

# Research on Improving the Teaching Quality of Young Teachers in Local Universities-With Example of a Local University in L Province

Xiaoting Tan<sup>1,a</sup> and Wanzhen Huang<sup>1,b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Shenyang Agricultural University, Shenyang 210000, China

<sup>a</sup>tanxtsyau@163.com, <sup>b</sup>625114502@qq.com

**Keywords:** Local colleges and universities; Young teachers; Personnel training; Teaching quality

**Abstract.** Local colleges and universities mostly target at both teaching and research, so the quality of teaching is a very important part. The young teacher is the major subject in teaching. Thus it is of great significance to explore how to train young teachers to improve their teaching abilities. This paper takes a local university in L Province as an example to summarize the characteristics and problems of the young teachers in the university. And introduces a series of explorations made by the university to improve the quality of teaching in the young teachers. And puts forward some further reflections and suggestions at the starting point on improving the teaching quality of young teachers in local Universities.

## Introduction

The documents provided by the Department of human resources of the Ministry of Education showed that by the end of 2014, the proportion of teachers at the age of 30 and below was 28.4%, and the proportion of teachers under 40 years old was 68%. Young teachers are important factors which affect the future development of colleges and universities. Their teaching standards affects the current teaching quality, scientific research ability and the future developing direction of the university. Among that, the quality of teaching is the foundation of a university. Therefore focusing on training and improving the teaching quality of young teachers has importantly theoretical value and practical significance for guaranteeing and enhancing the comprehensive strength of colleges and universities

Local colleges and universities (Provincial colleges and universities) is the general colleges and universities which affiliated to provincial, autonomous regional, municipal people's governments and Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong and Macao which funds are allocated by local administrative departments. More than 90% of the higher education institutions in China are local colleges and universities. The students in local colleges and universities account for about 88% of full-time undergraduate students in China. It plays an important role in the higher education system. In recent years, local colleges and universities have paid more and more attention to the cultivation of students' practical ability. The document jointly issued by the Ministry of education, National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance in 2015 named The Suggestions on Guiding Some Local General Universities to Transform into the Applied Type especially emphasis that the related department should guide local universities to transform to the applied type. Accordingly, at present most local colleges and universities are in the period of developing and transforming. Their school-running conception have been transformed into cultivating application-oriented talents. This puts forward higher requirements for teachers' ability of teaching and practicing. Therefore, it is of great significance to explore how to train the teaching ability of young teachers in local universities, especially the practical teaching ability in the new situation. Based on a field survey of a local university in L Province, this paper studies how to promote the cultivation of applied talents in local universities from the perspective of young teachers' training.

## Characteristics and Problems of Young Teachers in Local Colleges and Universities

**Poor Working Stability.** The young teachers have been the most unstable part of the whole university teaching staff all the time. However, due to the influence of many factors, the mobility of

young teachers in local colleges and universities is more frequent than that of subordinate colleges and universities, the rate of active turnover is also higher. According to the author's investigation and analysis on the teacher's turnover of the local university in L Province, over the past 15 years (2000-2015), there were 723 young teachers have been transferred from their jobs. It equaled to the number of retirees. Among them, the teachers at age of 25-35 are the biggest part of transferring actively. The possible reason is that teachers of this age group have just participated in the work and lack of organizational identity. It's more possible to run into all sorts of problems at work. At the same time, the contradiction between work and family is prominent. Therefore it's easy to prone to the turnover intention.

**Weak Teaching Ability.** According to the investigation and research of the local university in L Province, the young teachers in it are not likely to the teachers in primary and secondary school who mainly come from normal universities. They are mainly doctoral graduates from domestic and foreign universities. Most of the young teachers who have been introduced, their professional knowledge and skills are very prominent but they have not studied the professional education theory. So that they really do not understand the teaching methods and teaching rules, and lack of teaching practice experience. So their professional knowledge cannot be effectively imparted to students through the class.

The local colleges and universities mostly target at teaching and research or teaching type universities and the teaching tasks are heavy. Usually, young teachers come to the university without systematic teaching, training and guidance but they are arranged for class. At the same time, they need to teach many courses. They earn their workload relying on class period, sometimes they cannot prepare lessons systematically and keep light weight in teaching. There are also some teachers with strong scientific research ability, they should have given full play to the advantages of scientific research and expand the depth and breadth of the curriculum. But they spend more time and energy on research projects, writing papers. And even regard teaching as a task which can be done perfunctorily or even abandoned, so the quality of teaching is limited.

**Lack of Practical Teaching Experience.** The local colleges and universities are the main part of higher education system in China. The Position is serving regional economic and social development, cultivating more high-quality talents for the society. The document jointly issued by the Ministry of education, National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance in 2015 named The Suggestions on Guiding Some Local General Universities to Transform into the Applied Type clearly pointed out that local colleges and universities should enhance the ability to serve the regional economic and social development, and the idea of running schools should be transferred to the cultivation of applied technical and skilled talents. Therefore, more and more attention has been paid to the cultivation of students' practical ability in local colleges and universities. And this puts forward higher and higher requirements for the practical teaching ability of young teachers in local colleges and Universities. At present, most of the young teachers introduced by the university are directly graduated from the University, they have little social work experience and practical experience. And they are lack of comprehensive understanding of society and enterprises, lack of practical experience, the effect of practice teaching is more limited. So it is difficult for them to adapt to the new situation of personnel training requirements.

### **Practice of Improving the Teaching Ability of Young Teachers in a Local University in L Province**

The quality of personnel training in China is constantly improving, which also puts forward higher requirements for the quality of teaching staff. How to improve the teaching level and quality of young teachers is one of the important subjects in the training and cultivation of young teachers in local colleges and universities. The local university in L province pay much attention to the morality cultivation of young teachers, the promotion of humanistic quality, and the improvement of teaching quality and so on. According to the characteristics of young teachers in the university, the university established the training system of young teachers, and achieved good training effects by implementing the system of "pre job training", "One to one tutorial system" to instruct young

teachers to teach and organizing teaching supervision group to visit a class and teaching quality feedback system, etc practices of three levels.

**Implementing the System of "Pre-job Training".** The local university in L province pay much attention to the morality cultivation of young teachers and education theory training. The university train young teachers to establish a correct concept of education, and to learn to master advanced education and teaching theory by the "pre -job training" system, the length of time is one semester. The "pre-job training" is mainly composed of three parts: general knowledge, school based education and teaching practice. The first part is "school based education", the young teachers need to learn the history of the university. The second part is "general knowledge", senior professors give lectures on "higher education psychology", "higher education", "ethics of college teachers", "higher education regulations" and other courses, besides they give lectures on teaching demonstration courses and modern educational technology topics. The third part is teaching practice, it includes the trial teaching system of young teachers. Young teachers who are at the first time in class, they need to trial in the their Department before the official class. After reviewed and guided by the expert group in the university ,the young teachers who pass the trial can give lessons.

**"One to One Tutorial System" to Instruct Young Teachers to Teach.** "One to one tutorial system" is after the young teachers start working, each department of the local university in L province based on its own actual situation assign 1 professor or associate professor with rich teaching experience to help young teachers prepare lessons, teach, set paper and correct paper, and to give them guidance on papers and scientific research, teaching plan writing. And supervise on the courseware making and so on. Young teachers and guide teachers should try to teach the same or similar courses. Besides young teachers must listen to a course taught by the guide teacher completely. They need to fill in the attendance record form, and the guide teacher sign the opinions and the signature. The Office of Academic Affairs checks the attendance record list regularly, and they supervise the quality of teaching guidance.

**Implement Teaching Supervision Group Visiting a Class and Teaching Quality Feedback System.** In order to improve the teaching quality of young teachers, the local university in L province implemented teaching supervision group visiting class and teaching quality feedback system. The university hired a number of retired professors with high level of teaching and deep academic attainments as supervisors, they visit class randomly, and evaluate the teaching quality of young teachers on teaching attitude, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching effect, etc 10 aspects. According to the evaluation, they guide the young teachers to improve the teaching ability targetedly. Meanwhile, the results of teaching quality evaluation directly affect the young teachers' annual assessment and engagement. Besides they implement one-vote-down system in the professional title evaluation which means those who fail to pass the evaluation of teaching quality will not participate in the assessment of professional titles. Through the follow-up investigation and quality feedback of the teaching supervision group, the young teachers in the teaching quality and teaching level have been improved.

## **Conclusion**

**Strengthening Young Teachers' Sense of Organizational Identification.** Like the local college in L Province, at present some local colleges and universities have established a certain system of young teachers' training in professional skills training. However, the higher turnover rate of young teachers in local universities leads to no obvious training effect. The young teachers are an unstable group. It is necessary to strengthen school-based training and implement the strategy of organizing socialization, so that young teachers have a sense of belonging. On this basis, to strengthen the training of young teachers, which can achieve twice the result with half the effort.

Specifically, firstly, the university need to give full scope to the talents, complete the plan of introducing talents. Planning the talent introduction jobs reasonably is helpful for young teachers to enter their own suitable stations which the university also needed. Feeling the need of the school is more beneficial for young teachers to identify with the organization and to improve their work enthusiasm, so as to enhance their sense of organizational identity. Secondly, increase the

communication between young teachers and management departments. The most important and common phenomenon in organizational management is communication, and any management work of the organization can not be separated from communication. Management departments in university need to create conditions and a harmonious atmosphere of communication, and to promote communication between teachers and management departments. Increasing young teachers' participation in organizational activities can also significantly improve their organizational identification level. Thirdly, to strengthen the support of the organization so that young teachers can feel the concern and support of the organization persistently. At the same salary level, it may enhance the organizational identity when young teachers feel intimate care. On this basis, to further develop the teaching ability of young teachers, we can really achieve good results and improve the quality of teaching.

**Establishing Teaching Ability Training and Promotion Mechanism.** Such systems like "Pre-job training" help young teachers overall on the macro level, specifically help the young teachers obtain university teachers qualification certificate mainly through theoretical training. And help young teachers are familiar with the specific situation of the university, and initially recognize and integrate into campus culture. The local university in L province has been further implemented "Tutorial system", "leading cadre attending lectures system" and "teaching quality feedback system", has made positive effects. However, the teaching effect of some young teachers on the platform is not ideal. When they feel pressure from supervisors and students, the sense of pressure and frustration lead to more nervous and they cannot exert their full talents in the class, the university need to establish a teaching ability training and promotion mechanism in an all-round way.

One possible approach is the teaching assistant system. In countries with higher education, such as the United States and Japan, young teachers need to be teaching assistants for 2-3 years before they are formally taught. China also stipulated that young teachers should be teaching assistants firstly. However, due to the rapid development of higher education in recent years, the number of students has increased rapidly, and the number of teachers in local colleges and universities is in serious shortage, therefore, young teachers almost no longer serve as teaching assistants, and they go to the platform to teach courses as soon as they start working and to undertake heavy teaching tasks. Teaching assistants can help young teachers to familiarize all aspects of the course teaching, including the preparation, literature reviewing, correcting the homework, leading students to practice and participate in the examination, marking the examination papers, guide students to experiment, etc. It can prepare in all aspects for teaching on the platform and undertaking teaching tasks. Therefore, before the formal teaching, it is an effective strategy to enhance the teaching ability of young teachers to be a teaching assistant a period of time.

Another important aspect is that young teachers should fully play the advantages of scientific research ability, lead the advanced achievements of scientific research to daily teaching and expand the depth and breadth of curriculum. Guide students to actively carry out research-based learning, and guide undergraduates to carry out scientific research training, and try to write scientific research papers. It plays a very important role in cultivating students' exploring spirit and creative ability.

**Enhancing the Practical Ability of Young Teachers.** Practical teaching ability is another bottleneck in improving the teaching quality of young teachers. With the introduction of the guidance of the three ministries and commissions," local universities need to transformative to applied type", local universities need to pay more attention to the cultivation of students' practical applied ability. As shown in the survey and analysis above, the practical teaching experience of young teachers in local colleges and universities is very limited so they are unable to cultivate students' applied ability. Therefore, the first problem is to enhance the practical ability of young teachers. The specific measures include: setting up practice bases for teachers' further study, encouraging young teachers to enter enterprises and institutions for further study, enhancing the cooperation with enterprises, inviting engineers and technicians from enterprises and institutions to give lectures to young teachers, enhancing young teachers' practical ability and strengthening the long term, sustainable and standard training mode of young teachers' practical ability by several methods like sending to join the enterprise ,etc.

## **Acknowledgements**

Supported by the Foundation of Liaoning Province Philosophy and Social Science Planning (L17CJY008), and Science Foundation of Ministry of Education of China (13YJC790129).

## **References**

- [1] X. Yu: Faculty Employment Policy Shift in Chinese Higher Education. *Journal of Education*, (2009) No.9, p.42-47.
- [2] G.S. Becker: A Theory of the Allocation of Time, *Economic Journal*, Vol. 75(1965), p.493-517.
- [3] M. Dahlberg, M. Eklof, P. Fredriksson and J. Jofre-Monseny: Estimating Preferences for Local Public Services Using Migration Data, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 49(2012) No.2, p.319-336.
- [4] Information on <http://wwwctl.uga.edu/faculty/fac-dev-program/lilly/lilly.html>, Center for Teaching and Learning, 2011
- [5] P. Ramsden. Learning to Teach in Higher Education, *Journal of Women's Health*, Vol. 29(2003), No.6, p.305
- [6] J. L. Price: Reflections on the Determinants of Voluntary Turnover, *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 22(2001) No. 7, p.600-624