

A comparative study on the internship handbooks and their guiding effects for pre-school undergraduates in China and Australia

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Abstract: The importance of educational practice is increasingly recognized by governments and researchers in various countries, "Instruction handbook for Educational Practice" is an important guiding basis for educational practice, and the guiding effect of instruction handbook is an important factor affecting the effect of educational practice. The study elects the internship handbooks of preschool education majors in Chinese and Australian universities. Based on the textual analysis and interview method, the text structure, content and the guidance effect of the internship handbooks between China and Australia are compared and analyzed. Finally, some suggestions are put forward to improve the internship handbook of preschool education which are: increase the reflection goal and give full play to the regulation of the internship handbook; Refine the internship content and improve the practicality of the internship handbook; Clarify the responsibilities of all parties and enhance the guidance of the internship handbook; Improve the evaluation system and strengthen the supervision of the practice handbook.

Keywords: China, Australia, Undergraduates, Pre-school education, Internship handbook, Guiding effect, compare

1. Introduction

With the reform and development of teacher education system and the deepening of teacher education research in the world, educational practice is regarded as the peak of teacher education practice[1], has been paid more and more attention by governments and researchers. In 2018, China issued the Notice of Action Plan for Revitalizing Teacher Education (2018-2022), which emphasized the need to enhance the practical ability of normal students and cultivate outstanding teachers in the future. In recent years, the training of pre-service teachers' professional practice ability has also become an important part of Australian teacher education reform. "Australian Professional Standards for Teachers" clearly stipulate the requirements of pre-service teachers[2]. Although the significance of educational practice has been widely recognized, in China, the work of teacher practice has not been paid enough attention. There are some circumstances in China's educational practice, such as formalization of practice process, unspecific practice guidance, and unclear evaluation index of practice. On the one hand, Interns generally report that educational practice pays attention to formal process, despises the effect of practice, and their gains are limited after practice. On the other hand, the division of responsibilities between practical instructors in practice places and instructors in colleges and universities is not clear enough to provide effective guidance to interns.

Therefore, this study relies on "Undergraduate Program jointly run by Central China Normal University and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia", and the original data and materials come from the students participating in the program, which ensures the authenticity of this study. Based on the comparison of Chinese and Australian internship handbooks and their implementation effects, it is helpful to compare the differences between Chinese and Australian internship programs. And some suggestions are put forward to improve the internship handbook between China and Australia, so as to better guide the practice.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research subjects

The 12 interns who participated in the study were all Chinese students who participated in the Sino-Australian Cooperative Education Project, including 6 undergraduates majoring in preschool education in H University in 2014 (China-Australia class) and 6 undergraduates majoring in preschool education in M University in 2014 (China-Australia class).

2.2 Research methods

2.2.1 Textual analysis

Text analysis is an analysis method from the surface of text to the deep of text. Through the "Pre-school Education Practice Plan" and "Education Practice Guidance handbook" for undergraduates of Education College of Central China Normal University (hereinafter referred to as H University), and the "Pre-school Education Practice Guidance handbook" for undergraduates of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (hereinafter referred to as M University)[3], Anatomy of text content, in-depth analysis from structural system, presentation mode and internal logical structure, etc., found the differences between Chinese and Australian practice handbooks.

2.2.2 Interview method

Interview is a kind of research method by which researchers learn about relevant contents and collect data through oral conversation with subjects. In this study, the interns were interviewed semi-structurally, so as to understand the use of the internship manual and the problems existing in the use, and to see the guiding effect of the internship manual on interns. The interview tool adopts self-made interview outline. First, the author comprehensively analyzes the contents of the manual in China, then makes a preliminary interview with two interns from H and M universities. Combined with the preliminary interview suggestions, the interview outline is revised, and after discussion and revision by many people, the interview outline of the guiding effect of the pre-school education practice guide manual is finally formed.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Comparison of the Text Structure of internship handbook between China and Australia

Chinese internship plan mainly includes internship purpose, internship content, internship activity arrangement and specific requirements, and educational internship summary and performance evaluation are supplemented in the education internship handbook. Australia's internship handbook has a clear structure and rich content, with a total of 16 items, which mainly involves four parts: the basis for formulating the internship handbook, roles and responsibilities, internship objectives and planning, and internship evaluation standards and tools. Based on the above text interpretation, it can be found that the structure of the internship handbook of H University is relatively unclear and complete, and the structural sequence pays attention to the subject logic and neglects the psychological logic.

It is embodied in the following three points. Firstly, the internship activity arrangement and specific requirements in the Chinese internship handbook include the task arrangement for interns and internship instructors, and the contents have overlapping parts. It is inconvenient for interns and instructors to read. Secondly, the Chinese internship handbook does not present its basis for formulation, which is not convenient for interns to grasp the purpose and significance of educational internship as a whole. Thirdly, in the aspect of structural sequence arrangement, the handbook is carried out according to the concept, purpose, content, activity arrangement and requirements of practice, and follows the discipline logic. However, the internship handbook of M University has a clear structure and follows the psychological logic of readers. In terms of structural system, the handbook covers the task requirements and behavioral norms of all internship participants, and provides a wealth of supporting tables. In order arrangement, the handbook is arranged according to the psychological logic of interns. From the formulation basis of the internship handbook, the responsibilities of all parties involved in the internship, to the planning of the specific internship and the evaluation of the internship, from macro to micro, the interns are provided with guidance step by

step. However, the internship handbook of M University is also complicated in content, which is not convenient for interns to grasp the essence of internship quickly and accurately.

3.2 Comparison of the contents of Chinese and Australian internship handbooks

3.2.1 Internship objectives

The internship goal of H University focuses on interns' understanding of the national education policy, cultivating the application ability of professional knowledge and the scientific research practice ability of educational research in practice. The internship goal of M University focuses on the application of interns' educational knowledge, the formation of personal educational ideas and the development of critical reflection ability. By comparison, Although the internship objectives of H and M universities both emphasize the application of professional knowledge and the formation of personal education ideas, the requirements of M universities are deeper and have practical value.

3.2.2 Contents of the internship

The internship handbooks of H and M universities both describe the specific content of the internship, but they are different in content presentation. The specific content of the internship in H University is scattered in the internship activity arrangement, and it is mostly an overview statement, which is not carried out in depth. The internship content of M University is completely presented in the internship planning part, and according to the order of internship time, The contents of the weekly internship are clearly divided.

The arrangement of internship content in M University is more hierarchical, and the requirements for interns are gradually improved, following the principle of gradual and orderly progress[4]. For example, communication with parents is mentioned in the internship contents of H and M universities, and the handbook of H university only takes "planned progress" as the limiting requirement; M University divides this task into two stages, which are arranged in the first week and the second week of internship respectively. To sum up, the arrangement of internship content in M University Handbook reflects the continuity of professional development, and requires specific and meticulous, which is convenient for interns to operate in practice; However, the requirements of internship content in Chinese internship plan are more general, and the task orientation is not specific enough, so interns may encounter confusion in practice.

3.2.3 Guidance requirements

H University did not clearly present the guidance requirements and division of responsibilities for practical instructors, while M University clearly and completely set the guidance requirements for instructors and divided their responsibilities. Specifically, H University stipulates the responsibilities of college instructors in the teaching practice handbook, but the description statements are more general. Such as "fully grasping the internship situation of interns' teaching work", "arranging relevant documents for learning" and "educational interns love education"; The handbook does not present the division of responsibilities and guidance requirements for kindergarten practice instructors, but only mentions the content of "the internship instructor introduces the class situation" in the internship activity planning. M University provides task lists for kindergarten practice instructors, college instructors and college internship management offices[5], and presents the guidance requirements and responsibilities clearly and intuitively according to the time sequence, which is convenient for the practical operation of all parties.

3.2.4 Internship evaluation

The internship evaluation of H University tends to be summative evaluation, with less supervision and control over the process. University is more inclined to process evaluation, focusing on monitoring and recording the internship process. Both H and M universities include intern self-evaluation, kindergarten practice tutor evaluation and college instructor evaluation, and adopt three-dimensional evaluation. Strive for the comprehensiveness of internship evaluation. In the presentation of evaluation results, the evaluation of H University presents comments and achievements, mostly summary judgments; However, M University presents the specific rating and text description of each evaluation

dimension[6]. Kindergarten practice instructors should not only rate the performance of internship, but also describe it in text, and put forward suggestions for improvement in the next step.

3.3 Comparison of Guiding Effects of Practice handbook between China and Australia

3.3.1 Commonality of Guidance Effect of Practice handbook between China and Australia

By analyzing the interview texts of interns, the author divides the guiding role of China-Australia internship handbook into three categories: guidance, supervision and regulation. Among them, the guiding role means that the internship handbook can give interns specific guidance in terms of internship objectives, internship contents, internship requirements, evaluation standards, etc.. Standardize the specific steps, methods and procedures for interns to complete their internship tasks. Supervision means that the internship handbook can urge interns to complete the internship tasks according to the specified time and requirements in the process of guiding internship.[7]On the other hand, it can restrain the guiding behavior and norms of practice instructors.The adjustment function refers to the internship handbook guiding interns to constantly reflect and make adjustments in order to cope with and solve the situation or problems encountered in the internship process. By combing the interview contents and combining with different internship stages, the guiding effect of China-Australia internship handbook is shown in Table 1.

The China-Australia internship instruction handbook has played a guiding and regulating role in the internship process, among which the guiding role is the main one. In view of the guiding role of the internship handbook, among the 12 interviewees surveyed, the internship handbook has played a guiding role for all Australian interns and half of Chinese interns who have used the internship handbook. And, the internship handbooks of China and Australia can provide guidance for interns in most internship stages. In view of the adjustment function of internship handbooks, both Chinese and Australian internship handbooks mainly help interns to adjust in the stage of reflection and evaluation.

However, in the implementation stage, both Chinese and Australian interns did not use the internship handbook, and the internship handbook could not play a guiding role. This may be due to the uncertainty and generation in the implementation of educational activities. As a text material, the internship handbook is difficult to describe and guide all operation behaviors. Of course, this also reflects to a certain extent that the description of the implementation process of the activities in the China-Australia internship handbook is not sufficient and needs to be further improved.

Table 1 Comparison of guiding effects of internship handbooks between H and M universities handbook.

	Internship period /number	Internship preparation period	Probation period	Activity design period	Activity implementation period	Reflective evaluation period
H university intern	A					—
	B	Guide				Guide
	C	—				—
	D	—				—
	E					—
	X	Guide		adjust Guide	adjust Guide	adjust
M university intern	R	Guide	Guide adjust Supervision	—		adjust
	M	Guide		Guide		Guide
	I	Guide		Guide		Guide
	T	Guide	Supervision Guide			Guide
	P	Guide	Guide			Guide
	S	Guide	Guide		Guide	

Note: "-" represents the situation that interns use the internship handbook, but the internship handbook does not have a practical guiding role in their practice; "" indicates that interns do not use the internship

3.3.2 Differences in Guidance Effect of Practice handbook between China and Australia

On the continuity of guidance, the Australian internship handbook can provide more complete and coherent guidance in the whole internship process, while the Chinese internship handbook can only play a guiding role in individual internship stages. For example, during the internship preparation period, the Chinese internship handbook has a high utilization rate and played a guiding role. The intern said, "It provides us with a direction. Actually, we all followed the above steps (X124)" However, because no intern used the internship handbook during the probation period, the handbook did not play a guiding role at this stage.

Australian internship handbook plays a guiding role in every stage of internship, providing interns with rich, continuous and complete internship instructions, and realizing the guidance of interns in the whole process of internship. For example, the internship handbook plays a guiding role in the whole process of internship. During the internship preparation period, Australian internship handbook can help interns to define the specific tasks, arrangements and assessment methods of internship, help interns to plan their own internship, and guide the overall direction of internship. The intern said that "It (handbook) provides us with some basic requirements, as well as some contact information of the internship contact person in the college in terms of observation plan and internship arrangement, which helps us to better plan the internship (M141)".

In the depth of the guidance of the internship handbook, the guidance of the Chinese internship handbook is not practical, while the Australian internship handbook is more specific and clear. The Chinese internship handbook failed to provide effective guidance to interns. Although interns sometimes used the handbook, they said that they did not get substantial help. It was difficult for interns to deal with practical problems, and the internship handbook did not play a guiding role in depth. During the internship preparation period, The intern said that the internship handbook did not present the duty requirements for the internship leader.

Australian internship handbook can go deep into the specific tasks of each internship stage, and provide operable guidance for interns. For example, during the probation period, interns were provided with specific observation methods, which were required to be used in observation records. Interns said, "I experienced a situation in my last internship. Ten observation records should cover five different observation fields and use at least four different observation recording methods (S57)".

In terms of the comprehensiveness of the guidance, the Australian internship handbook can provide more comprehensive and rich guidance for interns, while the role of the Chinese internship handbook is relatively single. The Chinese internship handbook only plays two roles of guidance and regulation in the process of internship. Among them, the adjustment role of the Chinese internship handbook only happens to one intern. Intern X said, "after class, sometimes I will look through the instruction handbook again to see if there is anything that can be used for reference, and then I will look at the contents of the internship plan, whether there is any part consistent with my teaching and research content, and whether it needs further adjustment." Because the Chinese internship handbook does not stipulate that interns should reflect on the course after teaching practice. The regulatory role of practice handbook is not universal. Therefore, the guidance role of the Chinese internship handbook is still more, staying at the guidance level, not diverse enough.

The Australian internship handbook not only plays a guiding role, but also plays a supervisory and regulatory role in the process of practice. Taking intern as an example, during the internship observation period, the internship handbook on the one hand plays a supervisory role, and the evaluation items in the handbook supervise him to strictly require himself with standard standards. On the other hand, it plays a regulatory role, Help interns to solve the problem of little communication with practice tutors, interns from negative communication attitude to positive communication attitude." I will be optimistic about the evaluation classification in the handbook during the internship stage, and pay special attention to my performance in these aspects (R138)," said the intern.

3.3.3 analysis of the reasons for the guidance effect of the practice handbook between China and Australia

From the above analysis, it can be seen that compared with the Australian practice handbook, the guidance effect of the Chinese internship handbook is discontinuous, not in-depth and not comprehensive

Firstly, Chinese interns do not pay enough attention to the handbook. In terms of the use of the practice handbook, the Chinese interns as a whole do not pay enough attention to the practice handbook and do not know enough about the practice handbook. Only one Chinese intern understands the handbook and is able to use it on his own initiative, while most of the Australian interns can actively use the handbook. This shows that the interns do not have enough understanding of the importance of the practice handbook, and the awareness of using the practice handbook is not strong, and the practice handbook is difficult to play a role in the process of practice.

Secondly, the text structure of Chinese internship handbook is not complete. In the preparation of internship handbook, because H University of China has not prepared an internship handbook for preschool education majors, the relevant contents are scattered in different internship documents, resulting in interns needing to refer to multiple documents at the same time in actual use, and it is difficult for the internship handbook to play a comprehensive guiding role.

Thirdly, the Chinese internship handbook is not specific enough. The specific content of Chinese internship handbook needs to be further refined, which is not complete and specific, and is not operable.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Increase the reflection goal and give play to the regulation of the internship handbook

Chinese internship handbook should point out reflective practice goals in internship goals and guide interns to pay attention to reflective practice. Reflective learning ability is an important learning ability of teachers. However, at present, the practice handbook in China still stays in the one-way goal orientation of applying theory to practice, and lacks the two-way goal of reflecting on the practical effect. Therefore, the internship handbook should require interns to apply reflection to the whole internship process, cultivate interns' awareness of reflective learning and enhance their reflective learning ability, so as to help interns gain better professional growth.

Aiming at the internship goal of "cultivating interns' reflective learning ability", the internship requirements can be as follows: in the early stage of internship, let interns understand and master the connotation of reflective learning, and write reflective diaries.[8] In the middle stage of practice, it is emphasized that interns complete teaching reflection records after teaching, and strengthen the reflection requirements of internship handbooks for interns; At the end of internship, interns are required to submit a reflective evaluation of the whole internship. In this way, interns can recognize their problems in the internship process in time by reflecting on each stage of the internship process, and then take measures to make continuous adjustments and improvements.

4.2 Refine the internship content and improve the practicality of the internship handbook

China should step up the preparation of practice handbooks for preschool education majors, arrange the contents according to the time sequence of practice, and organize the contents according to the order from easy to difficult. First, it is the premise of refining the contents of the pre-school practice handbook to formulate a separate practice handbook for pre-school education. At present, some normal colleges and universities in China have used the internship handbook for preschool education alone, and obtained good feedback from interns.

Secondly, arrange the internship contents according to the time sequence, so as to conform to the psychological logic of users and facilitate the operation of interns and instructors. At present, the internship contents in the Chinese internship handbook are too general and low in operability, which leads to the confusion of interns in the internship process, and they are not sure when and what they should do. Therefore, we can learn from Australia to compile according to the order of internship time, and further refine the internship content. For example, internship can be divided into internship preparation period, probation observation period, activity design period and reflection evaluation period. During the internship preparation period, interns are required to read the internship handbook carefully and make their own internship plans; During the probation period, interns are required to determine the observation objects. And use specific observation methods to observe; During the activity design period, inform the interns of the activity areas to be designed and specify the number of activities designed; During the reflective evaluation period, interns are required to complete personal reflective summary and self-evaluation according to specific evaluation criteria.

Third, in the organization order of internship content, we should follow the order from easy to difficult to help interns complete a certain internship task step by step[9]Let interns have the opportunity to practice repeatedly and continuously in the whole process of internship, so as to ensure the completion of the task. For example, for the task of "focusing on children's observation" during the probation period, the internship handbook can first require interns to draw up key observation objects and discuss them with the practice instructor; Secondly, provide specific observation and recording methods,Let interns try to record with different recording methods; Thirdly, under the introduction of the practical tutor, make a preliminary communication with parents to understand the situation of children in the family; Finally, the handbook should provide the writing format of the observation report, so that interns can complete the observation report of young children in combination with class observation and family communication.

4.3 Clarify the responsibilities of all parties and enhance the guidance of the internship handbook

The Chinese internship handbook should specify the guidance requirements of the practical instructors in the internship places and the instructors in colleges and universities. Practice instructors in practice places and university instructors should strengthen cooperation and mutual supervision to form a community and jointly promote the professional development of interns. It is necessary to clarify the guiding contents of practical instructors in practice places and university instructors,Make specific requirements for the instructor's practice guidance process.

For practical instructors in practice places, the handbook can be guided by the improvement of interns' practical ability, and clarify their guiding work. Learn from the task list provided by Australia for practical instructors, and correspond to the guidance contents of practical instructors in different internship periods according to the order of pre-internship, mid-internship and post-internship. At the same time, establish a supervision mechanism for interns to practice tutors.To prevent the squeezing of interns' labor force, ensure the effective practice and help interns' professional development.

For college instructors, the handbook can be guided by the improvement of interns' professional ideas and scientific research practice ability, and clarify their guidance work.[10] It can be presented according to the time sequence. In the early stage of internship, college instructors should give collective counseling to interns to help students make targeted internship plans; In the middle of internship,College instructors should collect research topics from interns to help them design research. At the same time, in the process of practice, the handbook should specify the communication times between college instructors and interns, so that instructors can follow up the interns in time and make timely adjustments to the practice plan.

4.4 Improve the evaluation system and strengthen the supervision of the internship handbook

The Chinese internship handbook should introduce the evaluation mechanism of process education internship, and adopt a combination of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation to ensure the true accuracy of internship evaluation and give full play to the supervision role of internship handbook in the internship process. At present, due to the widespread adoption of summative evaluation in China, there is a phenomenon of "emphasizing results but neglecting process" in educational practice.As a result, some students who have a "coping" mentality for internship can get excellent internship results as long as they complete the prescribed internship tasks. Therefore, we should introduce a process evaluation mechanism, strengthen supervision and evaluation in the process of internship, find students who "cope" with internship in time, and improve the internship effect of interns.

In the middle process of internship, the internship handbook can require interns to reflect and summarize their performance according to the internship evaluation scale on a weekly basis, and form a written record to be reviewed by the practice instructor. [11]At the same time, the practice instructor evaluates and scores the interns' performances according to the internship evaluation scale.Specifically, we can learn from the evaluation scale in the internship handbook of Australia, and increase the comments of practice instructors on interns' performance and suggestions for improvement in the next step under each evaluation index. Based on this, interns can get internship feedback in time during the internship, and then strictly demand themselves according to the standards, and give full play to the supervisory role of the internship handbook in the internship process.[12]

In the final general evaluation stage of internship, the combination of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation can be adopted. On the one hand, the total score of internship can be weighted by the weekly score and the total score of internship; On the other hand, internship instructors should

evaluate the overall performance of interns according to the internship evaluation scale, and form specific written suggestions. Based on this, interns can reflect on and improve their evaluation opinions after the internship, so as to further achieve professional growth.

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