Exploration of Teaching Reform Paths for the Course "Principles of Pedagogy"

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Abstract: With the deepening of educational reforms, the course "Principles of Pedagogy" must keep pace with the times by focusing on reforms in teaching materials, teachers' educational concepts, and teaching evaluation, etc., to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of talent cultivation. This aims to enable students to comprehensively apply their professional knowledge to related work after graduation. To promote the smooth implementation of reforms, it is necessary to confront existing issues in the teaching of "Principles of Pedagogy," such as the disconnection between textbook theory and practice, poor teaching effectiveness, outdated teaching concepts among teachers, low emphasis on teaching research, single teaching methods, and insufficient practical activities. Based on this, this paper explores problem-solving paths and discusses measures from several aspects, such as emphasizing the effective integration of theory and practice in textbook compilation and improving teachers' teaching capabilities, to enhance the quality of talent cultivation and educational teaching.

Keywords: "Principles of Pedagogy"; Curriculum; Teaching reform

1. Introduction

"Principles of Pedagogy" belongs to the discipline of education and, as a foundational course, exhibits distinct characteristics such as fundamentalism and guidance. Its goal is to guide students to understand concepts related to education, master its theories and methodologies, and lay the groundwork for their future study and research on educational issues. Currently, there are several shortcomings in the teaching of this course, including the disconnection between textbook theory and practice, poor teaching effectiveness, and outdated teaching concepts among teachers. These issues not only negatively impact teaching quality but also affect students' professional literacy. Therefore, it is urgent to accelerate the reform process to address the above problems.

2. Problems in the teaching of the "Principles of Pedagogy" course

2.1. Disconnection between textbook theory and practice, poor teaching effectiveness

The current "Principles of Pedagogy" textbooks suffer from a disconnection between theory and practice,

namely, the ineffective application of cases to theoretical knowledge. In reality, educational theories can provide a substantial amount of research achievements for educational practice. If the two cannot be effectively integrated, theory will always remain at the theoretical level, unable to be applied to practice to solve practical problems, and the proposed solutions will have weak connections with real society [1]. When solutions are unclear, reform plans introduced by various regions often remain at the stage of blind replication. Although some colleges and universities have attempted innovations, the failure to address the disconnection between textbook theory and practice has led to superficial reforms with little actual effect.

2.2. Outdated teaching concepts among teachers and low emphasis on teaching research

Teachers in private colleges and universities face a series of urgent issues when teaching this course. For example, some teachers focus more on academic research and administrative work, neglecting course teaching, which affects teaching quality. Some teachers still rely on traditional lecture-based models, resulting in low student enthusiasm and insufficient interest, which hinders the cultivation of their deep thinking abilities. Against the backdrop of a changing educational environment and evolving talent needs, some teachers still adhere to traditional educational concepts, using single and outdated teaching methods. They prioritize imparting professional knowledge and skills, which only meet students' basic needs in private colleges, such as pursuing postgraduate studies for higher qualifications, conducting research, or finding jobs. However, this approach ignores the cultivation of students' comprehensive capabilities, such as innovative thinking and entrepreneurial skills, negatively impacting the quality of talent development [2].

2.3. Single teaching method and insufficient practical activities

Constructivist theory posits that knowledge acquisition should not rely solely on teaching but rather on students completing learning tasks and achieving goals through meaning construction. This process occurs within specific contexts (such as sociocultural backgrounds) with guidance and support from others (primarily teachers and peers) and through learning materials. Influenced by traditional educational concepts, some teachers in private colleges and universities adopt a cramming teaching model, where they unilaterally impart pedagogical principles and concepts without focusing on building interactive classrooms or paying attention to students' knowledge absorption. This leads to passive learning attitudes among students.

Additionally, some private colleges and universities lack sufficient practical activities for this course. For example, theoretical classes account for 36–48 class hours, with no or very few practical hours. The practical activities organized by teachers mainly take the form of survey reports, requiring students to investigate and analyze current focal issues in educational reforms and submit reports. In reality, students do not genuinely engage in practical research, and teachers cannot allocate time and energy to scientifically arrange and manage practical sessions due to limited class hours, resulting in these activities becoming mere formalities [3].

2.4. Imperfect evaluation system and inadequate guidance function

First, teachers mainly use closed-book exams for evaluation, which do not assess students' practical abilities and hinder teachers from comprehensively understanding students' learning status and comprehensive literacy. Second, the evaluation criteria do not align with talent cultivation requirements. When defining evaluation indicators, factors such as students' classroom participation and hands-on skills are not incorporated, making the evaluation results unable to truly reflect students' learning outcomes in this course. Finally, the current feedback mechanism is imperfect. Evaluation lacks timeliness, reducing its effectiveness. In many cases, evaluation is

merely used as a tool, with insufficient application of evaluation results, so feedback fails to play its guiding role [4].

3. Teaching reform paths for the "Principles of Pedagogy" course

3.1. Emphasizing effective integration of theory and practice in textbook compilation

The teaching reform of the "Principles of Pedagogy" course relies on the rational utilization and development of teaching materials. To develop textbooks, it is essential to clarify their objectives: helping students learn and master professional knowledge and skills, enhancing their educational capabilities, guiding them to understand educational trends, and exposing them to cutting-edge issues through daily learning. This enables them to identify current educational problems and practical goals, thereby effectively integrating theory and practice in textbook compilation. This approach cultivates students' innovative awareness, enhances their learning potential, and encourages them to deeply reflect on educational theories in practice while promoting curriculum integration from an interdisciplinary perspective. On this basis, it is necessary to break the traditional model of theoretical stacking in textbooks, effectively combining theoretical content with cases. Vivid cases should serve as supplements to theoretical knowledge, guiding students to think actively and practice independently. Additionally, integrating theoretical research questions with practical activities can comprehensively improve textbook quality [5]. Meanwhile, textbook compilation should focus on teacher-student interaction. Beyond the logical structure of the discipline itself, it should also cultivate students' psychological logic, problem-solving thinking, and other related competencies. Furthermore, schools should consider factors such as the theoretical system, content design, and adaptability to teachers and students based on the course's characteristics, emphasizing the effective integration of these three elements to enhance textbook compilation quality and lay a foundation for high-quality teaching and efficient learning. To promote the integration of theory and practice, schools can design 2-3 localized educational cases in each chapter, accompanied by practical tasks. This "case + practice" model breaks the current separation between theory and practice [6].

3.2. Enhancing teachers' teaching competencies

The teaching ability of teachers is directly related to the effectiveness of curriculum reform. On the one hand, in addition to conducting academic research, teachers should also take the initiative to explore ways to combine research results with teaching practice, incorporate the latest theoretical achievements and project progress of the course into the curriculum system. This not only broadens students' horizons but also cultivates their enthusiasm for learning, transforms their passive and negative learning attitudes, and enriches their learning methods [7]. On the other hand, regarding the lecture-based teaching model adopted by some teachers, while schools recognize the advantages of this model, such as the ability to convey a wealth of theoretical knowledge in a short time, they should not overlook its drawbacks, such as its ineffectiveness in practical teaching and its failure to fully stimulate students' learning initiative [8]. This course is closely related to practice. Coupled with the open nature of some theoretical content, teachers are compelled to update their teaching methods to correct students' learning attitudes, smoothly transforming them from passive acceptance in the past to active exploration. This enables every student to participate, transforming the teaching of this course from a single theoretical lecture into a new model that combines theory with practice, and exploration with interaction. For example, teachers can organize students to discuss and exchange controversial issues in the principles of pedagogy through diverse forms such as group discussions and project-based teaching, and even debate different viewpoints. By analyzing various perspectives, students' critical thinking can be cultivated, and their in-depth thinking ability can be enhanced [9].

In addition, teachers can also adopt methods such as micro-lectures and blended teaching to guide students to think deeply and explore actively, thereby improving their learning efficiency and the effectiveness of this course.

In addition, the teaching staff is a crucial factor in curriculum reform. Therefore, while formulating reform plans, universities should pay attention to the construction of the teaching staff. First, emphasis should be placed on teacher training to improve their teaching proficiency and research capabilities [10]. In practical work, schools can transform teachers' concepts and enhance their ability to integrate theory with practice by organizing workshops, special lectures, and other activities [11].

Meanwhile, private universities should encourage teachers to step off the campus and actively participate in training courses or visiting programs. Through continuous learning and practice, teachers can gain an understanding of popular educational concepts and models and effectively apply them to teaching to create efficient classrooms [12]. On the other hand, universities should focus on the recruitment of outstanding teaching staff, formulate recruitment policies, improve incentive mechanisms, and pay attention to creating a favorable working environment and academic atmosphere. This can enhance the attractiveness to outstanding talents, enabling them to actively engage in teaching and research. With their rich practical experience and theoretical knowledge, private universities can become a hub for high-level educational talents, and at the same time, create favorable conditions for educational reform [13]. Moreover, efforts should be made to promote the mentoring of new teachers by experienced ones, and improve the teaching level of the entire teaching staff through various means, thus providing important guarantees for the reform of this course and promoting its effective implementation.

3.3. Enriching teaching forms and carrying out practical teaching

Currently, to better fulfill their professional responsibilities, teachers should not merely adopt a cramming approach but instead transform their concepts, keep pace with the times, actively update their teaching philosophies, and employ advanced methods to meet societal needs for talent cultivation [14].

In practical work, teachers should focus on the construction of "golden courses," fully reflecting the dominant position of students while cultivating their comprehensive literacy. This can not only enhance teachers' enthusiasm for teaching but also stimulate and sustain students' interest in learning, transforming the classroom atmosphere from dull to active and engaging. In addition, teachers should pay attention to communication and interaction between teachers and students to mobilize their enthusiasm and initiative, cultivate students' awareness and ability of independent learning, enabling them to be willing to think, good at exploration, and promote their development through practical exploration [15].

Furthermore, against the backdrop of the rapid development of information technology, teachers should actively integrate online teaching resources, adopt advanced teaching models, and leverage this technology to promote the reform process, such as adopting a blended teaching model. This model combines online and offline teaching. Online, teachers can create a course portal on the Chaoxing platform and upload course resources, such as teaching plans and question banks. Before class, teachers should assign relevant tasks to students, allowing them to study independently in their spare time. In offline classes, emphasis should be placed on communication among students, enriching their learning methods, and giving full play to their dominant role. To achieve this goal, teachers can start from the following aspects: first, adopt the guided teaching method. Compared with other teaching methods, this method has its unique advantages. With multimedia teaching as an auxiliary means, teachers can skillfully set questions to introduce relevant knowledge points, guiding students to think actively and explore collaboratively. In this way, students can not only understand and master professional knowledge but also

cultivate and develop various intelligences, promoting their all-round development. For example, when teaching the content of "whether education exists in the animal kingdom," teachers might start by asking questions based on familiar phenomena, such as whether a mother cat teaching her kittens how to catch mice successfully is considered education. After raising the question, teachers can organize students for discussion and exchange. Second, adopt the inquiry-based teaching method to cultivate students' comprehensive abilities. In teaching, teachers can focus on key, difficult, and focal issues, such as the implementation of the "double reduction" policy, AI-enabled education, etc., and let students take these as topics. Students can independently search for relevant materials and explore solutions to problems through active exploration and independent construction, improving their problem-solving abilities.

Practical teaching is a crucial part of this course, so strengthening teaching in this aspect is of great significance. On the one hand, university teachers should conduct investigations starting from the development trend of educational reform, teacher ethics cases, teaching design, etc., and guide students to write practical reports. During this process, teachers should pay attention to guiding students, thus creating favorable conditions for their learning and practice. After the activities are completed, the primary task for teachers is to grade students' practical assignments. Additionally, teachers should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of students' practice, which can be achieved through peer evaluation and result presentation sessions, ensuring that the practice is effectively implemented.

On the other hand, there are practical elements within the theoretical teaching of this course. For such teaching content, case-based teaching can be adopted to actively inspire students, enabling them to flexibly apply theoretical knowledge and put it into practice in teaching, thereby improving their learning efficiency and effectiveness.

4. Conclusion

In summary, as the nation pays increasing attention to classroom teaching effectiveness, colleges and universities have carried out extensive explorations in curriculum reform to keep pace with the times and adapt to educational development trends. This paper discusses measures such as emphasizing the effective integration of theory and practice in textbook compilation and enhancing teachers' teaching capabilities, intending to improve the teaching quality of the "Principles of Pedagogy" course and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of talent cultivation.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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