



Status and Countermeasures of English Normal Students' Teaching Practice Ability Based on Core Competence: A University Level Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Teaching practice ability is the external manifestation of the professional development of English teachers and it is the essential element of improving the quality of teachers. English normal students are an important source of basic English education in China, so it is of great importance to cultivating English normal students' teaching practice ability. In this study, the literature research method and questionnaire survey method were used to study the current situation of the teaching practice ability of English normal students at Yangtze University. It can be found that students with a more thorough understanding of the core competence have stronger teaching practice ability, which shows that core competence is an important theoretical support to improve the teaching practice ability of students. Finally, 3 strategies are proposed to promote students' teaching practice ability, (1) Imperceptibly affecting, and strengthening teachers' emotions and beliefs, (2) Improving the level of teachers and building a team of university teachers with core competence, and (3) Optimizing the structure of practical courses.

Keywords: core competence; practical teaching; teaching skills; training of English normal students

1 Introduction

Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party, the promotion of teaching practice ability has become the key point of connotative development of normal education. The cultivation of teaching practice ability based on core competence has also become a key measure to foster English normal students. The definition of core competence varies, but most of them are based on Lin Chongde's connotation, that is, the necessary character and key ability gradually developed in the pre-service education to promote the development of the core competence of future students[3].

Studies on teaching skills of English normal students appeared earlier in foreign countries[2,5]. In recent years, there has been more and more related research in China[7,9,10]. It can be found through the relevant research that there are many theoretical analyses on teaching practice ability and most of them focus on the following types of studies: the significance of teaching skills, the components of teaching skills, the current status and reflection of teaching skills, strategies of improving teaching skills. However, most of the existing studies analyze theoretical knowledge, and few people integrate the concept of core competence into their research. The teaching system of core competence of English normal students has not yet formed a unified system, leaving room for further discussion.

2 Object and context of the study

2.1 Object of the Study

This research mainly takes Yangtze University as the research object for the following reasons: first, Yangtze University is a key comprehensive university in Hubei Province, and English Normal major is a key major of Yangtze University, which is also the foundation of the university. Second, the source of English normal students in the university is sufficient. It has rich and professional experience in training English normal students. At the same time, the English Teaching major at Yangtze University recruits students from Hubei province and other parts of China, and the source of normal students is relatively sufficient. Third, the employment of English teaching graduates is mainly for primary and secondary schools, which not only provides a solid guarantee for teachers in primary and secondary schools in Hubei province but also radiates the surrounding areas and even the whole country. The participants are junior and senior students majoring in English Normal at this University.

2.2 The Training Goal of Yangtze University

To adapt to the national basic education reform and development requirements, the university makes efforts to cultivate students with moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development in an all-round way with a solid English phonetics foundation, ideological competence, humanistic quality,

scientific quality, strong research ability, innovation spirit and practice ability. Therefore, the cultivation goal at Yangtze University is in line with the policy and meets the needs of social development.

3 Data collection

In this study, the questionnaire network applet was used to randomly distribute questionnaires to understand the situation of English normal students at Yangtze University. A total of 134 questionnaires were collected in this survey, 100% of which were valid. In this study, all the data from 134 questionnaires were used for data analysis and statistics, and some conclusions were drawn based on the survey to put forward corresponding improvement measures.

4 Data analysis

4.1 Analysis of teaching willingness and reasons for the choice

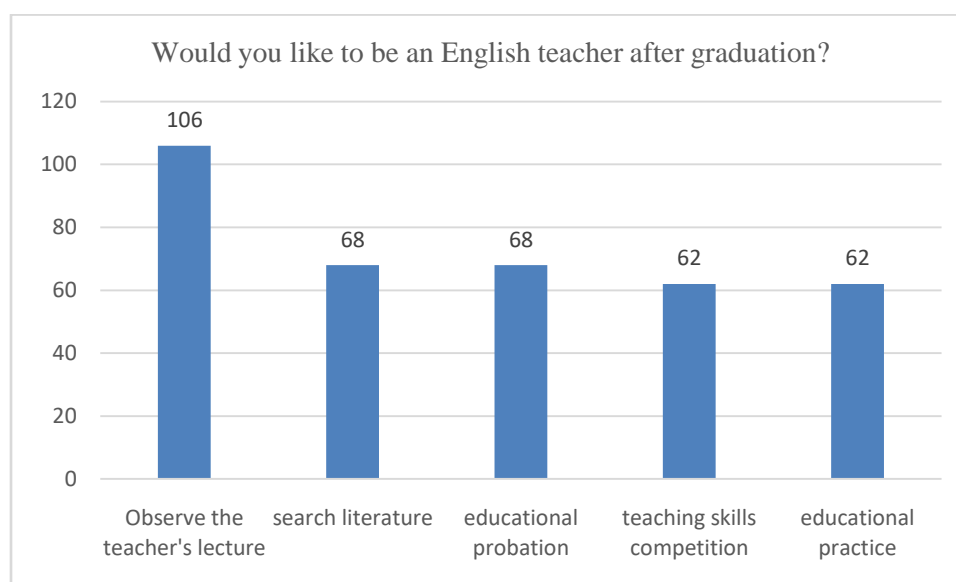


Figure 1

According to Figure 1, students' teaching willingness after graduation is as follows: "very willing" accounts for 26.87%, "willing" accounts for 55.22%, "ordinary" accounts for 11.94%, "unwilling" accounts for 5.97%, "hate" accounts for 0.00%. Students have a strong willingness to teach. As can be seen from Figure 2, there are various reasons for students to choose an English normal major, which can be divided into subjective reasons and objective reasons. Subjective reasons are divided into "self-passion" and "random choice", while objective reasons are divided into "need to make a living", "parents' hope" and "major regulation".

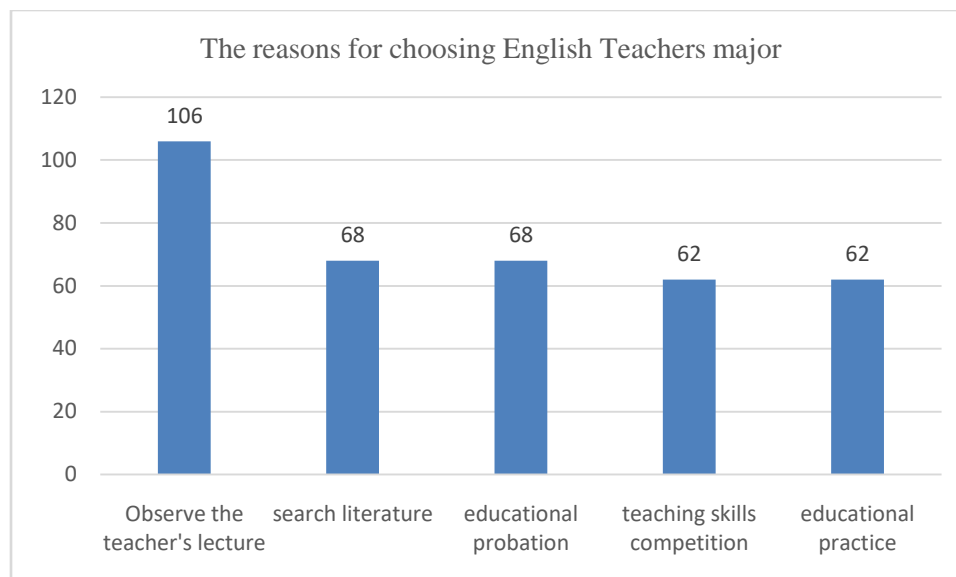


Figure 2

From the perspective of proportion, the subjective reason “self-passion” and the objective reason “parents’ hope” are relatively high and there is not much difference between them, which indicates that the choice of major mainly comes from two reasons: students themselves and their parents. And the proportion of the two reasons for “making a living” and “randomly choice” is not much different, indicating that the reasons for employment lead to the choice of the major, which is also common in many universities. There is also the phenomenon of major adjustment, which indicates that there is a phenomenon of unsatisfactory enrollment of English normal major, which requires the school to adjust or reform the major according to the social demand.

As an important force for local front-line teachers, most of the English normal students in this school have a strong desire to be teachers in the future. Yangtze University has also become an important training institution for local front-line teachers which provides a solid talent guarantee for local front-line teachers.

4.2 Analysis of the understanding of the importance of core competence

According to Figure 3, English normal students at Yangtze University have different understandings of education values, among which only 13.43% have a very good understanding of them. There are still 5.97% who don't know much about education values. Students' understanding degree of education values is not enough.

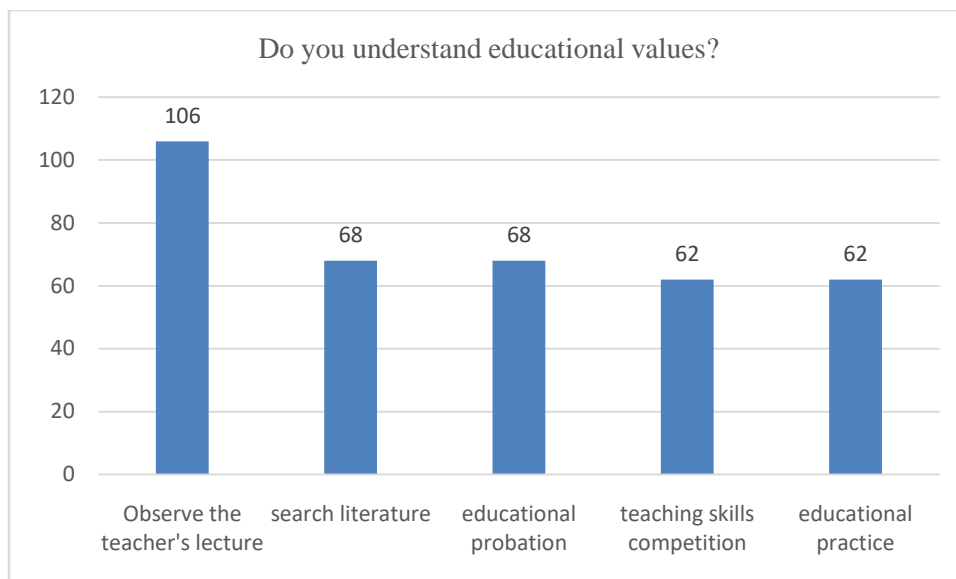


Figure 3

The core competence of practical teaching can promote the students' all-round development. The guidance of core competence of English normal students on teaching practice ability needs to be deepened.

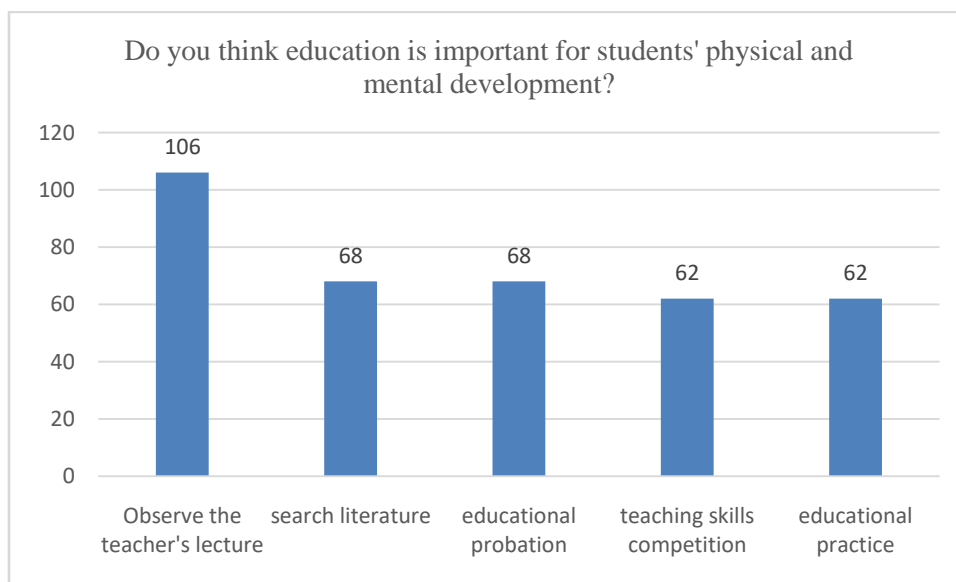


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows that more than 85% of the English normal students in Yangtze University think that education plays a very important role in students' physical and psychological development, still, 1.49% of students think it may not play a role, which indicates that most normal English students in Yangtze University have realized the important role of education in both physical and psychological aspects, but they still need practical teaching to internalize the textbook knowledge to deepen their understandings.

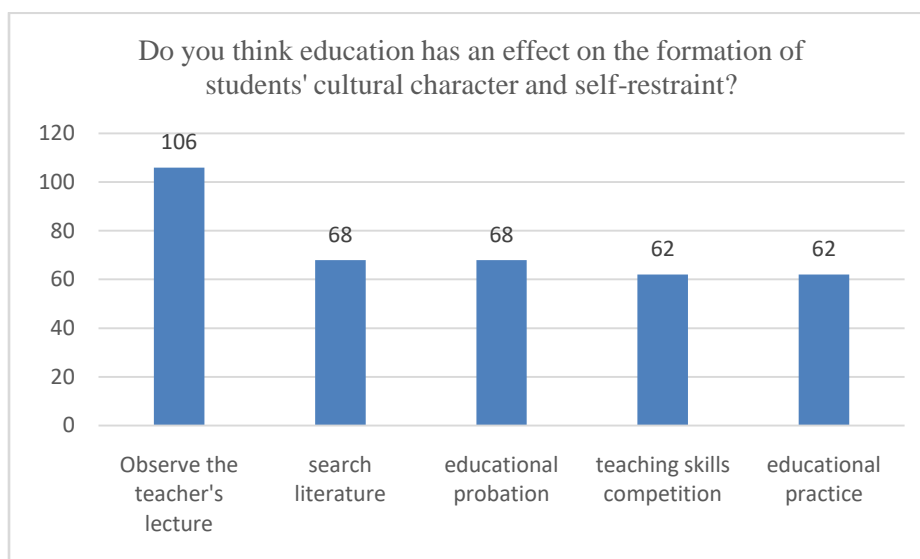


Figure 5

According to Figure 5, more than 98% of students believe that education has an impact on the formation of students' cultural character and self-restraint, among which, 82.09% of students show it has a great impact. However, 1.49% of students still think that education may have no impact. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the teaching practice skills based on core competence, and schools should pay attention to it so that all students can strengthen their cognition and improve their thinking.

4.3 Investigation and analysis of practical teaching

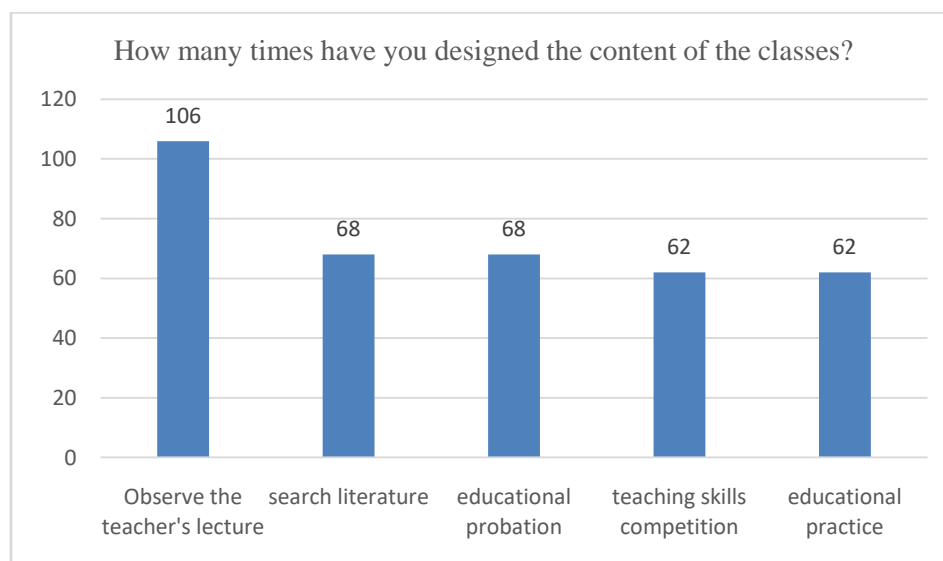


Figure 6

According to Figure 6, more than 91.05% of the students have designed course contents, which can be concluded that most students have had practical experience, but the number of practical experience is not

enough to meet the requirements of normal education. The lack of practical courses in schools is not conducive to the development of the comprehensive quality of normal students.

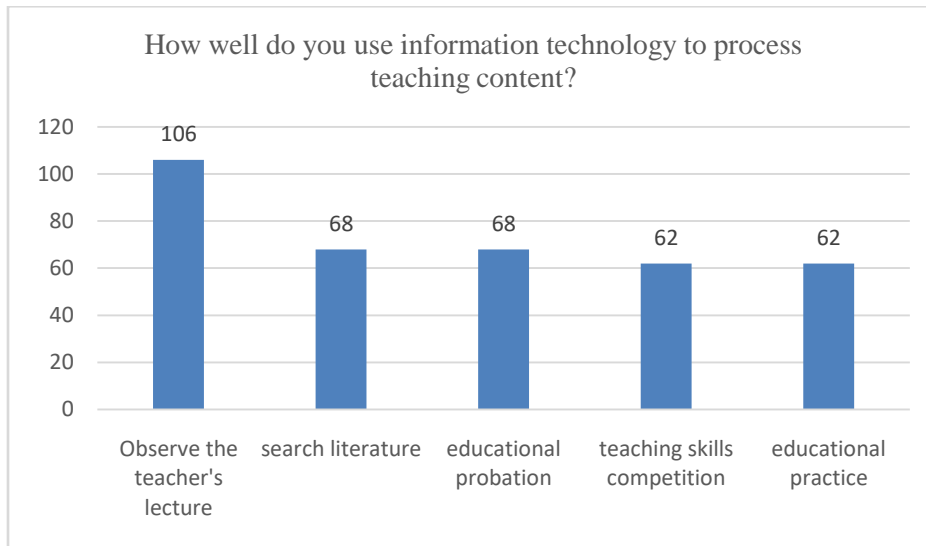


Figure 7

From Figure7, students have different degrees of using information technologies in processing teaching content, but they have mastered it on the whole, of which 10.45% have a very good processing degree, 37.31% have a good processing degree, 49.25% have an ordinary processing degree, only 2.99% have a poor processing degree. The reasonable combination of information technologies and teaching is particularly important in practical teaching, which plays a positive role in promoting teachers' teaching and students' learning. Therefore, the school should strengthen the English normal students' ability to master information technologies and lay a solid foundation for their work in the future.

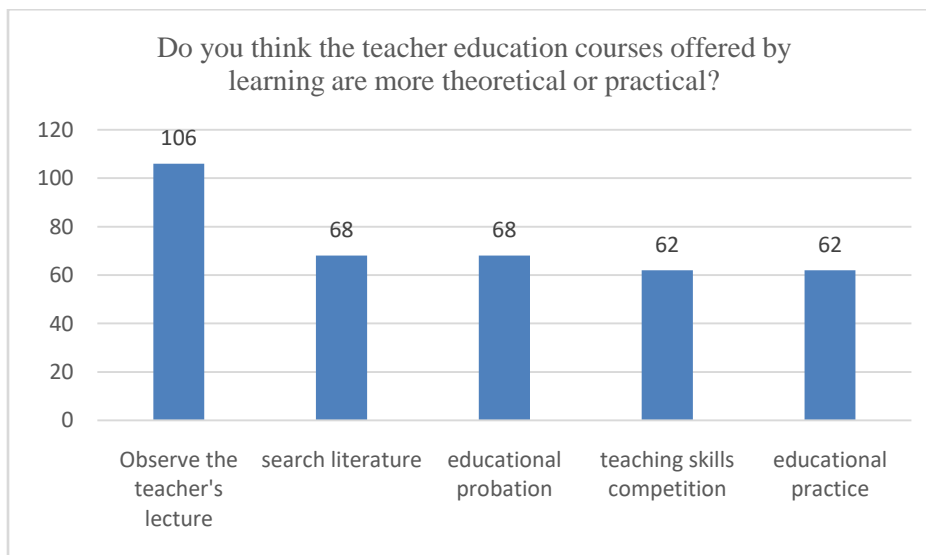


Figure 8

According to Figure 8, a number of students believe that the educational courses offered by schools lay more emphasis on theory. Among them, 73.13% believe that there is more theory but less practice, 16.42% believe that practice is as much as theory, 8.96% believe that theory is combined with practice, and 1.49% believe that there is less theory but more practice. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are more theoretical courses and fewer practical courses at Yangtze University, which will cause students to pay too much attention to the study of theoretical knowledge while ignoring the study of practical knowledge. It is not conducive to the all-round development of English normal students.

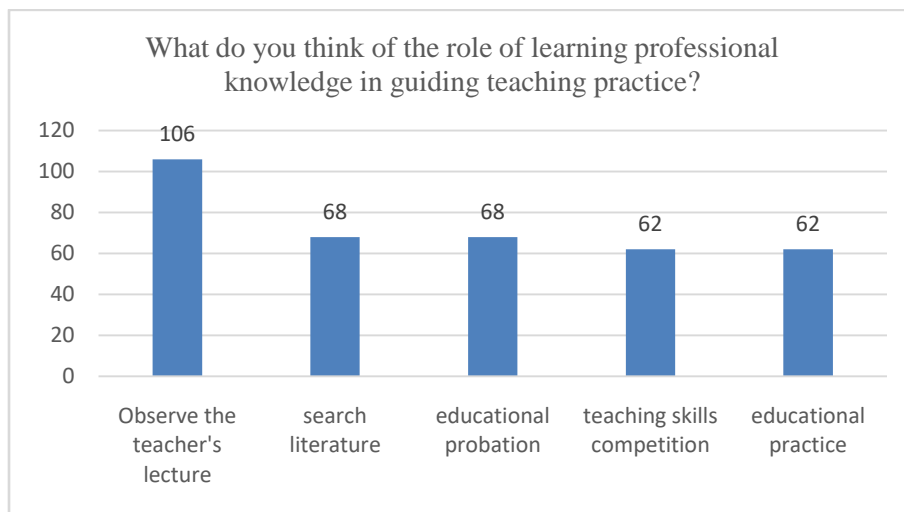


Figure 9

It can be seen from Figure 9 that most English normal students believe that professional knowledge plays a role in guiding their teaching practice. Among them, very helpful accounts for 20.90%, relatively helpful accounts for 62.69%, and not helpful accounts for 14.93%. But there are still 1.49% of students who think that they do not know clearly and forget the knowledge after learning. No one thinks it's useless. The professional knowledge learned in school plays an important role in guiding teaching. Therefore, English normal students should be aware of the importance of professional knowledge and learn it consciously.

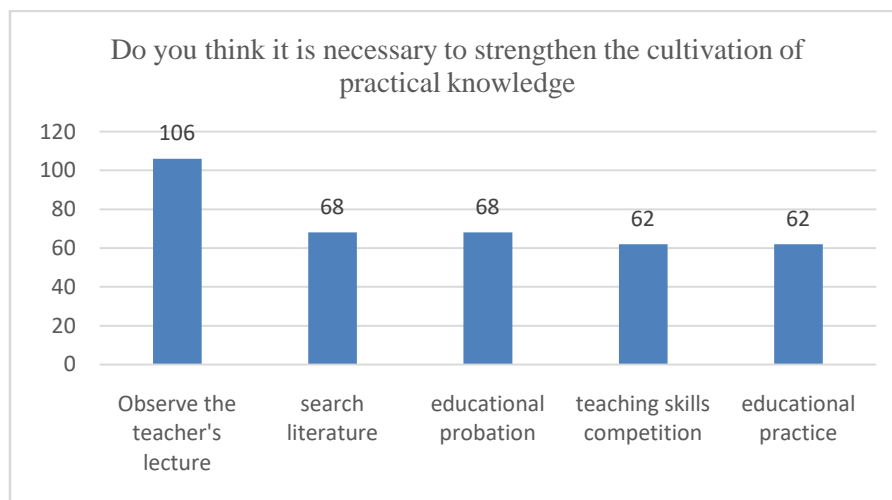


Figure 10

According to Figure 10, all students believe that the cultivation of practical knowledge should be strengthened. Among them, 59.70% think it is very necessary and conducive to future teaching, and 40.30% think it is necessary and they want to learn some practical knowledge that can be combined with theory. Students are aware of the importance of cultivating practical knowledge.

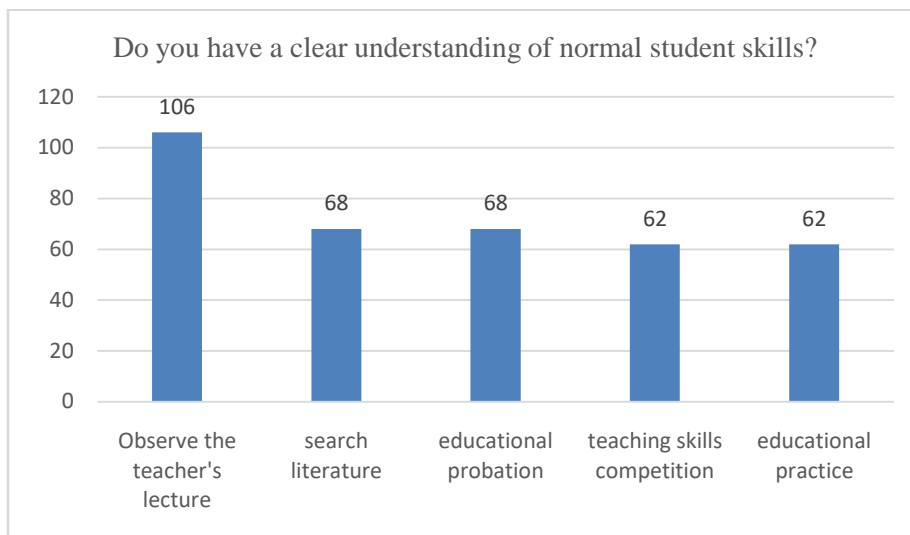


Figure 11

From Figure 11, most students have some understanding of the concept of teaching skills. Among them, total understanding accounts for 7.46%, comparative understanding accounts for 50.75%, and general understanding accounted for 38.83%. However, there are still 2.99% of the students do not know the teaching skills. The ability of teaching skills to English normal students is indispensable, and the cultivation of teaching skills is a critical moment in the stage of cultivating English normal students. Therefore, the school should strengthen the cultivation of teaching skills of English normal students.

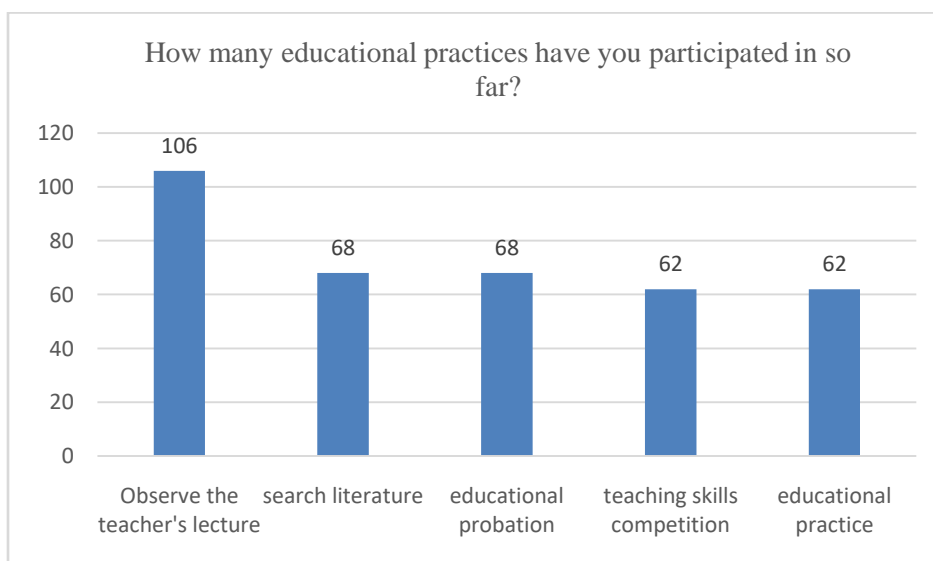


Figure 12

It can be seen from Figure 12 that more than 83% of students have participated in extracurricular teaching practice independently. Among them, more than 6 months account for 25.37%, 3 to 6 months account for 10.45%, 1 to 3 months account for 29.85%, less than one month accounts for 17.91%, but still, 16.42% of the students have never had practical experience. It can be concluded that most students attach importance to the role of teaching practice in the development of normal students, actively participate in teaching practice and have teaching practice experience. However, as English normal students, there are still some students who do not have practical teaching experience, which is not conducive to professional development.

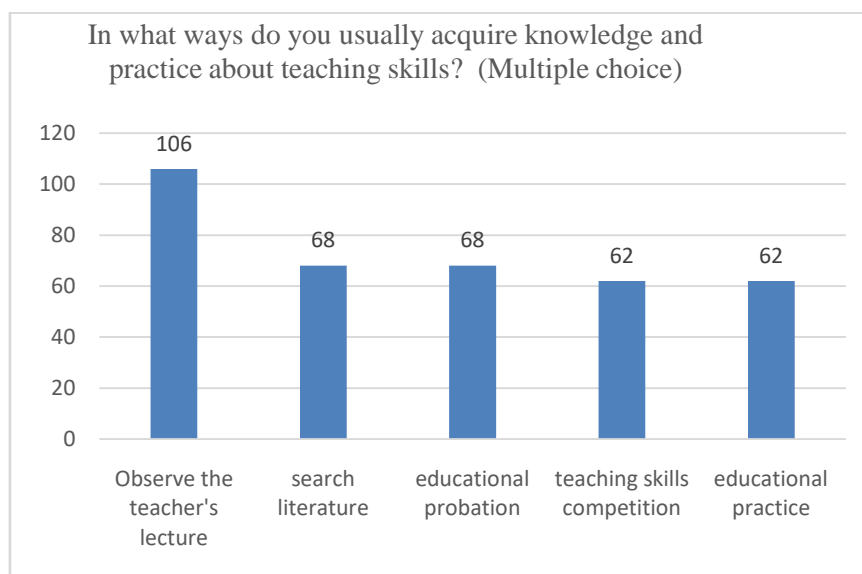


Figure 13

From Figure 13, students acquire relevant knowledge about teaching skills in various ways. The proportion of observing teachers' lectures is the largest, accounting for 79.10%. The proportion of searching literature materials, education probation, teaching skills competition and education practice is similar, accounting for 50.75%, 50.75%, 46.27% and 46.27% respectively. The number of thematic lectures and microteaching account for 19.40% and 16.42% respectively. It can be concluded that schools carry out less thematic lectures and microteaching, which should be strengthened reasonably.

5 Strategies for improving teaching skills

5.1 Imperceptibly affecting, strengthening teachers' emotions and beliefs

As future teachers, English normal students should have emotions and beliefs, which influence each other. Belief will affect feelings and form thinking patterns. The main duty and task of universities are to train the successors with firm educational emotions and beliefs. The reality is that some English normal students choose normal majors not out of their love of education. To cultivate such a part of normal students, it is necessary for universities to imperceptibly influence the emotions and beliefs of English normal students towards education to cultivate qualified teachers.

First of all, it is necessary to create a campus environment where teachers are respected and valued, so that normal students can be familiar with the responsibilities and significance of teachers, and then have a sense of identity with the teaching profession. Only by identifying with the profession of teaching, can they produce teacher emotions and beliefs. Secondly, creating a good humanistic environment and enhancing the teaching passion. "The generous accumulation of cultural knowledge will promote the

teaching passion and talent of normal students”[8]. Only by making English normal students feel the cultural charm of education, can they have a deeper understanding of cultural connotation and educational significance and stick to the professional value of teachers. Finally, we should encourage them to communicate and cooperate and establish an equal dialogue relationship between teachers and students. Equal dialogue between teachers and students is the basis of recognition and mutual respect between teachers and students; it is the moral and spiritual need of teachers and students. “This kind of dialogue relationship is an exchange activity with development value, and it is also a bridge that builds the university moral education to social life”[6], Only the dialogues between English normal students and university teachers are equal, can they realize the existence of the social concept of democracy and equality and confirm the profound significance of education.

5.2 Improving the level of teachers and building a team of university teachers with core competence

The intention of teaching and the psychology of career choice of English normal students are mainly influenced by Yangtze University teachers. Teachers in universities should take core quality as the criterion, pay attention to moral cultivation, and set a good example for students. Only in this way can they jointly promote the understanding and responsibility of teachers in study and life, and thus love the profession.

Firstly, university teachers should have the concept of promoting the teaching of normal students. Teachers in universities should take “students-oriented” as the start point and foothold of educational tasks, and carry out educational thought penetration for the purpose of improving the training quality of English normal students. Guided by the new philosophy of core competence and popularizing the core competence education of English normal students. Secondly, attention should be paid to the psychological changes of students and positive guidance should be given to the normal students with deviations in their thoughts. Universities can carry out regular meetings: teacher-student exchange meetings, and excellent teacher case-sharing meetings. Finally, organizing practice activities concerning teacher ethics. For example, universities regularly organize students to volunteer teaching in rural areas, care for left-behind children, and do homework tutoring and other related activities.

5.3 Optimizing the structure of practical courses

The first step to strengthening teaching practice is to optimize the structure of teaching practice courses and enhance the responsibility and innovation ability of students. Practical teaching courses are considered to be the practice of theoretical courses, after which it usually takes one or two classes and largely limit the concept of practical teaching courses. The concept of a practical teaching curriculum is extensive; it is an independent curriculum system, which includes course objectives, course content and course evaluation.

First of all, the optimization of the practical teaching curriculum needs to start with the teachers. Universities need to select a group of teachers with outstanding teaching practice ability to specially carry out the work of teaching practice courses. Secondly, universities ought to enrich practical teaching courses. In addition to necessary practice, the teaching and training of micro-teaching, micro-class and heterogeneous courses in the same class should be set, and the proportion of English normal students’ participation in practical courses should reach more than 50%. Among them, it should be noted that the teaching practice courses of the senior and above grade should reach the same standard, so as to effectively improve the teaching practice of junior and above grade students and reach the qualified graduation standard. Finally, teachers should lead normal students to carry out a social investigation, volunteer activities, countryside assistance, caring for children in welfare homes and other public welfare activities, and write the survey report. These practices not only help students to exercise the ability of practical teaching but also help them to realize their responsibilities. At the same time, broadening their

horizons, and enriching the experience, which is conducive to their development of thinking and the enhancement of their innovation ability.

5.4 Innovating the operational mechanism of practical teaching

Universities should construct the operation mode of teaching practice according to reality and construct the practical teaching operation mechanism for English normal students according to the special characteristics and advantages of the university. Also, strengthening unified management, that is, strengthening the three-level teaching practice management system between the school, department and major. The school is responsible for formulating the overall goal, guiding ideology and result estimation of practical teaching. The department is responsible for setting the content, time and evaluation of practical teaching according to the situation of the English normal major, formulating specific intern staffing, location, attendance and so on. Through the construction of a high-quality practice base, various forms of informed teaching practice activities, the perfect practical teaching management system and the unique practical teaching operation mechanism, normal students can improve their teaching practice ability, communication ability and learning ability so as to further participate in the society.

6. Research Innovations and Deficiencies

The research on the teaching practice ability of English normal students from the perspective of core competence is conducive to promoting the comprehensive development of normal students and the reform of normal education. It also lays a theoretical and practical foundation for improving the teaching practice ability of English normal students. However, the combination of theory and practice is insufficient, leaving room for further discussion. This study combines theory with practice, which can supplement the theoretical and practical basis. There are also some deficiencies in the research. The research methods adopted in this survey were too monotonous. Also, the proposed strategies have not been implemented so their validity cannot be tested. In the future, it's better to further summarize the experience and apply the theory to practice more.

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