On the Theoretical Construction and Practical Exploration of “U-G-S” Teacher Education Model

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Abstract. It is the shared responsibility and mission of normal universities, local governments, secondary schools and primary schools to optimize teacher education model and improve teacher education quality. Northeast Normal University, on the basis of the practical experience of “Changbai Mountain Road” and the “Ivy League Project”\(^1\), has creatively proposed a new cooperative model named University-Government-School Model (U-G-S Model for short) which takes “cooperative development” as the guiding philosophy and the seeking for identical goals, responsibility and benefits sharing and resource complementarity as the development principle. And an innovative and cooperative teacher education community has been formed in the fields of talent training, scientific research, teacher training and resource construction by the three participants of the U-G-S Model. This model has solved such problems as the inefficient educational practice of normal university students and the hard teacher training of secondary and primary school teachers. It has been a connection between normal university education and elementary education, pre-service and post-service training of teachers, teaching and research, theory and practice to promote the development of education for our country in the new period.

Introduction

Education is the fundamental way to foster people. As the engine for promoting the development of education, teachers are an important guarantee for fostering the innovative talents of all-round development, and are the driving force for promoting social progress and national rejuvenation. Since the middle of the last century, the requirement for teacher’s development in many countries has shifted from “the growth for quantity” to “the improvement for quality”. The attention paid to teacher’s quality has reached a record high and training teachers with high quality has become an important issue in the field of education. \([1]\) Since the 1980s, improving teacher education model has become a must to upgrade the quality of teachers. And according to the training body, three models have come into being, namely the education institute of comprehensive universities, independent normal schools, secondary schools and primary schools. For example, in British, the curriculum of “Bachelor of Education” (BED for short) and “Postgraduate Certificate of Education” (PGCE for short) implemented by the universities are for teacher’s pre-service training. Besides, taking schools

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\(^1\)The “Ivy League Project” is proposed by the Northeast Normal University on the basis of current situation of educational development in experimental area and the requirement of further reform on curriculum. It is proposed on the process of building an innovative experimental area for teacher’s education, and its purpose is for the comprehensive improvement of the professional level of teachers in secondary schools and primary schools, and promotes the balanced development for compulsory education in experimental area through “activating the duty, utilizing the resources and improving the connotation of schools that the teachers study in”. The “Ivy League Project” is consisted of “professional training—subject research—project study—transposition learning”.

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as its bases, teacher’s internship is conducted through the cooperation between universities and secondary schools and primary schools. [2] During this period, the teacher’s education in China transited from three-leveled normal education system (secondary normal school, college, university) to two-leveled normal education system (college, university), and from closed system to open system. And gradually, the open teacher’s education system is formed with normal university as main body and other universities participating together. Entering to the new period of time, further reforming the teacher’s education and improving the quality of teacher’s education have become the requirement of the time for the development of education. [3] In 2012, the State Council published the On Strengthening the Construction of Teachers’ Team. It clearly stated that teacher’s training model should be innovative, and the new mechanism for jointly training teachers between universities, local government, secondary schools and primary schools (kindergarten, vocational schools) should be established.[4] It not only calls for solutions to breaking the limitations on teacher’s education innovation and quality improvement, but also becomes a good opportunity for the development of teacher education model, namely the cooperation between “normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools” (“U-G-S” teacher education model).

Development and Connotation of “U-G-S” Model

The Development of “U-G-S” Model

The primary task of normal university is serving compulsory education and training teachers. In 1988, the Northeast Normal University took the lead in exploring the cooperative teacher education model between normal university and secondary schools and primary schools. The Northeast Normal University established service area for compulsory education in Baishan City, which trained and sent about 600 teachers to the countryside, strengthened and improved the general level of the teachers in Baishan area. This measure was known as “the splendid Changbai Mountain Road”. The past twenty years have witnessed the development of “U-G-S” teacher education model with “the experimental area for teacher’s education in the Northeast of China” (experimental area for short in the following part) as carrier. The teacher’s education mechanism was formed on the joint cooperation between normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools, and it becomes an important approach to “excellent teachers and educators’ training project”.

The Basic Connotation of Teacher Education Model

Establishing teacher education system on the basis of joint cooperation between normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools can not only add teachers with high quality to compulsory education but also promote the professional development of in-service teachers. It is an inherent demand for quality upgrading of compulsory education and the shared responsibility and mission of normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools. Currently, the Northeast Normal University is working with 105 secondary schools and primary schools of the bureaus of education in 23 counties (cities) under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education in three provinces of the Northeast of China to establish experimental area. In the experimental area, normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools jointly cooperate and innovatively develop. They play a main role in the area and achieve complementary advantages. The diverse, all-round, and three-dimensional teacher education model is formed, which effectively promote the development of people, organization and social culture. The “U-G-S” teacher education model becomes a systematic teacher education program and a strategic system for practice with talent training, scientific research, subject establishment and social service as its core, which is based on the demand for social development and the requirement for talent training. It is also on the basis of the aim-accordant, responsibility and interests-sharing and resource-complemented working principle developed by normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools under the coordinated development philosophy.

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Guiding Philosophy of “U-G-S” Teacher Education Model—Collaborative Development

The Collaborative Development of Talent Training and Teacher Training

The collaborative cooperation between normal university, local government, secondary schools and primary schools promotes the effective connection between compulsory education and high education, and the close combination between theory and practice. Normal universities provide pre-service training to normal students through innovating teaching system and curriculum system, which can enable students to master professional knowledge of the subject and educational knowledge. Local secondary schools and primary schools provide internship place, practice and guidance to normal students, which can, on the basis of theories, make them improve teaching ability and promote the combination and transformation of knowledge and skills. Besides, normal universities use their advanced educational theories and optimized educational resources and teachers’ team to train, guide and lecture the in-service teachers in secondary schools and primary schools, which can renew the teachers’ ideas and upgrade their ability. The “U-G-S” teacher education model improves the combination between teacher’s professional theories and practical ability, and it serves as a bridge linking pre-service and in-service training, knowledge and skills, theories and practice. This model enables talent training and teacher training to develop collaboratively.

The Collaborative Development between Scientific Research and Resource Construction

The scientific research on education is the driving force for the development of education and further education reform. It discloses and solves many problems in the field of education. Normal universities should develop teacher education and serve compulsory education, and at the same time they also shoulder the responsibility of scientific research on education. Normal universities have special advantages in policy, human resources, fund and facilities. These advantages are the guarantee for conducting scientific research on education. As the direct service object of normal universities, secondary schools and primary schools enjoy the outcomes of advanced scientific research and education resources with high quality. They can cooperate with universities to conduct scientific research according to their own development and construction requirement, so that they can solve the practical problems. Through the combination of “school-based curriculum”, “two-way attachment” and “project cooperation”, normal universities and secondary and primary schools, scientific research on education and education practice can be further integrated, education resources with high quality can be shared in an all-round way, and the mechanism of self-reinforcement and interaction can be formed. In the process of research and application of the outcomes of scientific research, local administrative departments on education play a main role in providing policy, environment and economy support to normal universities and secondary and primary schools, making themselves the “catalyst” for collaborative development of scientific research and resource construction. “U-G-S” teacher education model realizes the optimized and sustainable development between scientific research and resource construction.

The Collaborative Development between “Normal University, Local Government, Secondary Schools and Primary Schools”

“U-G-S” teacher education model is not a simple and mechanical “framework model”, while it is based on social development and requirement for talent training. It aims to change the current teacher education situation which is disperse, closed and ineffective, and to break the barrier between education theory and practice, normal university and secondary schools and primary schools. The previous “U-S” teacher education model has its own scientificity and rationality, but in the new circumstance, it also has deficiency. The “U-S” teacher education model can take teacher’s pre-service training and in-service training into consideration, but its aim is simple and it lacks diverse and all-dimensional mechanism for construction and guarantee. Besides, the level of the combination between theory and practice is low. “U-G-S” teacher education model expands the dimension of purposes and it enables normal university, secondary and primary schools to cooperate...
and integrate with each other. Under the guidance of experts in university, the supervision and coordination of local government, and the assistant training of secondary and primary schools for normal students, the “U-G-S” teacher education model enables experts from universities to study in secondary and primary schools in depth and to integrate with headmasters and teachers, to seek the features of the schools, to train seeded teachers and improve teaching quality. “U-G-S” teacher education model can also enable normal students to do internship in compulsory education system and to learn knowledge, exercise themselves and to improve the quality of internship. Besides, it can also make “scientific research cooperation”, “mutual complement of resources” to run through the model, thus forming a long-term mechanism of “production, learning and research”. “U-G-S” teacher education model closely integrates the strengths of three parties to face the educational requirement directly and output the research outcomes effectively. This model serves the compulsory education promptly, thus solving the long-term problems which restricted normal universities and compulsory education, teaching and scientific research.

Operating Mechanism of the “U-G-S” Teacher Education Model

The Operating Mechanism of the “U-G-S” Teacher Education Model

Operating mechanism is a series of rules, programs connecting all the factors during the operation of a system, and the overall order that the rules and programs form. [5] Scientific and systematic operating mechanism can give a full play of the functions of all factors, establish the logical relations between the factors, thus forming a stable model structure to exert the overall function of the model. The principle factors of the “U-G-S” teacher education model are normal university, local government and secondary schools and primary schools. Normal universities consist of five sub-factors, namely Northeast Normal University, Liaoning Normal University, Jilin Normal University, Harbin Normal University and Changchun Normal University. Local governments consist of such sub-factors as Liaoning Provincial Department of Education, Jilin Provincial Department of Education, Heilongjian Provincial Department of Education and 23 county (municipal) bureaus of education under the jurisdiction of the above-mentioned provinces. Secondary schools and primary schools consist of 105 schools under the jurisdiction of the above mentioned 23 county (municipal) bureaus of education. Taking the experimental area as their carrier, these factors organize the “the northeast collaborative creativity center for teacher education”, which serves as a guarantee for the sound operation of the “U-G-S” teacher education model.

Northeast Normal University takes responsibility for philosophy lead, intelligence support, technology guidance and human resource guarantee, and works with other four normal universities to establish a community for strengthening the exchanges and cooperation between normal universities, enlarging the teachers’ team of normal universities and breaking the barriers between normal universities, thus the resources integration, interaction of scientific research and culture exchanges between normal universities in the Northeast of China can be accomplished. Establishing a community of normal universities under “U-G-S” teacher education model can not only further optimize disciplinary construction and condense the teacher education resources with distinct features, but also serve compulsory education in a large scale and with high quality. This community of normal universities can improve the training quality of normal students and provide diverse research and study for teachers, and training service, which guarantees the effectiveness of teacher education in two-way. The local government provides policy support and funding support for the “U-G-S” teacher education model, selects scientific research and practice places for probationary teachers, intern-teachers and intern-students, strengthens the relation between theoretical research and teaching practice, optimizes the quality and condition for education practice.

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B. The Guarantee Mechanism for “U-G-S” Teacher Education Model

In order to ensure the effect of “U-G-S” model, normal universities, local government, secondary schools and primary schools make a series of guarantee mechanism in such aspects as policy, organization and talent. In the aspect of institution, the cooperative parties signed “experimental area” working contract in December 2007 and co-founded “the collaborative creativity center for teacher education” in September 2012. Documents such as “the Implement Plan for ‘Experimental Area’ Establishment”, and “On Strengthen the Work of ‘Experimental Area’ of Northeast Normal University” were stipulated and released. These measures guaranteed the institutionalization and standardization of the operation of “U-G-S” model. In the aspect of organization, the steering committee for “the collaborative creativity center for teacher education”, working committee and office, leading team for the establishment of experimental area and leading team for education internship were founded after the foundation of “the collaborative creativity center for teacher education”. Each main participating schools founded the leading team for “the collaborative creativity center for teacher education” to make decision on the major guideline and policy and general plan about “collaborative creativity”. At the same time, a panel of experts for “the collaborative creativity center for teacher education” were also founded, and they are responsible for the relevant project, consulting inspection and performance evaluation concerning “the collaborative creativity center for teacher education”. There is a clear division among these organizations and departments with different areas of responsibility, which ensures the integration of the “U-G-S” model and its orderly operation. In terms of talent guarantee, the cooperative parties invited a certain amount of professional staff and part-time staff to form a panel of teachers which was led by distinguished scholars in international academia, academic leaders of different disciplines. And the participators of the panel are teachers from secondary schools. The academic level of this panel of teachers is high in terms of the curriculum and teaching methodology. Documents such as the “Standard and Management of the Recruitment of Teachers for Teaching Skills”, and the “Standard and Management of the Selection of Designated Teacher for Education Internship” were stipulated and released. All these measures guarantee the convergence and integration of the talent. And the team with reasonable structure and high professional level was formed. The “U-G-S” teacher education model can be operated effectively and orderly thanks to these measures.

Function of “U-G-S” Teacher Education Model

Improving the Quality of Normal Students’ Education Internship

Internship is an important part for teacher education. When learning at school, the normal students can give priority to master basic knowledge and the knowledge of their major, while internship can improve their teaching ability on the basis of their knowledge. In the past, the normal universities and secondary and primary schools did not cooperate very often, and the duty of government was neglected, so that the internship became the burden of secondary and primary schools. The teaching time for internship was short and lacked guidance, which made internship become formalization. The main cooperative parties of “U-G-S” teacher education model enable normal universities and secondary and primary schools to extend to two directions and improve the practicality of internship through the construction of a practical curriculum system in form of “education probation-simulation teaching-education internship-practice and reflection”, and the adoption of the internship model of “county concentration-mixed formation-circuiting guidance-diverse evaluation”. Local government guarantees the selection of schools for internship and optimization of internship condition. As the major platform for education internship, secondary and primary schools are delighted to accept inter-students and intern-teachers, and designate outstanding class teachers and subject teachers to guide intern-students. “U-G-S” teacher education model innovates and explores in such areas as curriculum system, internship model and guarantee measures, so that the quality and quantity of normal students’ internship are improved.
Improving the Training Effect of in-service Teachers

The training for in-service teachers in secondary and primary schools is key to promote the quality of compulsory education. In order to launch regional construction, improve the quality of teaching, local government and secondary and primary schools have realized the significance of in-service teachers’ training. Normal universities are the major party for training and forming teachers’ team. Their function is self-evident. In “U-G-S” teacher education model, normal universities use such training methods as “post exchange”, “job-oriented training”, “giving lessons in the countryside”, “working on secondment”, “cooperative scientific research”, “research on school-based curriculum”, “effective teaching and different structures for same subject ” and the establishment of information resource platform to change in-service teachers’ ideas about education, improve their professional ethnics, enrich their knowledge, promote teaching ability, so that to develop themselves in their majors. “U-G-S” teacher education model breaks the traditional simple training model, and establishes a diverse and all-dimensional system for teacher’s training and improves the effect of teacher’s training.

Deepening the Scientific Research on Education

“U-G-S” teacher education model provides a sound operating field for deepening scientific research on education, solving real problems in education, fulfilling the demands of education development. Normal universities have advantages in scientific research, and they accumulate rich education experience and many scientific research outcomes. Under the philosophical guidance of serving compulsory education, the outstanding research outcomes can be applied in secondary and primary schools. Without the schools in the “experimental areas”, those experience and outcomes will separate themselves from education practice, which is nothing less than inner dreaming and lacks realistic value. Besides, intern-students, leading teachers of the intern-students, panel of experts and teachers from secondary and primary schools converge in compulsory education, which make the theoretical workers and practical workers integrate in an in-depth way. They can draw strength from other parties to complement and promote each other. The effect is self-evident. This collaborative cooperation forms a long-term circulating mechanism for researching, implementing and popularizing the education project. Thus, the “two-way complementary” for scientific research on education can be realized and the reform on education teaching can be promoted.

Promoting the Integration of Human Resource

Outstanding talent team is the core and foundation for the operation of “U-G-S” teacher education model. For fostering professional teachers with high quality, normal universities strengthen the talent exchanges within internal and external teachers’ team to form a panel of teachers compromised of teachers teaching certain subject, pedagogy teachers and curriculum and teaching methodology teachers for conducting teachers’ pre-service and post-service training. Besides, the normal universities also invite teachers from secondary and primary schools to work as part-time teachers, study and join research programs. Meanwhile, teachers retired from normal universities are re-employed by local government and secondary and primary schools to do guest guidance. In this way, the “U-G-S” teacher education model enables the talent’s interaction and integration of human resource between universities and secondary and primary schools, strengthens the establishment of penal of outstanding talent and provides guarantee for teacher education.

References


