
RESEARCH ON THE PROBLEM OF TEACHING IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF A KINDERGARTEN

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Analyzing practice is the key to improving the educational process

This paper discusses the teaching status, existing problems and corresponding optimization strategies of China's kindergarten educational activity design courses, aiming to provide empirical basis and reference suggestions for curriculum reform of preschool education majors.

Introduction. In the field of preschool education, the kindergarten educational activity design course serves as a cornerstone for developing future preschool teachers' core competencies. However, with evolving educational paradigms and the rapid advancement of kindergarten educational practices, this course has gradually revealed deficiencies such as outdated content, monotonous pedagogical approaches, limited practical resources and an imbalanced assessment system. These shortcomings not only dampen students' learning motivation and innovative capacity but also constrain the overall quality of preschool education training. Consequently, conducting an in-depth analysis of the current teaching landscape and formulating targeted improvement strategies are critical to enhancing the pedagogical effectiveness of preschool education programs.

Main Part. The Outline of the Kindergarten Education Guidelines states that "kindergarten education is an important part of basic education and the foundation of school education and lifelong education" [1, p. 2]. Education during the early childhood stage has a profound impact on the comprehensive development of children's bodies and minds. It not only lays the foundation for their future learning but also shapes their character and behavioral habits.

As the core of the early childhood education system, the kindergarten educational activity design course is directly related to the realization of educational goals and the quality of education. It is a mandatory course for preschool education

majors. It systematically integrates theory and methods of educational activity design and occupies an important position in the teaching of preschool education majors [2, p. 192].

"Design and Guidance of Kindergarten Educational Activities" is a comprehensive professional course that aims to cultivate the ability of preschool education students to design, organize, implement and evaluate kindergarten educational activities through systematic learning. The course integrates multidisciplinary theories such as pedagogy, psychology, and hygiene, combines the characteristics of early childhood development, and emphasizes the close integration of theory and practice [3, p. 29].

We propose to conduct our research alongside three interrelated directions:

- increasing the amount of knowledge: the core theories of early childhood educational activity design and guidance, methodological approaches across the five developmental domains (health, language, society, science and art) and practical skills in activity organization, classroom observation, lesson evaluation and instructional delivery.

- Improving competences: the application of fundamental principles of early childhood education to analyze and resolve practical challenges by integrating real-world kindergarten contexts with the age-specific developmental characteristics of young children.

- Professional quality development: to cultivate a scientific perspective on child development,

to foster professional identity in early childhood education, to strengthen collaborative teamwork abilities and to nurture capacities for self-directed lifelong learning.

Our course content not only comprehensively covers theoretical knowledge such as the basic concepts, principles and methods of designing kindergarten educational activities, but also gives priority to practical training in designing educational activities in five main areas: health, language, society, science and art.

Therefore, this paper primarily focuses on the teaching status and optimization strategies of the Design and Guidance of Kindergarten Educational Activities course.

Based on a literature analysis, existing research on the Design and Guidance of Kindergarten Educational Activities course in China can be categorized into five major directions:

1. Curriculum reform and exploration focused on enhancing adaptability.

This category includes efforts such as Niu Baoyu and Wu Meibing's reconstruction of teaching models based on learning task groups [4, P. 127–131], Zheng Xiaomei's integration of the "post-course-competition-certificate" concept into textbook development [5, P. 46–52] and Liu Cuiping's exploration of pathways to integrate ideological and political education into the curriculum—all of them are aiming to strengthen the course's contemporary relevance and practical application [6, P. 102–104].

2. Diversified innovations in teaching models.

For instance, Zhao Zhuxin validated the effectiveness of blended teaching [7, P. 27–30], while Wang Yang et al. constructed a "MOOC + virtual simulation experiment" system, providing empirical solutions to transcend traditional classroom limitations [8, P. 184–186].

3. Research on teaching evaluation systems emphasizing practical feedback.

Examples include Zhang Shasha and Fan Wenhan's establishment of skill evaluation standards within a kindergarten-school cooperation framework [9, P. 77–80] and Zhang Ting's optimization of curriculum implementation through teaching diagnosis and improvement mechanisms [10, P. 161–163].

4. Course optimization addressing real-world challenges.

Researchers such as Han Liyao proposed recommendations for improving content and pedagogy [11, P. 132–134], while Guan Yonghong designed modular teaching schemes to tackle outdated curriculum content [12, P. 100–103].

5. Specialized perspectives expanding curriculum boundaries.

For example, Han Chunhua emphasized the problem of accommodating individual student

differences [13, P. 130–133], Zhang Qifen aligned content with new teacher certification requirements [14, P. 94–96], and Wu Kerong pioneered pathways to integrate ethnic cultural resources [15].

Based on the literature review, this article takes our Shangqiu Preschool Teachers College as a case study to critically analyze the existing problems and shortcomings. The study aims to provide innovative ideas for promoting the reform of the curriculum and teaching practice in this field.

According to the survey, the textbook currently used in the preschool education college is "Development and Guidance of Educational Activities in Kindergarten" (2nd edition) edited by Yu Shulin and Liang Qingyao [16]. The content structure of the textbook includes four main modules:

- the overview of kindergarten educational activity design;
- fundamental elements and guidance principles for activity design;
- design and guidance strategies for educational activities in five developmental domains (health, language, society, science, and art);
- the organization and implementation of kindergarten regional activities.

Despite aligning with China's Guide to Learning and Development for Children Aged 3–6 [17] and the Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (Trial) as regulatory frameworks [18], the textbook's case studies predominantly focus on traditional themes, creating a disconnect with contemporary kindergarten practices such as "waste sorting experiments" and "early childhood programming education". Among them, 65% of students believe that the alignment between teaching content and practical needs is insufficient.

Although the course is taught over a total of 108 hours, practical classes make up less than 30% of the curriculum. Consequently, 55% of students perceive practical training as insufficient or entirely inadequate, exacerbating the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Moreover, pedagogical approaches rely excessively on teacher-centered lectures, occupying 70% of class time, while group collaborations suffer from uneven task distribution and inadequate faculty guidance – a limitation acknowledged by 72% of the students who perceive suboptimal outcomes. In terms of resource support, partnerships with training bases remain largely superficial, with only 10% of students gaining immersive practical experiences. Compounding these issues, 80% of instructors lack formal qualifications in early childhood education and 30% have been disconnected from practical kindergarten research for three years, further eroding the alignment between curriculum design and real-world pedagogical demands.

Finally, the assessment system exacerbates this imbalance, with final examinations prioritizing theoretical knowledge (80% of total grades) while practical evaluations - such as activity design projects - account for only 20% of assessments.

The root causes of pedagogical challenges can be attributed to three systemic deficiencies: first, curriculum frameworks lag industry practices, evidenced by textbook revision cycles spanning 3–5 years and less than 20% participation from frontline kindergarten teachers in development teams. These results are in a significant disconnection with course content and rapidly evolving innovative models in early childhood education, such as the “Anji Play” and “Lijin Play” approaches.

Secondly, faculty structures are imbalanced with only 20% of instructors holding specialized qualifications in early childhood education. University evaluation systems prioritizing research over teaching exacerbate instructors’ cognitive limitations regarding localized pedagogical reforms, perpetuating reliance on traditional lecture-based instructional methods.

Third, practical teaching support systems remain underdeveloped, characterized by low utilization of training bases, inadequate integration of digital resources, and an assessment framework that overemphasizes theoretical examinations (accounting for 80% of final grades) while neglecting process-oriented competency evaluations. These interrelated issues create a vicious cycle of “theoretical indoctrination-practical deficiency-assessment deviation”, fundamentally undermining the practical applicability of curriculum content.

In response to this, we propose improvement strategies that include:

1. Curriculum content optimization.

It means to set up an active system for revising textbooks (updated biennially or triennially), integrating innovative concepts like STEM education and project-oriented learning, alongside local cultural case studies, to extend the hands-on course duration to encompass more than half of the syllabus, employing “microteaching” and 2simulated classroom2 exercises to improve the instructional design skills of students.

2. Innovation in teaching methods.

We suppose to construct a three-dimensional teaching model, to promote the “online MOOC + offline simulation experiment” hybrid teaching model, such as using MOOC (massive open online courses) and virtual simulation to improve students’ participation and to strengthen students’ practical ability. In addition, flipped classrooms can also be implemented to promote discussion and reflection, and systematically improve teaching flexibility, practical skills and critical thinking.

3. Enhancing assistance for resources.

It means to implement a “dual-mentor system” pairing university instructors with senior kindergarten teachers to co-guide practical training, ensuring at least two field teaching sessions per semester.

It’s also of great importance to develop a digital resource-sharing platform integrating high-quality lesson plans, video case studies, and expert lectures.

4. Assessment system refinement.

It’s aimed to reduce the weight of theoretical assessments to 40% while increasing the score allocation for activity design proposals to 60%, incorporating third-party evaluations (with kindergarten teachers participating in practical scoring).

It’s also necessary to introduce “developmental portfolio” documentation to track students’ design logic, revision processes, and team contributions.

Conclusion. Thus, our study reveals systemic contradictions in the curricula for the design of educational activities in kindergartens in terms of content, pedagogy, resource allocation and assessment systems. The plan advocates the construction of a reform framework with practical application as the core, learner autonomy as the foundation, and industry demand as the guide. By establishing a dynamic optimization mechanism for curriculum resources, exploring diversified teaching models, building a deep collaborative network between colleges and universities and early childhood education institutions, and improving a multi-dimensional ability evaluation system, the problem between educational theory and practical operation can be systematically resolved. Subsequent development requires the establishment of a long-term tracking mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the reform, expand the research dimension to verify the universality of the strategy, and ultimately cultivate compound early education talents who can not only consolidate the professional foundation but also meet the actual needs of the industry through collaborative innovation among higher education institutions, preschool education practice bases, and education management departments.

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