

The Experience and Inspiration of the Teacher Education Reform in America and Britain

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Abstract: The Professional Development Schools of U.S.A. and School-based Teacher Training of U.K. reflect common experiences of teacher educational reform in Great Britain and America—Regarding the middle & primary schools as the base, university and middle & primary schools bear the duty of teacher's education together; Regarding the partnership as guarantee, the university and middle & primary schools cooperate fairly; Regarding the practice as direction, the educational theory and practice are combined with each other.

Teacher's quality decides the quality of education, and the teacher education takes the responsibility of improving teacher's quality, so it is obviously that the key to an educational reform is the reform of teacher education. Since the 1980s, a lot of western countries regard the education and training of teachers as the educational as the focus in the new tide of educational reforms. The professional development school of America and School-based Teacher Training of Britain are results of this reform, teacher's educational view they reflect, which needed in the middle and primary schools, indicates the developing direction of teacher education in the future. So, we can benefit from the experiences of teacher educational reform in Britain and America for the present teacher educational reform of China.

1 The Professional Development Schools of U.S.A.

The professional development school of U.S.A (abbreviated as PDS) [1] is a kind of integrative school forms that regards middle and primary schools as the base, the university and middle & primary schools are cooperating with each other and engaged in teacher education and relevant researches together, combine the Prejob educating, on-the-job training and school reform. The middle and primary school as PDS is similar to the teaching hospital for the medical science speciality, can offer clinical practice training. The university as PDS cooperates with middle and primary schools on the basis of practice and research, offers the partnership of the equal development opportunity to all cooperators. The PDS is considered as the last best school form for "professional training of the beginner's, continuative development of the experienced ones, research and development of the pedagogy " [2].

Though the PDS of all parts of U.S.A is not self-same, but they have already formed the stable practice mode relatively. In the PDS, the normal students have to be a student teacher for one year, trained by the cooperative group, which is consisted of experienced teachers of the middle & primary school and supervising-and-guiding teachers of the university. During this year, the students will participate in various activities of the school and experience all of the teacher role's intension like the formal teachers. The student teacher can assist the guide teacher as the assistant, and observe the teaching and class managing at ordinary times, be responsible for all work of the class alone one day every week. In addition, the student teacher should participate in the various teach-and-research meeting of teachers, even can make some teaching experiments. It is the main task for the cooperative teachers of middle & primary schools that to guide the trainee to participate in teaching. Because the trainees will take responsibility for all work of the class independently one

day every week, so the guide teacher can utilize the vacant of one day to improve themselves through self-study and elective course in the university, or serve as the teacher, assistant teacher or the visiting lecturer of some teacher-training courses in the university. The cooperative teachers of the university should spend the same time in the university and middle & primary schools. In the PDS, they participate in various teachers' gathering, observe the trainee's work, organize the trainee's discussion, and they also get on the lecture platform of the middle & primary schools to teach sometimes. Their responsibility is bringing new thought to the PDS and feeding back various kinds of new teaching problems in the PDS to the university. Meanwhile, in order to make the guide teachers in middle & primary schools become an effective advisor, they also open advanced seminar in PDS to train the teacher's technology and ability of communication and observation, etc.

As a cooperative organization of teacher training, the PDS improves the educational practice of normal student, make the trainee unite " learning in teaching " and "learning in cooperating" organically through the communication and cooperation with supervise-and-guide teachers of the university, guide teachers of middle & primary schools and other student teachers in the cooperative group; make normal student accumulate abundant practice experiences of class teaching, which is useful to them to adapt the duty of teaching fast after graduating. The PDS improve the professional development of both the university teachers who engaged in teacher education, and the middle & primary school teachers who engaged in basic education at the same time. On one hand, the teachers of middle and primary schools, through guiding practice, can excite the hope for study and progress, review their own teaching constantly and improve the teaching skill further at the same time; through going to the university to study, can upgrade the professional knowledge, and change the educational idea; through participating in research, can study the new theory of education, grasp the research approach, and learn to apply the theory, search the educational document and solve the practical problems. On the other hand, getting to know about fundamental education situation and teaching reality of middle & primary schools, the academic can promote applicative study facing the reality of fundamental education, and carry on a pointed, meet-the-actual-demands teacher education. The PDS improved the education quality of the universities and middle & primary schools at the same time. A lot of data and reports indicate that the teacher who has practiced in PDS can excite students' interest for study and review the practice more effectively. So middle and primary schools tend to prefer to employ the graduates who have been trainee in the PDS. Because of the new educational ideas, the reform of the curriculum, and the proportion of the rate of teachers and students, what contribute to the participation of the trainee and academic, there is obvious improvement in the education quality of the middle & primary schools. Practice has proved, the school grade of the students studying in PDS, is obviously higher than that of the students studying in other schools.

2 School-based Teacher Training of U.K.

School-based Teacher Training (abbreviated as STT) [3] is the reform action of the teacher education performed by the British government, which aims at improving teachers' training quality, training the future teacher according to the needs of reality of the middle and primary schools, making middle and primary schools to be the base of teacher training, doubling the normal student's time for teaching practice; strengthens the partnership between teachers' training organization and middle & primary schools, and emphasize the function of middle & primary schools in training the normal students further; values the result instead of the content of training course more clearly, make the focal point of teacher training transfer from theory to practice.

There are a lot of practice activities in the School-based Teacher Training, let's take the cooperation between the university of Leicester and Leicestershire middle & primary schools as an example here, state the concrete content of this kind of practice mode [4]. During one academic year, which amounts to 3 terms of 36 weeks, it will take about 24 weeks for the normal students to practice in the school. Among them, teaching practice will concentrate in 12 weeks. In other weeks, the normal student will spend 2 days every week in the practice school, and they will be engaged in the discipline course activity and the professional course activity separately. According to the

composition of the teachers, there are subject-course-guiding and professional-course-guiding teachers from practice school, and liaison-teacher and main-subject -guiding teacher from the educational institution of the university. The subject-course--guiding teacher is generally the experienced teacher, which usually is served by the group leader of teaching & research group of subject. He will cooperate closely with the main-subject--guiding teacher of the university, and be mainly responsible for the trainee's subject course activity and teaching practice. The professional-course-guiding teacher is designated senior teacher, which is usually served by the vice-president. He will be mainly responsible for all plans and arrangement in the practice school, coordinating the work of every subject-course-guiding teacher, guiding the professional course activity, and contacting with the liaison-teacher of university and other professional-course-guiding teacher in the district. The liaison-teacher is mainly responsible for, coordination and contact, while the main-subject--guiding teacher is responsible for evaluating the normal student's subject teaching and guiding their teaching practice, what's more, he usually hold the liaison-teacher concurrently.

The School-based Teacher Training makes all participants benefit from it. From the point of view of normal student, it has offered them the chance to participate in normal teaching activities of the middle & primary schools in the capacity of a teacher, and especially the chance that cooperating with the experienced teaches and guided by them. In this way, the normal student can not only get some fundamental teaching skills and the ability dealing with daily teaching problems, but also establish their self-confidence of competition as a teacher. Therefore the normal students all appreciate it universally. From the point of view of the middle & primary schools and teacher of them, class-evaluating activities enable the teachers of middle & primary schools analyzing their teaching more deeply and more objectively, which will improve developing their ability of review. The normal student and guide teacher will discuss about the education theory and educational problem of the middle & primary schools in their professional activity, which will promote the reforms of the middle & primary schools. Meanwhile, the research engaged by the cooperator will promote planning the future development of the middle & primary schools, too. From the point of view of the university and the guide teacher of them, all the activities in the middle & primary schools, such as presiding the seminar about educational problem in the practice school; participating in the activity of the subject group; making, implementing and evaluating the training plan with teachers of the practice school together, enable the academic understand the actual situation, need, question of the middle & primary schools, etc., thus can make them consider the arrangement of the training course of the university in terms of middle & primary schools and class teaching, adapt the theoretical training in the university to the demand of middle and primary school's teaching practice.

3 The Inspiration of the Teacher Education Reform in America and Britain

Arising since the 1980s, The Professional Development School of U.S.A. and School-based Teacher Training of Britain have accumulated a lot of common experience, which has reflected the international trend of teacher education reform to a certain extent, and offers helpful inspiration to the present reform of teacher education in our country.

3.1 Regarding Middle & Primary Schools as the Base, the University and Middle & Primary Schools Bear the Duty of Teacher Educational Together

The middle & primary schools should become the place where the future teacher can carry on the clinical practice just like in teaching hospital [5]. The school should be the place where the students study; the teachers develop; and teachers of the school and professors of the university research, improve the teaching practice together. Because of such understanding, the reform of the teacher education in Great Britain and America both regard the middle & primary schools as the base, require the normal students to practice with formal identity of member in the school, the teachers of middle & primary schools to participate in designing the normal student's professional course, guiding the educational practice, taking the responsibility for the evaluation on the trainee. At the same time, teachers of middle & primary schools can realize their professional development

through self-reviewing of teaching and participating in the academic's research subject in the process of guiding a trainee. That is, the responsibility for the teacher education is given to the middle & primary schools in essence, the middle & primary school's function of the teacher education is emphasize further, and make the teacher education become the common duty of the university and middle & primary school.

Our country's current teacher education mainly regards university as the base, and is executed by the normal colleges and schools or special organization of teacher training. Most of experimental schools of middle & primary schools have already developed into the key school, its function, that trains new teacher and carry on educational research and the experiment, is nearly disappeared. The on-the-job teacher training of middle & primary schools mainly concentrates on the normal colleges and schools and teacher training organization, so that the training loses contact with the reality of middle & primary schools, the problems arising in the teaching work can't be solved effectively in time, and the teachers have no enthusiasm to the training. For this reason, we should use the experience of teacher educational reform in Great Britain and America for reference; stress the function of teacher education and educational research in the middle & primary schools.

3.2 Regarding Partnership as Guarantee, the University and Middle & Primary Schools Cooperate Fairly

Without the outstanding middle & primary schools for the normal student to learn on the job and practice, the teacher educates cannot be outstanding. Without the teachers who have not accepted outstanding teacher education, the middle & primary schools cannot become the outstanding school. The middle & primary schools and university cannot be succeed at the same time, only when they help each other. In the reform of the teacher education of Great Britain and America, an important experience is to establish equal cooperative partnership between university and middle & primary schools. In cooperating, the university supports the middle & primary schools abundantly with theory, including opening educational resources, training guide teacher, and sending the liaison man etc.; the middle & primary schools supply the university with practice place and the research subject, which facing the reality of the middle & primary schools. Practice has proved, this kind of partnership finally benefit the university, middle & primary schools, academic, normal student, teachers of middle & primary schools, and students in middle & primary schools at the same time[6].

At present, the situation is serious that the university and middle and primary schools of our country are isolated with each other. The university does not know the actual requests of the middle & primary schools, the new- trained-teacher can't be competent with teaching quickly, and the on-the-job training is lack of pertinence. Middle & primary schools cannot know the development of the research in university, the advanced educational idea is unable be utilized to guide the teaching practice in time. Researchers of the university often come to the middle & primary schools for the information in the capacity of expert, but they will leave as soon as they finish the work of collecting information. The teachers of middle & primary schools participate in the research only as the target, and can't be improved directly. So, we should use the experience of teacher educational reform in Great Britain and America for reference, establish equal cooperative partnership between university and middle & primary schools, and strengthen the communication and cooperation in prejob training, on-the-job training and educational research with each other.

3.3 Regarding Practice as the Direction, the Education Theory and Educational Practice is Combined with Each Other

The teacher's knowledge includes the knowledge of discipline, profession and practicality, and the practicality knowledge is the accumulation of teacher's teaching experience [7]. According to the theory of reviewing teaching practice, introspection is a kind of way that can promote the development of ability through improving the self-aware level of the participator. Posner proposed a formula of teacher's growing: Experience + Review =Growing [8], while the either experience or review can lose the contact with practice. Action research theory emphasizes that teachers should be both practitioners and researchers of own teaching actions [9]. The reform of teacher education in

Great Britain and America emphasizes the function of practice very much, offers practice chance to the trainees through the cooperation with middle & primary schools and university, and makes them experience the teaching course in the capacity of true teacher personally, experience and grasp the knowledge of practicality. The on-job-teacher of middle & primary schools will grow into the reviewing practitioner of "reviewing constantly in practice, developing constantly in reviewing" gradually through guiding a trainee; admit the new education ideas, transform their own mode of thinking and practice through the cooperation with academic, and then realize the professional development of their own. Through the cooperation with middle & primary schools, the academic can obtain an opportunity to study the educational problem in practice, and examine, review the conclusion in this process.

In the teacher education and educational research of China, the problem that the theory is divorced from practice has existed for a long time, which embodied in: because of the lack of time for educational practice and the low quality in the prejob training, the trainer's ignorance to the actual conditions of middle & primary schools, it is difficult to carry on the pointed theory teaching to the normal student; The on-the-job training for the middle & primary schools lays particular emphasis on the upgrade of discipline knowledge and improvement of the academic credentials, breaking away from the practical work of the school, resulting in the drawback that the teacher being trained "feels reasonable while listening, but still keeps the old style while doing" [10], has not played the role in promoting the professional development of on-the-job teacher; The educational researcher and practitioner have been in the state of separation for a long term, most of the research is pure theoretical research, but the applied research is limited, which is needed in the teaching practice of middle & primary schools, therefore, the teachers of middle & primary schools lack the method and ability of research, while the academic's theoretical research can't solve the practical problems of the middle & primary schools. So, we should use the experience of teacher educational reform in Great Britain and America for reference abundantly, regard practice as direction, and realize the combination of educational theory and practice in the teacher training and educational research.

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