

Exploration of Ability Improvement Methods for New Teachers in Practical Courses in Colleges and Universities

Nan Jiang, Huidong Li, Yiwei Wei, Fang He

Xi'an Research Institute of High Technology, Xi'an, China

Abstract

In current higher education practice, the practical teaching abilities of new faculty members play a crucial role in improving teaching quality and the effectiveness of talent cultivation. New faculty members generally have high academic qualifications and research capabilities, but they often lack experience and practical teaching skills in this area. Enhancing practical teaching abilities requires proactive learning and practice by new faculty members, as well as comprehensive support and training from universities. It also necessitates the establishment of a scientific performance evaluation system and the optimization of cooperation mechanisms. Through these measures, the practical teaching abilities of new faculty members can be effectively improved, further enhancing the quality of talent cultivation and social service capabilities in higher education institutions.

Keywords

Practical Courses; New Faculty Members; Ability Enhancement.

1. Introduction

In the rapid development of higher education and the deepening of educational reforms, new teachers, as fresh blood in higher education, not only have their teaching abilities directly related to personal career advancement but also significantly impact the improvement of higher education quality and the effectiveness of teaching reforms. Especially in practical course instruction, new teachers are required not only to possess solid theoretical knowledge but also strong practical skills and teaching techniques, which is no small challenge for them.

2. Analysis of the Difficulties Faced By New Teachers in College Practice Courses

(1) Lack of teaching practice experience

One is the practical skills gap. Although new teachers have solid knowledge reserves and strong thinking abilities in academic fields, they often fall short in systematically training their teaching skills. This can result in a significant gap between transforming theoretical knowledge into practical skills that students can understand and master, making them feel overwhelmed in teaching practice. Such gaps can significantly undermine teaching effectiveness. Moreover, practical courses require teachers to possess certain experimental operation skills, experimental design capabilities, and project management skills. These abilities need time and practical opportunities to develop, but new teachers often lack sufficient practical opportunities during their early career stages, which constrains the improvement of teaching skills.

Secondly, there is a lack of real case reserves. Due to new teachers often not having the opportunity to access sufficient real cases before entering their teaching positions, they struggle to provide practical and inspiring case analyses during lessons, which limits the depth and breadth of practical course instruction[1]. The purpose of practical courses is not only for

students to complete a series of operations or experiments but more importantly, to cultivate comprehensive abilities through practical activities, such as problem analysis and solving skills. This requires relying on real and complex case backgrounds for teaching. If new teachers cannot provide these background materials, students may not fully experience the problem-solving process in actual learning, potentially affecting the quality of teaching.

(2) Poor course design ability

The first issue is vague goal setting. Firstly, practical course objectives may lack specificity and operability, failing to clearly define the specific skills or knowledge points students need to master. This results in new teachers having unclear standards and teaching directions during implementation. Secondly, the goals of practical courses are sometimes not systematically designed or planned but are set based on experience or temporary decisions. This approach can lead to discrepancies between course objectives and actual teaching content, thereby affecting the effectiveness of the course. In addition, the objectives of practical courses may change in different implementation stages, lacking stability and coherence. This uncertainty will not only affect teachers' teaching plans, but also make students confused about the learning objectives of courses, thus affecting the motivation and effect of learning.

Secondly, the content arrangement is unbalanced. Firstly, the ratio of theory to practice is improperly set; practical courses should ensure students have ample opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, thereby cultivating their practical skills and problem-solving abilities. Secondly, practical content is disconnected from actual situations; it cannot be entirely arranged according to real-life contexts. Practical classes should strive to simulate real work environments and scenarios so that new teachers can learn actual workflows and skills in a simulated working environment.

(3) Career development confusion

The first issue is the vague orientation. Firstly, new teachers, due to the lack of systematic preservice training, often have only a theoretical understanding of the purpose, methods, and evaluation criteria of practical teaching, lacking practical experience. Secondly, the ambiguity in orientation also manifests in the disconnect between teaching content and actual needs. New teachers often struggle to align their teaching activities with the requirements of relevant enterprises when designing and implementing them, as they lack sufficient knowledge about job standards and industry demands. This results in a significant gap between teaching content and practical application, which is a common problem among faculty members in Chinese universities. Lastly, the ambiguity in orientation also reflects in the choice of teaching methods. New teachers often adopt traditional teaching models in practical courses, lacking innovation and interactivity, which not only fails to foster students' initiative and innovative thinking but also hinders the improvement of teachers' teaching skills.

Secondly, the lack of growth planning. Firstly, new teachers lack clear development paths and career plans at the beginning of their professional careers, which may lead to a lack of direction and purpose in their teaching practice [2]. Secondly, the absence of growth planning can affect the work motivation of new teachers. Due to insufficient clarity about their future prospects and career development paths, new teachers may lack long-term commitment and enthusiasm for their jobs. Furthermore, it limits the innovative development of new teachers in teaching methods and technologies. When they try new teaching approaches and techniques, they may hesitate due to fear of failure, thus restricting the exercise of their innovative spirit and practical abilities.

3. The Investigation of Multiple Strategies to Improve The Ability of New Teachers in College Practice Courses

(1) Improve the mentor guidance mechanism

First, precise mentor pairing. In the process of precise mentor pairing, factors such as the mentor's teaching experience, professional background, research direction, and educational philosophy must be considered. These factors not only affect the efficiency of knowledge transmission between mentors and new teachers but also influence individual teachers' career development paths and teaching styles. During the mentor pairing process, the personal characteristics, development needs, and career planning of new teachers should be fully taken into account. For new teachers who have special interests or require particular reinforcement in a specific professional field, it is essential to match them with mentors who have relevant professional and research backgrounds. This ensures they can excel in their field.

Secondly, comprehensive mentorship support throughout the process. Establish a robust system for mentor development and training, using regular sessions, seminars, and other formats to meet the continuous upgrading needs of new teachers, ensuring that the mentor pairing remains effective over the long term. Ongoing teaching feedback and evaluations are also essential components of this comprehensive guidance and assistance. Through regular observations, feedback, and assessments, new teachers can recognize their strengths and weaknesses in teaching and receive directions for improvement. This continuous feedback mechanism helps them continuously adjust and optimize their teaching strategies, enhancing teaching effectiveness.

(2) Establish a systematic professional training system

The first is specialized practical skills training. Enhancing practical skills is crucial for new teachers. In traditional teaching concepts, the role of a teacher is often seen as a transmitter of knowledge. However, with the development of education, teachers must not only be transmitters of knowledge but also guides in student learning and exemplars of practice. Improving practical skills can significantly assist in organizing course design and teaching activities for new teachers. By participating in the design and implementation of practical courses, new teachers can integrate their practical experience and professional skills into teaching, which can not only enhance the practicability of courses, but also stimulate students' interest in learning.

Secondly, the Course Design Workshop. The Course Design Workshop provides a platform for new teachers to learn and exchange ideas. On this platform, they can systematically study theories and methods of course design, understand current trends and requirements in educational reform, thereby better adapting to changes in the teaching environment. Based on course design, they can further engage in learning and exchanges. At the same time, through discussions with experienced teachers, new teachers gain valuable practical experience and teaching wisdom. The Course Design Workshop promotes their professional growth and plays a positive role in teaching. During the workshop, new teachers not only design and implement courses but also evaluate and reflect on their designs, continuously updating and refining their knowledge structures. Teaching strategies should be employed to achieve educational goals. Finally, the course design workshop can also enhance new teachers' research awareness and capabilities; research skills need continuous improvement in teaching as well. New teachers will encounter various practical issues during the process of course design and implementation, which often require in-depth research and exploration. This plays an indispensable role in their personal career development and the improvement of teaching quality.

(3) Strengthen teaching reflection and research

First, regular reflection on practice. New teachers should systematically review and analyze their teaching behaviors and outcomes after each teaching activity, either through self-reflection or feedback from others. This helps them recognize shortcomings in their teaching, promptly adjust their strategies, and continuously optimize the teaching process. It is also a continuous learning and self-improvement process. The reflective process can better help new

teachers understand their teaching style and areas for improvement, allowing them to improve their teaching methods more effectively. Additionally, it aids teachers in better understanding students' learning needs, adjusting their teaching strategies to enhance teaching effectiveness. Secondly, teaching research must be deeply cultivated. Teaching research is not merely theoretical exploration; it serves as a bridge connecting teaching practice and improvement. New teachers can identify issues in their teaching through research and explore effective solutions[3]. Teaching research also demands a deeper understanding of the subject matter, enhanced observation and evaluation of student learning outcomes, and innovative thinking about teaching methods and strategies. Through teaching research, a scientific approach to teaching can gradually be established, contributing to the long-term development of one's teaching career.

(4) Clarify the career planning path

First is the orientation training guidance. The guidance phase of onboarding training should include an introduction to the history, culture, mission, and vision of the university, helping new faculty members understand their work background and significance. The guidance should also cover the introduction and usage of teaching resources at the university, including methods for using teaching facilities, teaching materials, and online teaching platforms. The orientation training should also provide guidance on teaching research and further education opportunities. Encouraging new faculty members to participate in teaching research projects and offering opportunities for continuing education can help them continuously improve their professional skills and build a solid foundation as they advance in their careers.

Second is the personalized growth plan. A comprehensive assessment of teachers' strengths and weaknesses should be conducted. Schools can organize multi-dimensional evaluations through teaching practice observations, professional knowledge tests, and feedback from colleagues and students, helping new teachers identify their own advantages while also recognizing their shortcomings[4]. Personalized development goals should be set based on the evaluation results, taking into account the characteristics of efficient practical courses and the school's expectations for teachers. Short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals should be established, with personalized cultivation. Short-term goals could include mastering a new practical teaching method within this academic year and independently guiding students to complete a complex practical task; medium-term goals could be to develop an innovative practical course module within one year, enhancing the quality of students' practical outcomes; long-term goals could aim to become a well-known practical teaching expert in the region, leading the reform and development of efficient practical courses.

4. Conclusion

New teachers face numerous challenges in practical course instruction. To help them improve their teaching skills, it is necessary to enhance these skills through various approaches and methods. Educational management departments, schools, and new teachers themselves must work together to enable new teachers to quickly adapt to the teaching environment of higher education institutions, steadily improve their teaching abilities, and meet the new requirements of higher education development, laying a solid foundation for their future career development.

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