory. By means of combining what they have learned in teaching methodology class with the authentic teaching situation, prospective teachers can have the first-hand experience, develop their teaching philosophy and learn how to teach.

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