The Diversified Construction of Practical Teaching System for Full-Time Pedagogy Postgraduates—a Case Study of Henan University Geography Major∗

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Abstract. As a kind of professional postgraduate education, full-time pedagogy postgraduate degree aims to cultivate high-qualified primary and secondary school teachers with skillful modern education theory and abundant educational teaching practice and research results. We conduct this research from the perspective of the A-list professors of pedagogy postgraduates, taking pedagogy postgraduates of geography in Henan University as the research objects, through long-term observation and investigation, thus drawing a conclusion as followings: there are some shortcomings in cultivating full-time pedagogy postgraduates in universities, such as lack of understanding of teaching practices, absence of educational system and mechanism, insufficient training of students’ teaching skills, ineffective training for practical abilities and so on. To solve these problems, the author puts forward the concrete reform measures and methods which have been proved to be effective in Henan University. To some degree, those actions can also be adopted as reference in other universities in training full-time master of education.

Introduction

According to Opinions on Strengthening the Cultivation of full-time postgraduates, issued by the Ministry of Education in 2009, universities should expand recruitment of full-time postgraduates especially for undergraduates[1]. In the process of cultivating full-time postgraduates, universities need to be oriented to professional practices, attaching great importance to the practice and application, adopting the teaching modal with the combination of academic theory studies and practices[2]. At present, since the full-time pedagogy postgraduates are rather new to people and they are still on the beginning stage, there are many issues in the training process and the practice teaching problem is the most head-paining one. The article takes the geographical science majors of Henan University as an example, to discuss how to carry out the practice teaching of the full-time pedagogy postgraduates, hoping to provide reference for other schools.

Main problems of Practical teaching for full-time pedagogy postgraduates

Inadequate understanding of the practical teaching

The cultivation of full-time pedagogy postgraduates ran in large scale since 2009. But without overall realization of practical teaching, nor enough attention, the majority of universities train full-time pedagogy postgraduates as academic master degree or as other pedagogy postgraduates.

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Academic master’s degree is give priority to train the ability of academic research, while the general pedagogy postgraduates are educators who have more than three years work experience with rich teaching experience. Therefore, there are many differences between those two kinds of masters and the full-on nature. If the above training scheme is continued to be adopted in training full-time pedagogy postgraduates, the cultivation of the practical teaching ability will be fully neglected.

Absence of educational system and mechanism

The quality of training can not be assured for too much part-time instructors

From the long run, our country mainly put emphasis on cultivating academic graduates, making the academic master and the specialized one out of balance in the existing teaching staff and specialized instructors are badly needed. In order to meet the needs of training specialized postgraduates, departments send academic professors to bridge the gap. Similarly, many instructors in other fields always take additional jobs to direct pedagogy postgraduates of geography in Henan University, making geography majors lack in professional guidance and the opportunity of academic research, even leaving them adrift. So it is difficult to ensure the development of the Master of Geography Education training quality.

Adoption of the traditional teaching model with tedium teaching practice

Going straight to teach after obtaining a doctorate degree at a university or research center, a professor rarely has geography teaching and practical work experience in high school. So he may follow the traditional teaching mode when he teaches pedagogy postgraduates of geography, namely “Cramming Method”. Moreover, some universities lack in teaching infrastructure, such as micro and training classroom, nor do they have original multiply teaching model. In cultivating specialized postgraduates, many particular characteristics (such as application-oriented, complexity, occupation and high-level) are strongly limited in the process of curriculum design, textbook selection, dissertation, quality assessment and other segments, resulting in poor teaching effects.

Specialized place and time for practicing can not be guaranteed

With the expansion of enrollment in Colleges and universities, the public classrooms are in saturated condition for curriculum arrangement. So it is difficult to spare additional room for teaching practice for full-time pedagogy postgraduates in every subject. Meanwhile, many high-schools are also short for classroom so they can only satisfy postgraduates’ internship. Due to the two-year’s educational system, the full-time pedagogy postgraduates do not have sufficient time to practice since numerous courses and graduate thesis also take a lot of time.

Students lack in teaching skills practicing and their practical ability can not get effective training

According to investigation findings, full-time pedagogy postgraduates training focuses on cultivating primary and secondary school teachers. While many outstanding undergraduates do not want to engage themselves in teaching career because teachers’ professional appeal is limited. On the contrary, full-time pedagogy postgraduates are graduates of non-normal majors composition with comparatively low overall quality. They usually lack in professional teaching skills training, teaching basic skills “Mandarin”, “three board” ability and modern educational technology capacity. During the learning of Master in education, with hard courses, limited time and heavy tasks, students still can not have enough teaching training when graduation is coming.

Measures for constructing the diversity of practical teaching mode

Switching the concept of thinking

With the increasing of time and number of full-time pedagogy postgraduates recruitment, we should not only attach importance to the cultivation of full-time postgraduates of professional degree in education, but also to change the traditional ideas[3]. To improve the quality of full-time education
master's training, we should create a unique training program based on the professional education of full-time pedagogy postgraduates and pay more attention to the construction of the practical teaching system.

Promoting the integration of theory and practice and strengthening the construction of practical curriculum system

In cultivating specialized masters, curriculum should be designed based on courses that led emphasis on putting theory and practice together. While taking actions to avoid deviating from “practical aims” and one-sided pursuing “academic standards”, some courses in Henan university make efforts to emerge reform of elementary education into the basic theory of curriculum teaching. With the introduction of a new teaching model that adjust case studies of classroom teaching to the study of pedagogy postgraduates, those courses bridge the distance between theory and teaching practice. Besides, they can also be helpful for pedagogy postgraduates to get a better understanding of theoretical knowledge, making full-time pedagogy postgraduates actively learn from each other, overall promoting realization from teaching theory to practice and from abstract teaching to real-condition one, improving the practical ability of pedagogy postgraduates.

Adjusting the construction of teaching staff and strengthening the teaching ability of instructors

Henan University focuses on the construction of postgraduate directors, thus setting up the Zhishan directors institution with the application of instructors training system. At present, five rounds of training have been conducted. At the same time, some specialized teachers are brought in the team of superior instructors construction in the Geography Department, mobilizing the professional teachers who have great potential and willingness threw themselves into the specialized teaching career. Under the premise of encouraging teachers to constantly improve their teaching skills, we mobilize them actively participate in the training of MOOCs, apply for educational reform project and publish teaching and scientific research theses. And we encourage geography teachers to study for post-doctoral. With the unremitting efforts, Henan University has possessed a great instructors team with high focus on training pedagogy postgraduates of geography.

Establishing a stable and efficient practice platform

The starting point of practical teaching is to cultivate postgraduates’ teaching skills, professional spirit, occupational ability and professional practical ability. To ensure the quality of practical teaching, we must make difference of practical teaching mode to provide the society with creative talents. Henan University takes full advantage of the campus resources to establish a stable and efficient practice platform and base. The university and the practice base cooperate with and benefit from each other. On the one hand, we have firstly established a micro-teaching laboratory to cultivate full-time pedagogy postgraduates at university. On the other hand, we have established relationship with local education administrative departments as well as primary and middle schools. We also signed the practice base construction agreement to carry out cooperation. What's more, several practice teaching bases have been established in the Affiliated High School of Henan University, Kaifeng 25 Middle School, Jiying Middle School of Kaifeng and Kaifeng 14 Middle School.

Changing the status of the single practical teaching form

Studying on Basic Education cannot be conducted without real-course of middle school and professional discussion, nor can it be conducted without organizing teaching practice on internship schools. For example, internship provides trainees' perceptual connotation of the profession as a teacher and further deepen the their understanding of real educational scene. In the half year of the educational practice ,master of education graduates have opportunities to observe or to participate in activities in the internship school .They can also organize the class to take various activities and deal with the class’ daily work by using learned teaching theories .Through accepting basic education teaching and the influence of science and research, they can get involved
in the field of application research of educational science, and link those practical problems with academic problems, thus forming the thinking model of theories and practice, and improving their teaching skills and theoretical knowledge.

**Constructing recording and micro classroom and strengthening the education practice**

In cultivating pedagogy postgraduates of geography, we might as well reform the way and contents of internship and make the internship longer to ensure the quality of practical teaching. For example, we can hold “within hall lecture”, “geographical course are contest” and “geography teaching competition” and other activities. By these ways, we can change the status that improving trainees’ teaching abilities only relies on educational internship, thus making them improve their practical teaching abilities imperceptibly during the training time (i.e. to analyze teaching materials, to definite teaching objectives, to create teaching plans, to select teaching methods, to utilize teaching language, to apply modern educational technology, to carry out educational teaching research and so on). Meanwhile, we make efforts to perfect the first modern geography teaching skill training laboratory especially for Henan Province (including are cording classroom and a micro classroom) and provide interns with more micro-teaching practices and interning opportunities. To some extent, the limited teaching condition of geography educational practice and the lack of teachers are solved by the construction of key courses and the improvement of the teaching condition.

**Conclusions**

Considering the background of the professional master degree of education, we need pay more attention to those practical needs reflected on teaching target, teaching contents, curriculum setting, teaching methods to meet the need of real-condition work. Therefore, during the whole period of studying, pedagogy postgraduates of geography should gradually train their teaching abilities, rather than depart professional learning from education practice. We should pay attention to the cultivation of students’ ability of teaching and scientific research, too. The reformation of Henan University has shown us the importance of building a high quality teachers team for improving the quality of pedagogy postgraduates of geography. Indeed, the meaning of high-lighting the teaching skills and researching abilities is significant.

**References**


