

# Research on the Teaching Reform of Pre-Primary Education Specialty Practice Course Under the Demand Orientation

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**Abstract:** With the further deepening of preschool education reform in China, high-quality preschool teachers have become highly sought-after in the job market, thereby creating more job opportunities for students studying preschool education. Colleges and universities should align their curriculum with the demands of the industry by optimizing the teaching practice system for preschool education courses, establishing off-campus training bases, and regularly organizing student placements in kindergartens. They should also prioritize employment-oriented approaches by collaborating with kindergartens to develop practical courses tailored to preschool education, thereby enhancing the curriculum system. To enrich the teaching staff, a “double tutor” teacher team should be established, integrating kindergarten teachers as part-time instructors to create a professional and diversified teaching faculty. Additionally, a teaching evaluation system focusing on post-competence should be implemented to foster the holistic development of students, consequently enhancing the quality of preschool education personnel training.

**Keywords:** Demand-oriented; College preschool education major; Practical courses; Optimized paths

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## 1. Introduction

The foundation of education lies in its educators. To enhance the quality of preschool education and fulfill the inspiring vision of “education for every child,” colleges and universities must shoulder the responsibility of nurturing exceptional preschool teachers. They should prioritize talent demand, focusing on cultivating practical skills, professional identity, and ethical standards among preschool education students.

Intending to produce versatile and proficient kindergarten teachers, it is essential to enhance the practical curriculum system. This involves emphasizing teaching across the five domains of kindergarten education and developing a curriculum rooted in kindergarten contexts and home-school collaboration. Furthermore, it is crucial to establish both internal and external practical training facilities. Students should be regularly engaged in kindergarten placements, allowing them to gain early exposure and involvement in kindergarten teaching practices, thereby enhancing their post-competency. These efforts are essential for further enhancing the

teaching quality of professional practice courses in preschool education.

## **2. Current teaching situation of professional practice courses in preschool education at colleges and universities**

### **2.1. Lack of teachers in practical teaching**

Many preschool education teachers in colleges and universities commence teaching immediately after graduation, lacking practical experience in preschool education. Consequently, they possess only a superficial understanding of essential job skills such as teaching across the five domains of kindergarten education, home-based co-education, and curriculum development specific to kindergartens. This lack of practical experience makes it challenging to integrate the skills required by preschool teachers into practical courses, consequently impacting the quality of teaching. Moreover, the deficiency in first-hand kindergarten teaching experience results in inadequate explanations of kindergarten teacher post skills and teacher ethics, hindering the enhancement of students' professional identity and impeding their practical training as future kindergarten teachers <sup>[1]</sup>.

### **2.2. Imperfect construction of training bases inside and outside the school**

Despite the establishment of both on-campus and off-campus training facilities, the coordination between them is often lacking, adversely affecting the quality of teaching and talent development in professional practice courses in preschool education. While colleges and universities designate kindergartens as off-campus training bases, student placements in kindergartens are typically arranged only during the fourth semester, neglecting the organization of regular kindergarten visits throughout the academic year. This failure to utilize off-campus training bases to their full potential diminishes their effectiveness <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.3. Inadequacies in the evaluation system for practical teaching**

A significant issue in the evaluation of preschool education in colleges and universities is the overemphasis on theoretical aspects over practical skills. The absence of standardized evaluation criteria for practical curricula results in an emphasis on outcome-based evaluation, disregarding the assessment of students' learning processes during practical courses <sup>[3]</sup>. Additionally, evaluations often overlook students' abilities in child care, innovation, and work ethic, thereby undermining the quality of practical course evaluations in preschool education.

### **2.4. Incomplete practice teaching system**

The practical teaching curriculum in preschool education encompasses various subjects such as piano, painting, dance, and educational psychology, requiring students to possess a broad range of skills <sup>[4]</sup>. However, the current approach separates theoretical knowledge from practical courses, failing to integrate relevant theories of preschool pedagogy and psychology into practical teaching. This disjointed approach negatively impacts the quality of practical course instruction.

## **3. The principle of demand-oriented practical teaching curriculum reform in college preschool education**

### **3.1. Principle of integrated teaching of science and practice**

Colleges and universities should conduct comprehensive investigations into the current demand for preschool education talents. They should prioritize employment-oriented approaches and optimize the practical curriculum system based on the skill standards required for kindergarten teachers. This optimization involves integrating

theoretical and practical courses to enable students to apply relevant knowledge of educational psychology and early childhood psychology in practical settings, thereby enhancing their professional identity. Additionally, teachers should actively gather kindergarten teaching cases, engage students in case analyses, and conduct simulated kindergarten teaching sessions. These activities deepen students' understanding of kindergarten teacher skills, stimulate their interest in learning, and enhance the quality of practical course instruction <sup>[5]</sup>.

### **3.2. Principle of production-education integration and school-enterprise cooperation**

Colleges and universities should promote the integration of production and education and foster school-enterprise cooperation. They should establish cooperative relationships with local kindergartens, creating high-quality off-campus practical training bases. Students should be organized to study in kindergartens every semester, learning directly from frontline kindergarten teachers about practical aspects such as early childhood care, teaching across the five domains, and home-based co-education. Furthermore, the institutions should hire kindergarten teachers as part-time instructors, enabling them to contribute to practical course instruction <sup>[6]</sup>. Integrating high-quality kindergarten education and home-based co-education cases into teaching materials expands practical course content, thereby improving teaching quality.

### **3.3. Employment-oriented principle**

Colleges and universities should align their efforts with the demand for preschool education talents and maintain an employment-oriented focus. They should collaboratively develop school-based practical courses for preschool education majors, enhancing the practical teaching system. This collaboration should facilitate the alignment of kindergarten talent needs with practical courses, ensuring students meet kindergarten employment requirements and enhancing their competitiveness in the job market <sup>[7]</sup>. Additionally, institutions should establish practical course evaluation indicators based on childcare grade certificate assessment standards, further developing students' vocational core skills and laying a strong foundation for their future employment.

## **4. The optimization path of professional practice course teaching in preschool education at colleges and universities under the demand orientation**

### **4.1. Adhering to employment orientation and improving the practical course system**

Colleges and universities should mobilize preschool education faculty to conduct employment research, delineating the core professional competencies required of preschool teachers in the contemporary era. Based on identified talent needs, institutions should refine the practical curriculum system of preschool education, fostering a stronger sense of professional identity among students and laying a solid foundation for enhancing the quality of practical teaching. For instance, institutions can utilize resources such as the 2020 Guidelines for the Implementation of Standardized Training for New Kindergarten Teachers to establish teaching objectives for professional practice courses in preschool education. These objectives can be structured into four modules: early childhood care and teaching, teacher ethics, early childhood research, and professional development, thereby refining the practical curriculum system.

Increasing the hours dedicated to practical training courses such as early childhood care, piano playing and singing, children's dance creation, and solfeggio ear training aligns with the goals of preschool education talent training, emphasizing "teacher ethics first," a child-centered approach, prioritizing abilities, and promoting lifelong learning <sup>[8]</sup>. Furthermore, institutions can engage kindergartens in developing professional practice courses, linking childcare cases, teaching cases in the five major domains, home-based co-education cases, and kindergarten-based courses with practical courses. Collaboratively developing loose-leaf textbooks for practical

courses enables a focus on cultivating students' core vocational abilities, such as piano playing, childcare, and child dance creation. This approach allows for flexible adjustments to textbook content based on students' practical skills and knowledge points.

Comprehensively promoting the integration of production and education, institutions should construct practical courses tailored for preschool education majors, bridging the gap between kindergarten teachers' job skills and practical courses. This integration deepens students' comprehension of core professional abilities required of kindergarten teachers, expands the teaching content of practical courses, and enhances the practical curriculum system for preschool education majors<sup>[9]</sup>.

#### **4.2. Establishing off-campus practical training bases to enhance students' post-competency**

Colleges and universities should comprehensively promote the integration of production and education along with collaboration between academic institutions and enterprises. This entails establishing cooperative partnerships with local kindergartens and setting up off-campus practical teaching bases. Regularly organizing student placements in kindergartens allows them to learn directly from frontline kindergarten teachers, thereby enhancing their practical abilities in real-world scenarios.

Initially, institutions should arrange for students to practice in kindergartens each semester, enabling them to observe kindergarten teachers' teaching methods and engage in collaborative activities such as classroom teaching, home-based co-education, and kindergarten-specific curriculum development. Extending practical course teachings beyond the confines of the institution by implementing kindergarten-based practice sessions further enhances students' post-practical abilities<sup>[10]</sup>. For instance, students can assist kindergarten teachers in explaining childcare knowledge and facilitating children's acquisition of self-care skills like tooth brushing, handwashing, and toilet use. Through such activities, students deepen their understanding of kindergarten teaching content, enrich their professional knowledge, and subsequently enhance their post-competency.

Additionally, schools can conduct assessments for off-campus practical training. Students are tasked with designing their teaching plans across the five domains of kindergarten education and implementing them in kindergarten settings. A panel consisting of professional preschool education teachers and kindergarten educators can serve as judges, evaluating students' teaching design skills and classroom interactions. This evaluation process further elevates the quality of off-campus practical training, ensuring students receive comprehensive feedback for improvement<sup>[11]</sup>.

Off-campus practical training bases serve as vital platforms for enriching the practical experiences of college students majoring in preschool education. By immersing students in real-world kindergarten settings, these bases significantly contribute to improving the quality of practical course teachings.

#### **4.3. Establishing a “double tutor” team to enhance the quality of practical teaching**

Colleges and universities should first recruit outstanding kindergarten teachers as part-time instructors, forming a blend of professional and adjunct faculty to elevate teaching standards. This initiative facilitates the alignment of kindergarten teaching content, talent requirements, and practical courses in preschool education, progressively enhancing the quality of practical teaching. For instance, kindergarten teachers can conduct practical sessions on early childhood care, elucidate the intricacies of small, medium, and large class childcare education, and showcase exemplary childcare cases and instructional videos demonstrating kindergarten activities like dining and hygiene routines. Such activities instill in students the significance of childcare duties, motivating them to proactively seek relevant early childhood care knowledge and fostering a strong sense of professional ethics characterized by diligence, responsibility, and dedication. This approach enhances students' professional identity and ignites their enthusiasm for self-directed learning<sup>[12]</sup>.

Secondly, institutions can orchestrate temporary training sessions for preschool education faculty, enabling them to acquire novel educational concepts such as Anji-play and pro-nature education from kindergarten educators. Participation in home-based co-education initiatives further equips faculty with practical experience in kindergarten teaching, cultivating more “double-qualified” educators and laying the groundwork for advancing practical curriculum reforms. Preschool education faculty should integrate insights gleaned from kindergarten training into practical course instruction. For example, they can conduct specialized sessions on early childhood care, motivate students to pursue certification in early childhood care, expand the scope of practical course teachings, and enhance the employability of students majoring in preschool education <sup>[13]</sup>.

#### **4.4. Enhancing the practical teaching evaluation system to foster students’ holistic development**

Colleges and universities should establish an evaluation system centered around post-competency. Preschool education specialists and kindergarten part-time instructors should collaboratively devise evaluation criteria to assess students’ abilities in preschool teaching, teacher ethics, innovation, and curriculum development, thereby enhancing students’ vocational core competencies <sup>[14]</sup>.

Firstly, institutions can conduct comprehensive practice assessments simulating real teaching scenarios in kindergartens. Through simulated teaching across the five domains of kindergarten education, conservation education, and others, students can demonstrate their teaching design, classroom instruction, and psychological resilience. Encouraging self-evaluation and participation in teaching assessments fosters student engagement and stimulates their interest in learning.

Secondly, involving part-time kindergarten teachers in teaching evaluations allows for feedback on students’ performance in practical courses such as piano playing, singing, dance creation, and picture book reading. This enables timely correction of any issues in students’ practical learning and helps adjust their learning attitudes <sup>[15]</sup>.

Moreover, preschool education teachers can guide students in self-evaluation and peer assessment, prompting reflection on practical course learning and kindergarten internships. This includes evaluating abilities such as curriculum development, communication, picture book reading, and children’s song performance during kindergarten placements. Encouraging students to establish clear career plans further enhances their comprehensive abilities and lays a solid foundation for future employment.

### **5. Conclusion**

In summary, colleges and universities should align with the demands of preschool education, adopting an employment-oriented approach to enhance the professional practice curriculum system. By inviting kindergartens to contribute to the construction of this system and integrating teachings from the five domains of kindergarten education and conservation teaching, institutions can empower students to familiarize themselves with and master the core vocational skills of preschool teachers in advance.

Additionally, schools should establish off-campus training bases and regularly organize student placements in kindergartens. This facilitates learning from kindergarten teachers and cultivates students’ professional ethics, emphasizing qualities such as love, dedication, conscientiousness, responsibility, and hard work.

Building a “double tutor” teacher team further enhances the practical teaching abilities of educators. Establishing a practical curriculum teaching evaluation system centered around on-the-job practical abilities is crucial. This system should focus on evaluating students’ practical skills, thereby comprehensively enhancing the teaching quality of professional practical courses in preschool education.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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