

Integrating the spirit of educators into the cultivation of English teachers: Realistic Predicaments and Practical Approaches

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are the cornerstone and source of education. Strengthening education requires strengthening teachers first, and strengthening teachers requires strengthening education first. The spirit of an educator serves as a guiding principle which is a profound summary and elevation of the professional spirit of teachers setting new requirements for building a high-quality teaching force. With the advent of generative artificial intelligence, the cultivation of English teachers faces challenges. Based on a questionnaire survey, this research focuses on the intrinsic attributes and connotations of the educator's spirit and explores the practical dilemmas that constrain the integration of the educator's spirit into the cultivation of English teacher and attempts to construct a four-in-one practical approach for integrating it into the cultivation of English student teachers aiming to cultivate high-quality, professional, and innovative English teachers.

KEYWORDS

Cultivation of English Normal College Students; Teacher Education

1 Introduction

China has issued a series of policies to promote the construction of high-quality teaching staff. The State Council emphasize the need to uphold the spirit of educators to strengthen teacher training and development, and to impose new requirements for building a high-quality teacher force^[1]. English language education students are the reserve force for the English teaching profession. They shoulder the responsibilities of teaching English and cultivating well-rounded individuals. Integrating the spirit of educators into the cultivation of English language education students is of great significance.^[2] The self-developed questionnaire reveals that currently, there exist several realistic predicaments in the cultivation of English teachers by integrating educator spirit.

2 The Significance of Integrating the Spirit of Educators into the Cultivation of English Normal College Students

Teachers in the new era are no longer the traditional kind of teachers who merely impart knowledge. Instead, they are the engineers of human souls shouldering important missions such as leading society, innovating culture, cultivating talents.^[3] Integrating the spirit of educators into the training of English teachers can address the dual challenges faced in the training of English student teachers and is of great significance for the training of English student teachers. The spirit of educators is centered on the core mission of cultivating talents. It can awaken the educational sentiments of normal school students and cultivate their professional ethics. In addition, strengthening capabilities and reconfiguring oneself, cultivating well-rounded individuals. Thirdly, it enhance the resilience to confront technical challenges, and abandon the fragile adaptation approach and shift towards the active breakthrough strategy. Under the background of rapid development of new technologies, generative AI models such as ChatGPT providing students with channels to acquire various knowledge. Should teachers be or could they be replaced by technology? Many scholars have given a negative answer.^[4] The spirit of educators emphasizes that teachers should pursue the noble goal of cultivating people through culture, be vigilant against the misconception that technology will replace teachers, and should become emotional interaction guides and knowledge architecture designers for students. They should emphasize the emotional warmth and humanistic care in education rather than the knowledge itself.

3 An Empirical Analysis Based on Self-compiled Questionnaire Survey of the Realistic Dilemmas in the Process

3.1 Research tool and subjects

This study employed a self-developed questionnaire titled "The Realistic predicaments on Integrating Educator Spirit into the Cultivation of English Teachers", which included 14 core questions. The questionnaire was composed of multiple

aspects--the understanding of the contemporary connotation of educators' spirit, the current status of training, and the integration approaches. Questionnaires were distributed to some English teaching students and a total of 156 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.2 Analysis and Review on the Realistic Predicaments of Integrating the Spirit of Educators into the Cultivation of English Normal College Students

Based on the analysis of questionnaire data, the integration of educator spirit into the training of English teachers still encounters practical difficulties.

Firstly, the integration paths are relatively simple. Regarding the contact situation with course materials, 20.51% of English teacher-training students often come into contact with relevant materials or courses, 41.67% sometimes do, 28.85% rarely do, and 8.97% have never done so showing that the popularity of relevant course materials in teaching is not high, and it is difficult to meet the needs of English teacher-training students.

Secondly, the training content and training needs vary. Course design (80.77%) and providing practical opportunities (82.05%) are highly recognized by the trainees. 48.08% of the English major trainees think that cultivating the spirit of educators requires specialized training, 42.95% believe that it can be achieved through internships and practical activities as well as integration in courses, and only 7.05% choose to be uncertain or adopt other methods, showing that more than half of the English major trainees recognize that cultivating the spirit of educators requires specific methods.

Thirdly, the evaluation system and support system are not well-developed. This survey shows that 74.36% advocate comprehensive assessment of overall qualities. Meanwhile, insufficient resource support, such as precise guidance from mentors and construction of practical platforms, cannot systematically assist in the internalization and practical transformation of educationalist spirit, further echoing the empirical demands for cultivating practical effectiveness.

3.3 Analysis of the Causes of the Realistic Predicaments in the Cultivation of Normal School Students with the Inclusion of the Spirit of Educators

Firstly, the curriculum and textbook system of English teacher training colleges is lacking, and the training objectives are rather vague. There are problems such as the fuzziness of the training objectives for the spirit of educators, the fragmentation of the training content, and the singleness of the training methods.^[5] The frequency of exposure to relevant textbooks and courses on the theme of educators' spirit is relatively low, making it difficult for English education students to systematically and deeply study the spirit of educators.

Secondly, there is a shortage of internship and practical experience opportunities, making it difficult for English teachers-to-be to fully grasp the essence of the educator's spirit. Data shows that English teacher-to-be students call for specialized training in the theory of the educator's spirit, and the cultivation methods of the educator's spirit need to be optimized indicating that the existing training and practice approaches cannot fully meet the needs of English teacher-to-be students.

Thirdly, there is a lack of educational technology empowerment in teaching. With the development of information technology, traditional educational technologies and means cannot meet the learning channels of English teacher-to-be students. Some teachers lack effective teaching methods when imparting the educator's spirit and cannot fully exert the role of teaching by example and personal demonstration.

Fourthly, the evaluation system urgently needs to be improved. In the actual training process, there may be a lack of scientific and systematic evaluation indicators and operational procedures, and the evaluation mechanism is missing. There is no established evaluation standard for the cultivation of the educator's spirit, and it is impossible to accurately measure the effectiveness of integrating the educator's spirit into the cultivation of English teacher-to-be students.

4 Exploration of Practical Approaches

This study, based on the current predicament and causes of integrating the spirit of educators into the training of English teachers, explores a four-in-one practical approach attempting to construct a possible model for integrating the spirit of educators into the training of English teachers through curriculum design, practice mode, technology empowerment and evaluation system.

4.1 Optimize the curriculum design and incorporate the spirit and consciousness of educators

English teacher-training institutions urgently need to restructure the relevant courses of the spirit of educationalists, such as offering a compulsory course named Special Topic on the Spirit of Educationalists, adding courses like The Spirit of

Educationalists and Cross-Cultural Educational Practice.^[6] Integrate the spirit of educators into the modules of teacher ethics and innovation, combine the characteristics of the English subject and local characteristics, utilize the in-school teachers or seek cooperation with external units to develop supplementary textbooks and a case database of Educators Spirit Model Teachers, increase the channels for integrating the spirit of educators into English teachers' education students, optimize the teacher education curriculum and system.

4.2 Innovative practice model, nourishing the spirit of educationalists

Practical internships are the fundamental way for English language teachers-in-training to implement the spirit of educators. Through the collaborative effect of universities, governments, and schools, enhancing the quality of practical internships to offer practical opportunities^[7] such as rural English teaching assistance activities and domestic and international public welfare education programs. Through these practices, students can hone their professional skills and realize the practical scenarios of the educator's spirit. During this process, English teacher-training institutions need to improve the assessment system for practical training, and establish the educationalist mentorship system, with the dual mentors being subject matter mentors + professional ethics mentors.^[8] Multiple stakeholders' evaluations are introduced, such as self-evaluation by English education students, evaluation by their supervisors, and feedback from the practicing units. In accordance with the requirements of the university's teacher education accreditation, the spirit of educationalists is incorporated into the accreditation indicators of teacher education, and corresponding incentive policies and teacher ethics scholarships are implemented.

4.3 Utilize technology to empower and broaden the channels for the dissemination of the spirit of educators

Universities can rely on generative artificial intelligence models and big data technologies^[9] to develop digital resource libraries of educationalist spirit and construct online learning platforms to support English student teachers to conduct contextualized learning anytime and anywhere. VR technology can be introduced to simulate real teaching scenarios, allowing English student teachers to experience in an immersive way and understand the practical logic of the educationalist spirit connotations such as enlightening minds and nurturing hearts, and individualized teaching. For example, virtual scenarios for cross-cultural communication can be designed to help English teacher candidates exercise educational wisdom from an international perspective.

4.4 Revise the evaluation system and establish a multi-dimensional and dynamic assessment mechanism

Integrating the spirit of educators into the training of English student teachers requires breaking through the limitations of single quantitative evaluation and urgently establishing an assessment framework that integrates both process and development.^[10] It is necessary to innovate the existing result-oriented evaluation system. Process assessment refers to process evaluation, incorporating items such as observation diaries of teacher ethics and analysis of educational cases into the assessment, and focus on the emotional attitudes and behavioral manifestations of English teachers. In the innovative practice model, the dual-mentor system is introduced--the subject mentor and the teacher ethics mentor. The joint practice and internship units, self-evaluation by English teachers, and peer mutual evaluation are carried out to ensure the comprehensiveness and objectivity of the evaluation. Development assessment refers to developmental indicators. An educator spirit growth file is established to track and record the changes in career beliefs of English teachers from enrollment to graduation.

5 Conclusion

Through empirical research, it is found that there are still practical difficulties in integrating the spirit of educators into the training of English student teachers. Based on this, a four-in-one practical approach of curriculum design, practice mode, technology empowerment and evaluation system is proposed that systematically enhances the educationalist spirit of English teachers, shaping English teachers who are capable of teaching and educators who understand how to educate. These English teachers will safeguard the original educational intentions in the dual tension of localization and internationalization, convey the warmth of knowledge through the balance of technological rationality and humanistic care, promote the process of building a high-quality teacher team for the new era in the country.

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