A Study on the Current Situation and Strategies of Education Curriculum Reform in Local Undergraduate Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Quality

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Abstract: Pedagogy course is the most basic and core teacher education course for teacher training students to acquire systematic knowledge of education theory and to form the ability to teach and educate people. In the context of the national unified examination for teacher qualification, the traditional pedagogy course teaching methods, approaches, and curriculum design, which are mainly based on knowledge transmission, have been difficult to adapt to the intrinsic requirements of teacher education students' competence cultivation in the new situation. Therefore, this study combines the background of the national unified examination for teacher qualification certificate, focuses on the quality perspective, focuses on exploring the current situation of local undergraduate colleges and universities in the reform of pedagogy courses, and puts forward the reform strategies and suggestions for the competence cultivation of teacher education students in order to lay a solid foundation for the reform of education courses for the cultivation of teacher talents, and to provide useful experience for the improvement of the quality of teacher talent cultivation.

Keywords: Local colleges and universities, Teacher qualification, Education curriculum reform

1. Introduction

The National Unified Examination for Teacher Qualification (hereinafter referred to as the National Unified Examination) is an examination system in which the national education authorities set uniform examination standards and the provincial education administrative departments are responsible for the organisation and implementation of the examination, which is divided into two parts, namely, the written examination and the interview, and the national examination system is based on a uniform standard for evaluating whether or not applicants for teacher qualification possess the basic qualities necessary for engaging in the teaching profession, and the purpose of this system is to strictly access to the teaching profession and to safeguard the quality of the teaching force. The purpose of the examination system is to strictly enforce access to the teaching profession, safeguard the quality of the teaching force, and promote the professional development of teachers. The formation and soundness of such a system has had both a positive and, to a certain extent, unanticipated impact on the capacity development of teacher training students. On the one hand, the implementation of the national unified examination requires undergraduate colleges and universities qualified to train teacher-training students to improve the quality of teacher-training students; on the other hand, such colleges and universities are forced to "make quick successes and short-term profits" in setting the objectives of the relevant programmes in order to enable more teacher-training students to obtain the qualification for the teaching profession and to increase the employment rate. As a result, the contradiction between the quality of teacher training and the objectives of education programmes is becoming more and more irreconcilable. From a quality perspective, in order to promote the construction of a quality assurance system for teacher education and improve the quality of personnel training for teacher education majors, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued the Implementation Measures for the Certification of Teacher Education Majors in Ordinary Institutions of Higher Learning (Provisional) in October 2017, deciding to carry out the certification of teacher education majors in ordinary institutions of higher learning and to implement a three-tier monitoring and certification. Teacher education graduates who have passed the first level of certification must, like non-teacher education students, take the national unified examination for primary and secondary school teacher qualifications (the "national examination" or "teacher qualification examination"), and pass the written examination, interview, and accreditation in order to obtain a primary
and secondary school teacher qualification certificate[^1]. The qualification of primary and secondary school teachers can only be obtained after passing the written test, interview and certification[^1]. At present, the lagging reform of the pedagogy curriculum and the solidified single teaching mode have become a kind of inherent crisis in the training of teacher education students in local undergraduate colleges and universities in the context of the national unified examination. In order to further improve the quality of teacher training students and promote the healthy and orderly development of the teacher education profession, it is imperative to promote the study of pedagogy curriculum reform.

2. Analysis of the Importance of Teaching Qualifications for Access to the Teaching Profession

All sectors of the society have criteria for entry into the sector, i.e. sectoral entry qualifications. Teacher's qualification is the entry qualification for teachers to enter the teaching profession to work in education. Each country has its own standards for the entry qualification of the teaching profession. In the United States, for example, the teacher qualification system includes teacher qualification certificates, policies on the employment of new teachers and the PES, and so on, which have contributed positively to the enhancement of the professionalism of teachers and the rational distribution of teachers among schools. At present, the Preakness examination system of the American Centre for Educational Services is the most practical teacher qualification examination system in the United States. Some American scholars are of the view that the teacher qualification examination is an important means to ensure the quality of teaching, and that if one wants to become a people's teacher and fulfill the responsibilities required by the teaching profession, he or she must first sit for the teacher qualification examination and obtain a teacher's qualification certificate. At different times, scholars in various countries have conducted useful studies on the teacher qualification examination system and achieved positive results. The teacher access system is the institutional basis for teacher quality assurance; without a strict teacher access system, there can be no high quality standard of teachers. China's teacher access system was gradually established with the development of education, and since the reform and opening up, China's teacher access system has experienced three stages: the exploration period, the institutionalisation period and the deepening development period[^2]. After the implementation of the national unified examination for teacher qualification in China, many scholars have studied and explored the teacher qualification examination from different dimensions, and in terms of research content, there are studies on examination standards, studies from the perspective of the development of teacher competence, and studies on the setting of curriculum standards. Through literature combing, it is not difficult to find that China's teacher qualification examination has gone through several stages of conception, pilot, and formal implementation.2010-2013, belongs to the conception stage of the national unified examination, this period, China's teacher training students can be in school through the course assessment qualified directly to obtain the teacher qualification certificate.2013 belongs to the pilot stage, China's education administrative department issued a notice to implement the nationwide National Teacher Qualification Certificate Reform Pilot. In 2014, China's education authorities further deepened the reform of primary and secondary school teacher qualification policy, explicitly requiring teacher education students in teacher training colleges and universities to obtain teacher qualification certificates by taking the National Unified Examination, and, at the same time, registering for the examination once every five years.2015 belongs to the implementation stage, in which both teacher education students and non-teacher education students are required to pass the Teacher Qualification Certificate Examination, and implement a regular registration system. The implementation of this system has further raised the threshold for primary and secondary school teachers to engage in education, and the past privilege of teacher-training students being able to obtain a teacher's qualification certificate upon graduation no longer exists, while non-teacher-training students can also sit for the teacher's qualification examination. The implementation of the unified national examination has, on the one hand, broken the monopoly of teacher-training students on the qualification of education practitioners and promoted fairness in the practice of education, while on the other hand, it has tightened the entry standards for the practice of the teaching profession, which is of great significance in that it further safeguards the benign development of the teaching force and strengthens the endogenous impetus for the development of the force, and is conducive to a gradual improvement of the quality of the development of the teaching force in the long run.

3. Implications of the "National Unified Examination" for the training of teacher training students in local undergraduate colleges and universities

Under the background of national "double first-class" construction, local undergraduate colleges and
universities have great potential in discipline construction and professional development, but due to the
short history of running schools, unclear objectives of running schools, and insufficiently condensed
characteristics of running schools and other shortcomings, their competitive advantages are not obvious,
and thus in terms of the quality of talent training and comprehensive strength, compared with the old
comprehensive universities, their foundation is still relatively weak. Therefore, in terms of the quality
and comprehensive strength of talent training, compared with the established comprehensive universities,
the foundation is still relatively weak, and the cultivation of talents is always in a passive situation of
small quantity and weak quality. All along, local undergraduate colleges and universities have been
undertaking the important responsibility and mission of cultivating qualified teachers for the local
community, and the teacher education programme is the important cornerstone of local undergraduate
colleges and universities’ talent cultivation. Strengthening the development of teacher education
profession is an important foundation for promoting the professional development of teachers. Teachers’
professional status is the status they gain as a social profession with professional knowledge and skills
that cannot be replaced by other professions, so it is crucial to strengthen the professionalism of the
Teaching force[31]. For a long time, local undergraduate colleges and universities have lacked creativity
and innovation due to the irrational layout of teacher education majors and the old-fashioned curriculum,
resulting in the lack of motivation for teacher training, the quality of teacher training is obviously low,
and the quality of teacher training students’ employment has once been criticised by employers. In the
context of the national unified examination, both teacher training students and non-teacher training
students have to accept the national examination together, and both face the pressure of passing the
examination. The biggest difference between teacher education and non-teacher education is the presence
or absence of education programmes, the hallmark of teacher education. Teacher education students
receive a systematic and specialised education curriculum, whereas non-teacher education students lack
such a curriculum. Education-based programmes provide teacher educators with the various types of core
literacies needed for the practice of teaching, and provide a fundamental guideline for the professional
development of teachers. Teacher educators undertake important responsibilities such as the development
of various teacher education programmes, the creation of teacher education environments, and the liaison
of teacher education communities[31]. At present, from the current situation since the implementation of
the national unified examination for five years, the content of the examination has been further broadened,
the subjects of the examination have been gradually refined, the difficulty of the examination has been
gradually increased, and the passing rate of the examination is generally low. In the written examination,
in addition to the examination of knowledge and ability, more attention is paid to the application of
pedagogical and psychological knowledge in practical teaching. In the interview, the proportion of
pedagogy and psychology-related theories in teaching practice is as high as 40% or more, which shows
that the level of teaching practice ability directly affects the quality of teacher teaching, which is
obviously a more comprehensive and more integrated examination of teacher training students. Therefore,
the inspiration of the National Unified Examination for the reform of the education curriculum of local
undergraduate colleges is that the curriculum reform should be based on the “practice orientation” and
“competence orientation” of the National Unified Examination, and should pay more attention to and
strengthen the competence orientation. The curriculum reform should pay more attention to and
strengthen the cultivation of the practical ability of teacher training students in accordance with the
“practice orientation” and “competence orientation” of the National Unified Examination.

4. The current situation of pedagogy curriculum reform in local undergraduate colleges in the
context of the national unified examination

4.1. Irrational curriculum and insufficient practical teaching

Through the sampling survey of three local undergraduate colleges in different geographical areas, it
is found that: first, in terms of credits, there is a big difference in the credits of pedagogy courses in the
three schools, and the credits of individual colleges and universities are on the low side. Secondly, there
is a general phenomenon of more theoretical hours and less practical hours in the pedagogy courses of
individual institutions, or they are at the lowest line of practical hours stipulated by the curriculum
construction and schools, and the arrangement of hours is extremely unreasonable. (As shown in Table
1.) The reasons for this are analysed mainly in the following aspects: First, individual institutions are
accustomed to the long-standing theoretical teaching mode based on the transmission of knowledge, and
lack the courage to reform practical education and teaching. Secondly, the support of individual
institutions for the educational teaching reform of pedagogy courses is not strong enough, and there is
lack of corresponding incentives, which leads to a relative lack of practical teaching content in pedagogy
courses, and teacher training students have less time and opportunities for practical simulation exercises
in this kind of courses, and the time for internships and trainee ships in the use of theoretical knowledge related to pedagogy is short, and without enough time to ensure that, the enhancement of the ability to practise can not be talked about. Without enough time to ensure, the improvement of practical ability is impossible to talk about. Even if some colleges and universities have increased the number of hours of practical teaching in their pedagogy programmes to meet the needs of teaching reform, the teaching effect fails to meet the requirements of teacher training due to the teachers’ lack of experience and the fact that they are in a state of experimentation and groping.

Table 1: Comparison of pedagogy courses in 3 local undergraduate colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>credit</th>
<th>total period (45 minutes / class hour)</th>
<th>Proportion of theoretical hours</th>
<th>Proportion of practical hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36 + 54</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48 + 68</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30 + 58</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Teaching objectives are quick to achieve quick results and one-sidedly pursue the passing rate of the teacher qualification examination.

Figure 1: Statistics of normal students' mastery and forgetting of pedagogy

Since the implementation of the national unified examination, local undergraduate colleges and universities have been facing great pressure on the training of teacher training students, and the passing rate of the teacher qualification examination has become the most important indicator for measuring and evaluating the employment of teacher training students. Many colleges and universities have started to revise their course syllabi, and individual colleges and universities have even set the passing rate of the teacher qualification examination as one of the teaching objectives of the courses, which is the basis for evaluating and measuring the teaching level of teachers. The haste of the objectives of the pedagogy course can improve the passing rate of teacher qualification examination of teacher training students in a short period of time, but from the perspective of the law of time forgetting, with the passage of time, the understanding, deepening and self-renewal of the knowledge related to pedagogy of teacher training students will be gradually weakened, or even be completely forgotten. In the long run, it is not conducive to the educational practice of teacher training students or the long-term benign development of the teaching force. Through a follow-up survey of 300 current teacher training students in three colleges S, F and G, it was found that 45% of the students partially forgot pedagogical knowledge three months after passing the teacher qualification examination, 68% partially forgot pedagogical knowledge six months after passing the teacher qualification examination, and 92% completely forgot pedagogical knowledge twelve months after passing the teacher qualification examination. (As shown in Figure 1). Goal Orientation Theory states that students tend to use different orientations when engaging in teaching and learning activities, and that they differ in their motivation to engage in learning, their justification for their efforts in learning activities, their perceptions of their own abilities, their criteria for judging whether...
they are succeeding or failing, and their behavioral performances when engaging in learning activities. The goal of teaching for quick success belongs to the category of learning goal orientation, which will make students lose interest in learning activities, but in order to pass the teacher qualification examination, students have to accept the challenge of memorising a large amount of knowledge in a short period of time, and the efforts made by students to apply what they have learnt in terms of in-depth comprehension and application are not enough.

4.3. Different curriculum standards and complexity of course content

Since the implementation of the National Unified Examination, China has not unified planning and preparation of pedagogical teaching materials, thus the selection of pedagogical teaching materials in various local colleges and universities has a large difference, and there is no uniform standard. At the same time, the content of the course varies greatly according to the preference of the academic interests of the authors. Course content is the knowledge carrier of pedagogical courses, which contains specific facts, opinions, concepts, principles and problems in pedagogical disciplines and their ways and means of dealing with them, etc. It is the object or content of students' learning, and it will change with the level of social productivity and the development of economy and culture. The content of pedagogy course involves philosophy, economics, sociology, anthropology, history and other multidisciplinary fields of knowledge, is a practical and comprehensive course, with the characteristics of theoretical abstraction, strong theoretical connection to practice, and a wide range of professional involvement. As the core course of teacher education, the content of pedagogy course should cover the brief history of education, education law, education purpose, moral education theory, curriculum theory, teaching, teachers, students, classroom teachers and management, etc. However, from the actual situation of the survey, most of the local undergraduate colleges and universities offer the pedagogy course due to the limitation of credits or class hours, the content of the course has to be compressed a lot, and many contents that should have been retained have been deleted, resulting in the course to be more comprehensive. Retained content of subject knowledge, resulting in a narrow and insufficient coverage of course content. For example, the number of hours of public education in S colleges and universities is 36 for specialists and 54 for undergraduates, and even within the colleges and universities, due to the different nature of the specialties, the allocation of hours for undergraduate teacher-training specialties is also inconsistent, with 48 hours for science and engineering and 54 hours for liberal arts. It is difficult for teachers to complete their teaching tasks in accordance with the arrangement of the amount of hours, and the more important contents, such as school management and moral education, are not fully covered. To a certain extent, this is narrow and incomplete compared with the content required for the national unified examination.

4.4. Teachers are of mixed quality, and the teaching ability of young teachers needs to be further strengthened

Through the survey, it is found that in the three colleges of S, G and F, the overall quality of the teaching team is not high, whether from the viewpoint of the academic structure of the teaching team, the structure of the title, the number of teachers or the distribution of specialties. Firstly, the academic structure of pedagogy course teachers is uneven, and teachers with doctoral degrees are obviously less. Secondly, the title structure of pedagogy course teachers is mostly in junior and intermediate titles, and the number of teachers with senior titles is obviously insufficient, and there is a lack of leading figures in curriculum construction. Third, the number of full-time pedagogy course teachers is insufficient, and the number of part-time teachers is high. Fourth, the professional backgrounds possessed by the teachers are inconsistent, and the number of teachers majoring in non-education subjects accounts for a large proportion. (As shown in Table 2). The professional knowledge possessed by teachers is the basis and key to the quality of course teaching. In the survey, it was found that young teachers in the three institutions were responsible for teaching a large number of courses, including pedagogy, and at the same time faced the pressure of heavy scientific research tasks, in which lesson preparation time could not be guaranteed and energy could not be focused, thus making it difficult to effectively ensure the quality of pedagogy course teaching. Many young teachers lack the opportunity to participate in further education and training for teaching pedagogy. Pedagogy is a comprehensive and practical teacher education course, and the lack of further education and training opportunities for young teachers will, to a certain extent, affect the quality of the teaching of the course, which is not conducive to the construction of the course in the long run, the improvement of the teaching ability of young teachers, and even more detrimental to the systematic training of teacher training students. (As shown in Table 2)
5.1. Reasonable setting of course content, focusing on enhancing the practicality of the course

Under the background of the national unified examination, the reform of pedagogy curriculum should be combined with the key points and difficulties of the examination, and according to the characteristics of the discipline of pedagogy, the curriculum content should be set reasonably and the practicality of the curriculum should be enhanced. The curriculum should highlight the key knowledge with “tasks” and drive the knowledge with key knowledge. The teaching of the course must highlight the key points and bring the whole with the key points, rather than covering everything\(^\text{(3)}\). First, in the course content setting focus on the combination of theory and practice, in the class schedule can be appropriate to improve the amount of hours of practical teaching. Secondly, teaching methods and approaches should be further innovated. Interest is to stimulate students to learn the internal motivation, the traditional knowledge-based teaching form, to a certain extent, will dissolve the students' interest in learning, in the curriculum can be more arrangements for primary and secondary schools to observe teaching, classroom teaching case studies, and other forms of practical course content, the form of teaching and teaching content to achieve an effective convergence. Third, the course content should increase the content of teacher-student interaction, teacher-student interaction can further enliven the teaching atmosphere and strengthen the communication between teachers and students. Fourth, the curriculum should be moderately increase the content of the problem discussion, focusing on cultivating students' independent problem-solving ability.
5.2. Clarify the teaching goal orientation, and endeavour to enhance students' comprehensive quality

In the context of the national unified examination, the reform of the pedagogical curriculum should further clarify the orientation of teaching objectives. Teaching objectives should be set with the purpose of promoting the overall development of students and cultivating their comprehensive quality. It should start from the following aspects: First, the objectives should be orientated to all students and promote the comprehensive development of students. Orientation of all students refers to the orientation of students at different levels, not the same requirements for all students, but to have different requirements for students at different levels, to pay more attention to the cultivation of students' morality and personality, and the cultivation of students' national consciousness and practical ability. Secondly, the setting of teaching objectives should be conducive to the development of students' learning initiative, and students should be encouraged to engage in cooperative learning and inquiry learning. Teaching objectives should focus on the change from teachers' "teaching" to students' "learning", and give full play to students' subjective initiative in learning. Thirdly, the teaching objectives should focus on the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality, especially the cultivation of students' innovation, practice and hands-on ability.

5.3. Strengthen the construction of the teaching team, focus on improving the professional level of teachers

High-quality teacher team is the key to the reform of pedagogy curriculum, and the construction of teacher team should be further strengthened. Firstly, we should strengthen the introduction of teachers with professional background in pedagogy, make up for the short board of insufficient number of full-time teachers, fully guarantee the preparation time of pedagogy courses, and further reduce the amount of class hours taught by teachers. Secondly, full-time teachers with doctoral degrees should be further introduced to further enhance the vitality and creativity of the construction of education majors and disciplines, and efforts should be made to build teaching teams with strong strengths, so as to enhance the actual effect of curriculum reform with the quality of the construction of disciplines and majors. Thirdly, we should strengthen the training of the teaching team, and further strengthen the comprehensive ability training of the teachers of education courses by upgrading their academic qualifications, course seminars, and further training outside the university, so as to continuously improve the teachers' professional competence and their ability to teach and educate people. Fourthly, the management and training of part-time teachers should be strengthened, part-time teachers should be encouraged to actively carry out the teaching construction of the courses, the tasks of course construction should be clarified, and the professionalism and business awareness of part-time teachers should be strengthened.

5.4. Strengthening the quality of the curriculum and focusing on creating educational excellence programmes

Course quality is the course teaching activities and its results in the inherent characteristics of the degree of satisfaction of the demand, it is closely related to the leadership and management of the course, course funding, teaching conditions, teacher motivation and student quality and other factors. To strengthen the quality construction of the curriculum, it is necessary to highlight the evaluation orientation of the quality construction of the curriculum, and make efforts to create educational quality courses. To establish a sound evaluation system for the quality construction of pedagogical courses, firstly, we should build dynamic indicators for the evaluation of course construction, secondly, we should increase the proportion of practical teaching links in the course, and thirdly, we should increase the indicators for the quality construction of the course from the three dimensions of teachers, students and society. The quality construction of pedagogical courses should further strengthen the awareness of course quality, through in-depth exploration and practice, to build a number of high-quality online and offline combination of high-quality course resources, to increase the category of auxiliary elective courses in education, and to enhance students' ability in various aspects, so as to push the curriculum reform to the depth.

5.5. Strengthen the reform and innovation leadership, and strive to enhance the awareness of the integration of curriculum and evidence

Reform means seeking new changes, and innovation is the kernel of education curriculum reform, which is the key to breaking the old and establishing the new. In the context of the national unified examination for teacher qualification, the integration of curriculum and certification is a major trend in
the reform of the professional curriculum of teacher education, and it is necessary to put in a lot of effort in this regard. The integration of the curriculum and certificate is not only to promote better employment of students, but it includes the integration of ideas, knowledge, ability and other aspects of the curriculum and certificate. Enhance the awareness of curriculum integration of education curriculum reform, one is to strengthen the construction of curriculum ideology and politics, curriculum construction in highlighting the knowledge base of the curriculum, to fully explore the ideological nature of the curriculum, the second is to integrate the knowledge of the national unified examination for teacher qualification into the curriculum teaching of the knowledge of the difficult points and key points, and the third is to further strengthen the cultivation of students' knowledge ability and practical operation ability. At the same time, teachers should further enhance their comprehensive professional ability in multidisciplinary intersection, integrate multidisciplinary knowledge of philosophy, anthropology, economics and other disciplines into the teaching content of the integration of the curriculum and certification, and enhance the comprehensiveness, applicability and practicability of the curriculum reform.

6. Conclusion

With the continuous development of China's education endeavor, society's expectations of educators are getting higher and higher, and the threshold of the national unified examination, which is the qualification for the profession, is bound to become more and more stringent. At the same time, local undergraduate colleges and universities will face more and more pressure on the cultivation of teacher education talents. Therefore, vigorously promoting the reform of pedagogy courses and other teacher education courses is an inherent requirement for enhancing the quality of teacher education professional training, and is also a general trend. Only on the basis of quality and connotation construction, according to the requirements of the national unified examination, and conforming to the changing situation of the society, can the reform of pedagogy curriculum better stimulate the vitality and creativity of the curriculum reform in the cultivation of talents.

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