

Research on Academic Ethos Construction and Career Development Planning for Publicly Funded Normal University Students

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Abstract. In 2017, the Education Department of Yunnan Province launched the provincial public funded normal college student project, which aims to train primary and secondary school teachers with multi-level needs and styles. To explore and practice the path of precise poverty alleviation in basic education, continue to train a group of primary and secondary school teachers who can "go, stay and teach well" for 10 cities in West Yunnan and strive to improve the basic education ability of 10 cities in West Yunnan and the whole province. The training direction is specialized teachers, "double-qualified" teachers and local shortage teachers from primary and secondary schools in 10 cities in western Yunnan. The six-year public funded teacher education is a measure of Yunnan Provincial government to promote the development of rural education in the province, but there are some problems in the process of education, such as students' lack of professional identity and learning motivation. The main reasons can be summarized as the lack of students' motivation for independent learning and the incomplete consideration of training plans. In view of the problems existing in students' learning style and career development planning, some solutions are put forward.

Keywords: Yunnan Province, Public Funded Normal College Student, Basic Education, "Double-Qualified" Teachers, Rural Education Development

1 Introduction

Yunnan province, marked by its rugged terrain, transportation challenges, frequent natural calamities, and a rich tapestry of ethnic groups, still contends with over 4 million individuals unable to speak Mandarin Chinese. Its educational landscape remains widely dispersed, boasting 3,566 teaching points, including 1,354 one-teacher, one-school setups, with approximately 440,000 educators, primarily 310,000 serving in rural township-level schools. Despite achieving a 7.2-year average education span per person and successful assessments in compulsory education development, Yunnan's educational strides pivot on addressing rural teacher shortages. [1]

Originating from Yunnan, the "Special Contracted Teachers" initiative has emerged as a vital supplement to rural teaching. Over a decade, the province recruited 57,500 such teachers, supported by 3.889 billion RMB in central subsidies, spread across 2,000-plus rural schools in nearly 100 counties, constituting 16.4% of the total compulsory education teacher count. [1]

A shared conviction prevails that prioritizing education is imperative, even if it means slowing other developmental facets down. Among the 129 counties in Yunnan, 73 are focal points for national poverty alleviation efforts, and 7 are provincially designated key counties, encompassing 85 severely impoverished areas, struggling with fiscal sustainability. Despite this, the commitment stands firm: "Even in dire poverty, neglecting education is not an option." A policy offering a 500 RMB monthly subsidy for town-level job positions spans teachers in town schools across the province. [1]

In response to this initiative, in 2017, the Education Department of Yunnan Province embarked on an ambitious initiative—the provincial public funded normal college student project. The primary objective was clear: to cultivate a cadre of primary and secondary school educators equipped to address the diverse needs and learning styles of students. This endeavor sought to pave a path towards precise poverty alleviation in basic education by nurturing a cohort of teachers capable of not just teaching but excelling in any environment—be it remote or urban, ensuring their competence to "go, stay, and teach well" in the challenging terrain of West Yunnan.

The project's core focus was to refine the skills and expertise of teachers who could significantly impact the educational landscape, aiming to elevate the basic education capabilities in 10 cities across West Yunnan and the entire province. Targeting specialized teachers, "double-qualified" educators, and addressing the shortage of local teaching talent in these regions, the initiative emphasized a six-year trajectory of public funded teacher education. It stood as a testament to the Yunnan government's commitment to bolstering rural education by investing in comprehensive teacher development programs.

However, the process of education encountered hurdles, notably observed in the insufficient professional identity and learning motivation among students. This deficiency stemmed from a twofold issue: the lack of intrinsic motivation for independent learning among students and inadequacies in the formulation of comprehensive training plans. These issues, although impediments, served as critical indicators prompting a reevaluation of the project's efficacy and potential areas for enhancement.

Recognizing these challenges as pivotal points for improvement, the focus shifted towards addressing students' learning styles and refining their career development planning. In response to these challenges, a set of targeted solutions have been proposed. These solutions aim to bridge the gap between educational aspirations and reality by offering tailored strategies to invigorate students' motivation for independent learning. Moreover, they seek to rectify the inadequacies in training plans, ensuring a more comprehensive and effective approach to skill development and career planning for aspiring educators.

The remaining sections of this paper are organized as follows. Following this introduction section, sections 2 are dedicated to a thorough examination of existing literature and how this study derives from the existing body of literature. section 3 outlines the methodology employed in this research. section 4 discusses anticipated research outcomes and analysis of existing problems and causes. Subsequently, in section 5, the practical strategies are stated. Finally, section 6 presents the research conclusions.

2 Literature review

Previous studies have emphasized the significance of tailored teacher training programs in rural or underdeveloped regions. Research by Gao and Tao (2018) highlights the pivotal role of specialized teacher education in addressing educational disparities in remote areas.[2] Longitudinal studies conducted by Liu et al. (2019) underscore the efficacy of extended teacher education programs in nurturing educators capable of thriving in diverse educational settings. [3] These findings resonate with the six-year teacher education initiative undertaken in Yunnan, emphasizing the need for sustained, comprehensive training. Examining the motivations and learning styles of teacher trainees forms a critical aspect. Studies by Wang and Zhang (2017) shed light on factors influencing the professional identity and intrinsic motivation among educators-in-training. This is particularly relevant to the challenges observed in Yunnan's project regarding students' lack of professional identity and learning motivation.[4] Research by Li et al. (2023) delves into the nexus between career development planning and educational aspirations among prospective educators. [5] The literature emphasizes the need for structured career development frameworks. Studies by Geng and Law (2019) provide insights into effective pedagogical approaches and strategies aimed at fostering independent learning among students.[6] These findings offer potential solutions to address the lack of motivation for independent learning identified in the Yunnan project. Comparative analyses by Yang et al. (2022) explore challenges faced by rural teacher education programs globally.[7] They discuss innovative solutions and policy recommendations, offering a broader perspective that might inform strategies to overcome challenges encountered in Yunnan's teacher training initiative.

Synthesizing these diverse strands of literature provides a robust understanding of the complexities and nuances within teacher education initiatives, student motivation, and career development planning. However, while these studies offer valuable insights, there's a gap in specific research focusing on the unique socio-cultural context and challenges present in Yunnan Province. Bridging this gap is essential to devise context-specific interventions and enhancements tailored to the project's objectives and the region's educational landscape.

3 Research methodology

This paper employs research methods such as surveys, interviews, and statistical analysis to study the learning style construction and career development planning of publicly funded teacher training students. It offers corresponding suggestions and measures: In the construction of academic style, schools should pay attention to the proper distinction and cautious matching of professional and non-full-time disciplines for publicly funded teacher training students. In terms of career planning, these students can engage in self-reflection and enhancement, while the university level can offer career development planning courses, focusing on cultivating students' career planning abilities.

3.1 Research design

Adopting a mixed-methods design combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques provides a holistic understanding. This involves integrating surveys, interviews, and document analysis.

3.2 Participants and sampling

Targeting a diverse cohort of teacher trainees from the Yunnan project spanning different stages of the six-year program. Random sampling ensures representation across genders, regions, and program phases.

3.3 Data collection

Administering structured surveys focusing on professional identity, learning motivation, and perceptions of training plans among participants. These surveys could utilize Likert scales and open-ended questions. Conducting semi-structured interviews with selected participants to delve deeper into their experiences, aspirations, and challenges faced within the program. Analyzing program documents, curricula, and training plans to identify potential gaps or inadequacies contributing to the observed challenges.

3.4 Data analysis

Employing SPSS for analyzing survey responses, using descriptive statistics and inferential tests to identify correlations between variables. Utilizing thematic analysis to extract patterns, themes, and nuances from interview transcripts, employing coding techniques to identify recurring topics and sentiments. Employing content analysis to scrutinize program documents, identifying discrepancies or shortcomings in training plans.

4 Analysis of existing problems and causes

The effective sample size for this survey was 228. Through data analysis, we identified substantive issues: low attendance rates, a high number of failing students, limited award recipients, low pass rates in examinations, and decreased participation in extracurricular activities. Summarizing and analyzing these issues, we have determined several primary factors contributing to the lack of learning motivation among publicly funded normal university students. These factors include:

Lack of clear career planning, lack of endogenous motivation for independent learning. Government-funded normal school students have signed a training agreement before enrollment, so their jobs are guaranteed after graduation. Without the pressure of job competition, many students are content with the status quo. In the study of passive coping, before the exam began to attack.

The positioning and understanding of "one-specialty and multi-ability" teachers are not enough. The training program designated by the public funded normal university students is "one specialty and multiple abilities" and the curriculum system trains junior high school teachers who can better undertake one subject course of junior high school and concurrently teach and teach the other two subject courses and have relevant subject research ability and innovation ability. This training program pays great attention to the improvement of comprehensive quality. Through the questionnaire survey, it is found that most students think that government-funded normal students should learn more skills than ordinary normal students. But this has caused the problem of "extensive but not fine" and many government-funded normal students are struggling to cope with a large number of courses.

Insufficient guidance and incentive for publicly funded normal students. Since the government-funded normal students are exempt from tuition and miscellaneous fees and have monthly living allowances during their studies, the school pays more attention to ordinary normal students in the selection of scholarships. It is inevitable that the psychology of public funded normal university students will be unbalanced, resulting in insufficient learning motivation.

Uneven performance of students, teaching difficulty. In terms of enrollment, schools are affected by regional and college entrance examination policies and there are great differences in student performance. The same course content, students with good grades are easy to master, often satisfied with the status quo, do not want to forge ahead; Students with poor foundation are more difficult and they will lose their confidence in learning for a long time. Therefore, the teaching ability of teachers is also a great test.

5 Practical strategies

5.1 Increase the setting of skills courses to improve students' learning motivation.

Yunnan Province is a government-funded normal school students directly after graduation. Therefore, schools should pay more attention to the cultivation of teaching practice ability while imparting theoretical knowledge.

5.1.1 Pay attention to the training value of micro courses

The significance of carrying out microteaching in normal colleges lies in training students' teaching skills. It is a practice based on theoretical courses to help students get on the platform better. However, in the course of course development, there are still some deviations between the actual effect and the expected requirements. This paper analyzes the situation of microteaching in the first half semester of the third year of the public funded normal university class of 2017 in the School of Mathematics and gives effective strategies.

Subjectively: Teachers should reasonably arrange the training content of micro class according to the limited time to ensure the high-quality completion of students and improve students' teaching skills. At the same time, students should also pay attention to the feedback of microteaching. After class, they should carefully listen to the analysis and evaluation of classmates, conduct self-analysis through the recorded video, summarize the existing problems and actively correct them, so as to make progress in each class. Strive to overcome adverse factors, take the form of collective discussion to solve problems after class and make full preparation for training and reporting in class.

Objectively: schools should increase the investment in micro classroom teaching equipment. First of all, in terms of hardware, the number of micro classrooms should be increased to repair and replace the aging equipment in time to alleviate the problem of frequent equipment failures and ensure the smooth progress of teaching. Secondly, in terms of management, the number of courses should be reasonably arranged, small class teaching should be implemented, and the efficient use of the same resource conditions should be ensured so that students can have more ample training time and complete the task with high quality.

5.1.2 Improve the three-stroke skills

As future teachers, normal university students should not only have solid theoretical knowledge but also cultivate teaching practice ability. As a basic educational skill, three-stroke characters can effectively improve teachers' comprehensive quality and personal charm, so it is very important for normal students to write three-stroke characters well. This paper analyzes the problems existing in the course setting of "Three characters" in the public funded normal college students' class of 2017 in the School of Mathematics and makes corresponding optimization strategies.

The improvement of the three-stroke skills of normal university students will put forward corresponding learning countermeasures from two aspects: On the one hand, the school needs to highlight its important position in the curriculum and assessment to attract students' attention; On the other hand, the students of the public funded normal school class should exert their subjective initiative, consciously and conscientiously practice and standardize their writing.

Improve the teaching and assessment mode: First of all, the three characters course should be taken as a compulsory course in the training program of normal university students and the course credits should be increased. At the same time, we can try to add three characters' assessment results into the conditions for the identification of teacher qualification certificate to form an incentive mechanism and promote the conscious practice of normal university students.

Encourage normal students to play the subjective initiative: Although there is no pressure to compete for jobs, students in public funded normal school classes cannot be satisfied with the status quo. Once they enter the workplace, schools expect them to play a leading role in the teaching team, which requires government-funded normal students to have a more comprehensive quality. Therefore, "three strokes" as a basic skill is particularly reused. The class committee of the public funded normal university students can solicit the opinions of the classmates in the class, select the students who write neatly in the class to lead the class to practice three strokes and give corresponding guidance to the problems. It is beneficial to improve practical skills and enhance the cohesion of the class.

5.2 Arrange the time reasonably and complete the tasks of the double section.

In view of the complexity of the curriculum and the lack of rationality in the arrangement of the "one-specialty multi-ability" class, the following will put forward the corresponding improvement strategies from two aspects.

General Studies and public courses can be taught from the beginning of admission to free up time for later professional courses. Teacher skills courses can also be implemented from the beginning to give students a sense of urgency.

The level of professional courses (major and part-time courses) should be clear, and the study of part-time subjects should be carried out after the completion of all mathematical professional courses so as to ensure the "one major" and then realize the "multi-ability".

5.3 Promote the formation of a good learning atmosphere and enhance students' sense of time.

5.3.1 Increase evening self-study

In order to allow students to have a good learning atmosphere, the school can also arrange evening self-study for government-funded normal school students so that students have time to review and consolidate the courses learned in the day and strengthen the independent learning ability in the process of checking and filling in the gaps.

5.3.2 Start a coaching group

The public funded normal class can form a group of excellent students to tutor other students in spare time, which can also promote the formation of a good atmosphere of study.

5.3.3 Adjust the course schedule of government-funded normal students

Schools can try to arrange some compulsory or elective courses for ordinary normal students so as to make students' knowledge more coherent and the system more complete.

5.4 Optimize the reward mechanism and strengthen the guidance and encouragement of publicly funded normal students.

There are some differences between the assessment mechanism of students in public funded normal classes and ordinary normal classes. In order to correctly guide and motivate publicly funded normal students to study hard, schools can adopt the same assessment mechanism for publicly funded normal students and ordinary normal students, that is, the periodic test questions of the same subject are consistent, and the grade requirements stipulated in the teacher skills test are consistent. Under the same conditions, government-funded normal students have equal opportunities to compete for scholarships with ordinary normal students.

5.5 To narrow the gap and promote the balanced development of students in publicly funded normal school classes

The school enrolls publicly funded normal students with uneven performance due to the influence of regional and college entrance examination policies. In order to adapt to the learning conditions of different students, the school can divide the students into two classes according to their admission scores to improve the teaching quality.

In order to solve the problem of "some students in high level are satisfied with the status quo, while some students in low level lose confidence", during the student's study period, the school can re-distribute the students of the two classes according to the results of the periodic test.

6 Conclusions

To further enhance the training mode for publicly funded normal students at Yunnan Normal University, a multifaceted approach drawing from successful practices in six other teachers' colleges (i.e. Beijing Normal University, East China Normal University, etc.) is imperative. Integrating these experiences entails a strategic review, leveraging insights from diverse training

modes, curriculum arrangements, and teaching methodologies. Incorporating dedicated career planning courses and differentiated class management based on score disparities offer a tailored approach, alleviating pressure for lower-performing students while enriching the educational experience for those with higher capabilities. Strengthening interviews to gauge student-teacher perceptions and potential improvement areas, coupled with comprehensive support systems and continuous evaluation mechanisms, aims to create an adaptive and empowering learning environment. By amalgamating these strategies, the university can revamp its training mode, fostering a holistic and responsive framework that propels publicly funded normal students toward comprehensive growth and success.

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