

Investigation of the Educational Practice of Normal College Students Based on the “Double Tutor System”

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Abstract. In order to improve the training effectiveness of normal students, Xiangnan University actively explored the “double tutor” mode of joint training of normal students by college teachers and primary and secondary school teachers, providing joint guidance for normal students in educational probation, educational practice and other processes. In order to understand the current situation of normal students' educational practice under the “double tutor” mode, an investigation was carried out through questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that normal students generally benefited a lot from the “double tutor” guidance mode. At the same time, there were also problems such as insufficient preparation for educational practice and the narrowness of guidance content. Considering the training of normal students in the future, it was necessary to further clarify the responsibility of double tutors, pay attention to the cultivation of students' professional and practical skills, and promote the further reform and innovation of normal education in colleges.

Keywords. Double tutor, normal students, educational practice, questionnaire

1. Introduction

As reflective practitioners, teachers realized their professional development in the process of studying their own experience and improving education and teaching behaviors. The traditional training mode of normal students focused on theoretical teaching, far from the real educational environment, which made it difficult for normal students to be quickly competent for the teaching work of primary and secondary schools after graduation. In order to solve this problem, Xiangnan University actively explored the “double tutor system” training mode for normal college students to enhance the practical knowledge and effectively improving their practical application ability through the joint training of students by colleges and primary and secondary schools, realizing the seamless connection between normal college education and primary and secondary education. With much achievements after several years of exploration and practice, the “double tutor” model also met some development difficulties. For example, the “double tutor” system has shown that the mentoring

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process in many universities is a mere formality[1]. many external tutors are busy with daily work and lack of theoretical thinking and research on teaching[2],and so on.

2. Definition of “Double Tutor System”

The so-called “double tutor” training mode mainly referred to the joint cultivation mechanism of normal students via multi-level guidance from not only professional teachers in colleges but also front-line teachers in primary and secondary schools. Realistic and vivid practical knowledge was brought to normal students by primary and secondary school teachers. The open idea and inquiry was brought by college teachers, helping normal students to realize the unity of knowledge and practice. For normal students, not only professional guidance of college teachers but also practical guidance of grass-roots teachers could be obtained.

As a public comprehensive full-time ordinary undergraduate university, Xiangnan University was a local university with a total of 46 undergraduate majors, among which there were 9 normal majors, which covered the main disciplines of primary and secondary school courses.

The cooperation between Xiangnan University and primary and secondary schools was mainly carried out through teaching, practice, teaching and research, evaluation and so on which were all cooperative. In terms of the stages and processes of the normal students training, both on-campus and off-campus tutors participated in the normal students training throughout the four years with different emphasis in each academic year. In the freshman year, the on-campus tutor focused on the guidance of college career planning, and the off-campus tutor focused on educational probation to let students “see middle schools”. In the sophomore year, the on-campus tutor focused on professional learning guidance, and the off-campus tutor focused on guiding students to carry out educational research. In the third year of college, the on-campus tutors focused on career planning and teaching skills guidance, and the off-campus tutor focused on educational exercises to let students “learn by doing in middle schools”. In the senior stage, both on-campus and off-campus tutors focused on employment and educational practice guidance.

Guiding objectives, tasks, contents and forms of two tutors were also different. College teachers mainly guided students to carry out professional learning and academic Q & A. Thus, forming a multi-level three-dimensional education and guidance system for students whose comprehensive quality could be improved could made them gradually master relevant theoretical knowledge and skills of basic education. Primary and secondary school teachers regularly participated in professional teaching activities. Thus, students could gradually understand basic education management, primary and secondary school students’ characteristics and other related knowledge. Through the necessary guidance of educational practice, students were guided to gradually apply the professional theoretical knowledge which have learned in practical teaching. Meanwhile, targeted feedback was used to guide students to improve, forming an effective mode of joint training of normal students by colleges as well as primary and secondary schools (Figure 1).

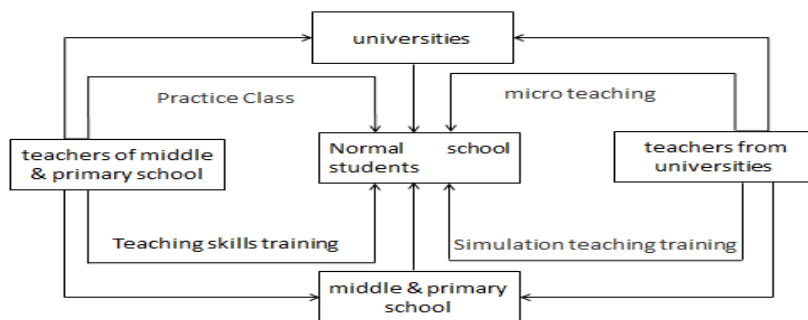


Figure 1. Double tutor training mode

As a comprehensive practical process of qualified teachers training in primary and secondary schools, educational practice was the only way to the educational career for normal students. It was also the beginning of the teaching profession experience for most normal students. It was also one of the important ways to improve the quality and skills of normal students. The normal majors of Xiangnan University have broken through the construction of the traditional and single education practice base, further strengthened the cooperation with primary and secondary schools, fully explored and expanded their respective advantages and functions of colleges, middle and primary schools. The “double tutor” model was adopted to guide students' education practice, undertaking the education responsibility together.

In order to understand the practice situation and effect of normal students under the guidance of the “dual tutor system”, improve the practice quality, enhance the sense of acquisition of normal interns, and promote the growth of interns, we investigated the practice of normal students in Xiangnan University by a questionnaire survey and interviews.

3. Research design: survey tools, methods and main contents

In this survey, questions were sent to interns by links in Questionnaire Star which were filled anonymously in the second semester of 2021. In this semester, there were more than 900 normal interns participating in educational practice in Xiangnan University. There were 702 questionnaires accounting for 78% of interns, covering all normal education involved majors. There were 22 questions in the questionnaire, which was divided into two parts. The first part was the basic information of interns, including gender, major, practice way and practice length. The second part was the detailed investigation of interns in the practice school, including the practice stage, practice teaching materials, the number of practice teaching hours, class hours, the guidance methods of instructors and university team teachers for interns and practice effects. The question types included single choice, multiple choice and subjective questions, which could comprehensively and effectively demonstrate the practice status of intern students.

At the same time, the interview method was used to investigate and interview teachers who led the normal students of various majors in the college, instructors of the practice school and interns. In the interviews, there were 20 normal students and 10 on-campus and off-campus practice instructors, among which there were 5 instructors

in the practice base and 5 college practice instructors. In total, there were 30 person times.

4. Statistical results and analysis

4.1. The unbalanced gender ratio of normal students

From the perspective of gender, the proportion of male and female intern students in normal colleges was unbalanced. The number of female students far exceeded that of male students which only accounted for 13.46% of the total. From the perspective of disciplines, the number of students with dominant subjects such as Chinese, mathematics and foreign languages was significantly larger than that of other disciplines, in consistent with the situation of enrollment and employment.

4.2. Strong concentration of practice

The data showed that about 85.58% of the intern students adopted the centralized practice according to the college arrangement. Scattered internship, post internship and independent internship by students' own contact with the school were few. Due to the influence of the practice base, the practice section was mainly junior high school. 68.27% of the students participated in the junior high school practice, and 25% of the interns were in senior high school. No students participated in the primary school practice.

4.3. Students' good attitudes and attention to the practice

First of all, most interns recognized the importance of the practice. The proportions of students who considered the practice very important and important were 69.23% and 25%, respectively. Secondly, during the practice, interns with the class attendance above 20 and 16-20 whose corresponding proportions were 53.85% and 18.27%, respectively, constituted a majority. Thirdly, the mutual communication initiated by both interns and instructors constituted a majority with the proportion of 54.46%. And only 1.98% of the students never communicated with instructors forwardly during the practice. In addition, 70.19% of the interns' teaching design asked for the guidance of the instructors and finished the revision of the teaching plan before class. After class, they reflected and explored teaching methods, demonstrating a strong autonomy and reflective ability as well as the active learning spirit of contemporary college students.

4.4. The appropriate practice length

In order to strengthen the construction of teachers' team from the source, the Ministry of Education issued the "opinions on vigorously promoting the practice and teaching support work of normal students" in 2007, which clearly required senior normal students to go to primary and secondary schools for educational practice not less than one semester. 96.8% of the students in our college spent one semester in the practice school. 2.6% of students' practice lasted more than one semester. From the perspective of time length, 74.04% of the students agreed with the just right time arrangement.

Only 11.54% of the students regraded it as too long with tiredness. Another 14.42% of the students thought that the practice time was too short to get fully practiced.

4.5. Double tutors jointly promoted the growth of interns

In terms of guidance methods, college team teachers and the practice school instructors worked together to promote the growth of normal interns. 66.35% of the interns received the joint guidance of our teachers of our school and the instructors of the internship school during the internship (Figure 2).

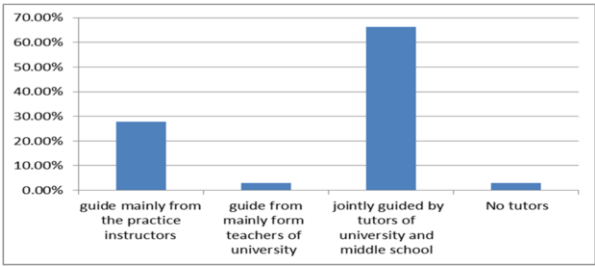


Figure 2. Guidance from double tutors

In terms of guidance methods, there were differences between practice instructors and college instructors. The diversity of the guidance methods of the practice instructors was strong. Adopting the onsite teaching, 37.5% of instructors gave comprehensive guidance in the selection of teaching methods, the application of teaching strategies, the grasping of knowledge points, and the practical arrangement of teaching content (Figure 3). However, college teachers mainly gave guidance of lectures and mutual evaluation within the group.

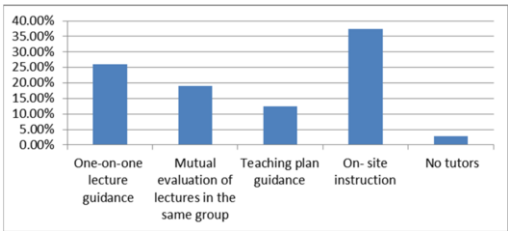


Figure 3. The guidance methods of teachers in practice schools

Through the practice, interns benefited a lot. 85.58% of the students thought that the practice enriched their professional knowledge and teaching experience. 81.73% improved their professional awareness and professional emotion. 68.27% of the students agreed that they had gained experience in getting along with students. And 48.08% of the students clarified their career directions. In this practice, 75.96% of the students thought that the help from the practice tutor was the largest.

5. Existing problems

5.1 Insufficient preparation for the practice

In the open questions which asked for the suggestions for improvement suggestions, nearly 50% of the students suggested the in-time information of the practice which guaranteed the earlier preparation. 56.73% of the students wanted to be trained before the practice, appropriately. Although students who entered the senior grades realized the beginning of the practice as soon as the autumn semester started. Most students didn't clearly know the teaching materials in the practice period because of the unconfirmed practice whether in junior or senior high school, which has become one of the obstacles for interns to quickly get into the state. In addition, the questionnaire demonstrated that 58% of the students looked forward to the educational practice in advance. However, 20% had no feeling and 22% even didn't expect the educational practice. The interview demonstrated that boys were mostly unwilling to engage in the education industry because of the feeling of no future. Girls had a relatively high enthusiasm for the education industry, and thus gained relatively more through educational practice.

5.2 The deficiency of the guidance

On the one hand, the centralized practice method facilitated the overall management of interns by the college and the timely grasp of the situation of interns, thus ensuring the practice effect of interns to a certain extent. But on the other hand, it put some pressure on the practice school. Each practice school needed to receive more than 30 interns students. Middle school teachers, especially high school teachers themselves, had great teaching pressure and did not have much time and energy to guide students. In order to reduce the pressure of instructors, practice schools also had mixed conditions in the allocation of instructors and teachers. Considering the improvement suggestions, about 45% of interns mentioned that they expected experienced teachers to be sent as instructors by the school.

Secondly, in terms of guidance content, the instructors of practice schools guided students more from the perspective of discipline and professional knowledge, such as class teacher work, class management and so on. After the practice, all colleges and departments evaluated and graded the educational practice, mainly according to the practice report and the back talk course after the practice. However, the back talk process was often a mere formality with no obvious effect. In the survey, 64.42% of the students thought that they met difficulties in class management. 59.62% also felt thorny in classroom discipline management (Figure 4), expecting more guidance and help in these aspects.

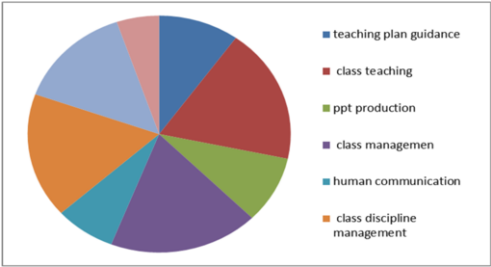


Figure 4. Difficulties encountered by normal students in the practice

5.3. Few practice opportunity for normal students

In the educational practice, 44.23% of interns had 6 to 10 classes, and 32.69% had less than 5 classes. There were many reasons for this situation. From the perspective of practice schools, it reflected the current high teaching pressure situation of high school teachers, because the instructors didn't dare to risk the interns on the podium. Additionally, insufficient preparation of interns, poor communication between the college and the practice school, and few class hours of the discipline itself were also the reasons.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Making preparations before the practice

Before the practice, colleges should carry out the discipline training of primary and secondary schools for students in a planned way. The grasping of the textbook version and knowledge system used by the practice school could facilitate interns to quickly get into the practice state. Meanwhile, the connection between each practice stage should be strengthened. Personal growth files for normal students' educational probation and educational practice should be formulated, consisting of three parts, namely, the description of the whole practice process and the procedure introduction, the practice process and the reflection of normal students' educational practice, preparing for their participation in educational practice in the future, wherein the second part should include the records of class attendance and evaluation, the work log of the class teacher, the teaching plan, the final practice summary and practice evaluation. With the practice manual, the real-time feedback and communication in the process of educational probation and practice should be combined with the network to promote the development of normal students' practical ability.

6.2 To enhance the instructor's sense of responsibility

College and primary and secondary school instructors should enhance their sense of responsibility and communicate more frequently with interns to find and solve problems in the process of education in time. Professional instructors in colleges and primary and secondary school teachers should clarify their responsibilities. College instructors mainly provide necessary teaching guidance for normal students in terms of ideology and morality, professional basic knowledge, teaching theory, teaching skills,

etc., promoting the improvement of their abilities and further enrichment of their professional knowledge. Primary and secondary school teachers mainly guide normal students in the training of teaching skills and the transformation of teaching roles. They organize normal students to carry out necessary practical teaching and cultivate students' professional and practical skills. In a word, both college instructors and primary and secondary school instructors should be responsible for the guidance of normal students in terms of discipline and professional knowledge, class management and so on. Through the guidance of educational practice, students who could be evaluated according to real practical teaching could be guided to apply the professional theoretical knowledge learned in practical teaching and improve with targeted feedback. Thus, a multi-level and three-dimensional education and guidance system could be formed to improve students' comprehensive quality.

6.3 The perfect carrying out of the “double tutor” educational practice management system

The operation of educational practice could not be separated from the guarantee of the perfect system. These systems include the working system in the whole process, the guiding teacher working system, and the evaluation index system after the educational practice. The responsibility system of educational instructors should be implemented. The post responsibility system of on-campus and off-campus instructors should be established. The role orientation, responsibility requirements, work content, reward and punishment measures of on-campus and off-campus instructors should be clarified to form the post responsibility system. The work responsibility consciousness of on-campus and off-campus instructors should be strengthened. Meanwhile, new educational management methods should be considered and used to finally realize the “practice oriented and student-centered” educational concept.

6.4 To establish various communication platforms

In view of the practice situation of normal students in the practice school, relying on the network, a multi-party communication platform could be established for the timely feedback. The school could issue the practice content and the goal of normal students on the network platform. Normal students could obtain the latest information in time, complete learning tasks and achieve learning goals. The school could grade students according to their performance. Meanwhile, according to students' real practice situation, tasks could be adjusted in time to achieve humanized communication. Students could also put forward problems and questions to be solved through the platform and get timely guidance and response from teachers. Instructors should reflect the practice situation of normal students on this multi-party communication platform as more as possible giving normal students more suggestions, keeping contact with and communicate with colleges to ensure the high efficiency and quality of normal students' practice.

6.5 Study from international experience

Developed countries have accumulated rich experience in guaranteeing the quality of teachers under the “double tutor” system, and have evolved a scientific and rich model of teacher training based on it.

In many universities in the United States, students in normal education practice on the basis of “double tutor” cooperative teaching. In this mode, colleges and universities have established a broader partnership with their surrounding primary and secondary schools[3] .a project organization operation. “Direct school training” is the normal education mode implemented by the British Ministry of Education nationwide, which has been Implemented nearly ten years. In this mode, the numbers of primary and secondary schools form a teaching school alliance, and then look for universities to cooperate; All the follow-up work is carried out by the Teaching School Alliance. Normal university students will complete practical training in schools within the Alliance and obtain corresponding teacher certificates and job opportunities[4]. Singapore's “three mentors” collaboration model: create an internship mentor group. In order to ensure the quality of teacher education, the Singapore government developed the “double tutor” system into the multi-tutor system. Normal university students will receive guidance from multiple tutors when participating in educational practice[5]. In addition to the “double tutor” system, school coordination tutors are added in this training mode. They come from the primary and secondary schools where normal university students practice and are responsible for organization, management and quality supervision[6].

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