

# **Research on problems and tactics in the implementation of excellent teacher training project**

By

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## **Abstract**

*Excellent teacher plan "is an tactic of China to cultivate excellent teaching talents . Since the implementing of the plan, all the institutes who undertake the plan have tried their best to carry out the plan. Even so, there are still some difficulties to overcome. In order to make the project be implemented efficiently and smoothly, we discuss and probe the background of the excellent teacher plan's implementation, the connotation and standard of the excellent teacher. We also try to find an effective way in improving the training efficiency of the excellent teachers plan by implementing value added evaluation in the program.*

**Keywords:** *excellent teacher; value added assessment; professional quality*

## **1. Background**

### **Process of the excellent teacher training program's implementation**

The pursuit of excellence in education, cultivating excellent talents is an important way for China to realize the goal of "powerful human resources country". While the cultivation of excellent talents need teachers with lofty ideals, moral excellence and those who are knowledgeable, skillful. Since twentieth Century, countries like United States, Britain and Australia began to implement the "excellent teacher training" program. In 1980s, the United States published two reports to promote the cultivation of excellent teacher, one is "country's preparation on cultivation of the twenty-first century teachers", another is "the teacher of tomorrow". In 1999, Australia also formed the report of "teachers of the twenty-first Century" in order to improve the status of primary and secondary school teachers, promote the professional development of outstanding teachers which will be implemented by the local governments .In 2011, the British government issued the education policy advice of "training excellent teacher of the next generation" to discuss and research on how to strengthen the cooperation between primary school ,middle school and university on teachers education , increase financial incentives, attract outstanding graduates to join the teachers group. Through the implementation of the "excellent teacher" program, the above countries provide more professional development opportunities, space, policy and fund for teachers, especially in rural and remote areas. In 2007 in China, the ministry of education and ministry of finance jointly decided to implement the "high education school undergraduate teaching quality and teaching reform project" which provided the policy basis for the implementation of the "excellent teacher" plan. In 2010,"excellent engineer", "outstanding doctor", "excellent lawyer" programs initiated by the ministry of education with the goal of fostering the cultivation of high quality engineering and technical talents which conform to the requirements of the society, which also provide a reference basis for "excellent teacher plan".

In 2012, based on the international background of teachers professional specialization, ministry of education organized normal university or institute to apply for the “excellent teachers training system reform plan”, encouraging universities to implement the “excellent teacher training plan ”creatively according to objective reality, then it will be implemented in other universities in China.

On September the 9th, 2014, general secretary of China Xi JinPing was on the behalf of the discussion with the teachers and students of Peking normal university. He pointed out that “the importance of teachers lies in the job itself which can shape the soul, mold life and human being. A man is lucky if he or she met a good teacher in life, a school with good teachers is the glory of the schools, a nation with continuously emerged good teachers is the nation’s hope.” (Bin Li, 2014). And he required ministry of education “strengthening the construction of teachers’ education system and the support of normal colleges, finding out the main problems existing in the education and seeking the breakthrough and focuses to the deepening of reformation of teacher education so that we can improve the quality of teacher training constantly.”

On December the 5th, 2014, the ministry of education issued a circular to determine that east China normal university and other 79 universities or colleges will undertake the eighty “outstanding teacher training reform project”, it include 25 middle school excellent teacher cultivating projects, 20 primary school excellent teacher cultivating projects, 10 middle vocational school excellent teacher cultivating projects and 5 special education excellent teacher cultivating projects. The notification require that all relative universities and institutes should try their best to make better implementation of the excellent teacher cultivating projects and make a good implementation plan, good arrangement on comprehensive education reform at student’s selecting, cooperation between university, government and school(primary school, middle school and vocational school) and talent cultivating mode.

As one institute who undertake excellent teacher cultivating program, it is necessary for us to probe and find the problem existed in the implementation of this program.

## **The connotation and standard of excellent teachers**

To achieve the purpose of the excellent teacher training, the first step is to clear the connotation and standard of excellent teachers. Only then, can it be targeted for excellent teacher’s training.

The connotation of outstanding teachers:

In the Chinese word “ZhuoYue”, “Zhuo”means transcendental independent, smart, high and far. “Yue” means through or over. The whole definition for “ZhuoYue” is outstanding, beyond the general and goodness; It also means someone has superior skill or achievements. Outstanding talented person is excellent and has top talent. And outstanding teachers should be full of teaching skills. In this regard, many scholars have explored from different perspectives, Jianling Liu had a view from the perspective of life that excellent teachers are focusing on life as the starting point, along with a professional pursuit of the ideal realm along the professional development process of teachers. It reflects the lives’ value of teachers’ professional development activities in the harmonious unity (Jian-ling, 2005). Other researchers pointed out based on new-expert teachers’ research results that "outstanding teachers’ positioning is an expert, As an expert, she or he not only rely on intuition, but also need self-monitoring and evaluation. “ZhuoYue” means that a teacher has a complex and structured knowledge base. Thinking and reflecting consciously is the core of “ZhuoYue” (Chi, 1988). There are also researchers who pointed out that the positioning of excellent teachers is expert according to expert—novice research results. As an expert, they not only rely on intuition, but also rely on self-monitoring and evaluation. “Excellence” means to him to have complex and structured knowledge basis .Thinking and Reflect Consciously is the core of excellence. Some researchers believe that excellence means beyond, means continuous professional progress, constantly improvement on ability, continuous purification on qualification, means enhancement and improvement on overall quality of teachers .

The core of excellence is to go beyond themselves, to avoid being caught in a fixed pattern and state, so as to make their own potential to be expanded and sublimated. And some researchers also say that “excellent teachers are not only accepted by students from the heart , but also can receive recognition from parents, peer and the society. the reason they win respect attributed to their superb teaching art, unique teaching style and rich cultural heritage. In the formula of success, get along well with people is one of the most important aspects.”

Some other researcher think It is also statistically significant that excellent teachers will be defined as teachers whose T value test is in the front 1%-5% . But the author thinks that outstanding teacher is a dynamic relative concept, not absolute. Not a teacher can be regarded as a good teacher once and for all, not some teachers who pay in any effort cannot achieve excellence. Excellent teachers should be the constant pursuit of the ideals and goals of teacher in the knowledge, ability, ethics, and other aspects.

**The standard of excellent teacher**

The standard of excellent teachers is the basis for judging whether a teacher is excellent or not. It can be Embodied in characteristics, objectives, requirements, etc. Zhi-guang Wang summarized the traits of excellent teachers as “firm belief in education, realistic and innovative spirit, fruitful education research, unique style of education and teaching and also deep understanding of the essence of education, the extraordinary personality charm” from the mental and cognitive perspective (Zhiguang, 2013).

Yellow dew summed up the traits of excellent teacher according to the interview to 37 excellent teachers. That is “strong occupation motivation, advanced education idea and unique personal charm, flexible teaching behavior and efficient management of students” ( Lu Huang, 2013).

**Table 1: Standard in mathematics and health education for 11-18 years old students’ excellent teacher**

The teacher standard in mathematics for11-18years old students.		The teacher standard in health education for11-18years old students.	
Dimension1	Attitude	Dimension1	Prepare for students’ learning
1	Responsible for all students mathematics learning	1	Knowledge about students
Dimension2	Professional knowledge	2	Knowledge about Curriculum
2	Professional mathematical knowledge	3	Promoting skill –based learning
3	Knowledge about students	4	Course selection
4	Knowledge of teaching practice	Dimension2	Promote students learning
Dimension3	Mathematics Teaching	5	Guiding strategy
5	Academic environment	6	High expectations to students
6	Mathematical thinking mode	7	Evaluate
7	Evaluate	8	Fairness, justice and diversity
Dimension4	Career development and expansion	Dimension3	Supporting student learning
8	Reflection and growth	9	Relationships with colleagues, family and community
9	Family and community	10	Professional community
10	Professional community	11	Reflective practice and professional development

While in the United States ,the standards of excellent teachers is defined like this: (1) outstanding teachers are responsible for not only the students themselves, but also to the students’ learning. (2)

excellent teachers are proficient in professional knowledge and know how to teach it to students. (3) excellent teachers have strong ability in organizing and learning. (4) Outstanding teachers often reflect on themselves and be good at summing up experience. (5) Outstanding teachers are an integral part of the whole teaching. The above characteristics are specific to the teaching of mathematics and health education as in above table 1.

In Britain, except similarity with United States in formulating outstanding teacher standards, it also include occupation quality (relationship with students and colleagues), occupation knowledge and understanding ability (teaching and learning, evaluation and supervision, communication and learning, health and happiness), professional skills (planning, teaching, evaluation, supervision and feedback, summary and reflection, to create a learning environment etc.).

Integrated the above point of view, excellent teacher is defined as: Regarding cultivating outstanding talents as their mission, regarding the coordinated development between individual and society as the starting point, with the help of growing professional intuition, finding problems in education and teaching environment, the development of students and other issues through the teaching practice, skills and talent training, experience increasing and reflection in education teaching work, solving problems in order to make their own knowledge, ability, occupational moral realm and teaching effectiveness be improved , winning respect and recognition of student, teacher and society with its own unique personality . In a word, excellent teachers are those who continuously pursuit excellence in the education and teaching, in the training of talents, social services and their professional development.

## **2. Problem existing in cultivating excellent teacher**

After acceptance of the excellent teacher project, Implementing units do not know well how to implement the project and did not reach a consensus on the implementation, that lead to the project being implemented in the exploration and trying which exposed the problems on following aspects:

### ***Aims on excellent teacher's cultivating is not comprehensive***

Although many institutions who undertake the excellent teacher program pay more attention on students' teaching skills, such as excellent expressing ability, writing ability, excellent teaching level; dynamic generating and constructing ability on knowledge, noble morality, such as the spirit of dedication, love on education as the training target. But rarely take lofty ideal of education, continuing professional self-development ability, teaching reform and innovation ability as the training objectives of outstanding teachers, that leads to teachers' lack self-plan and active development in their work.

### ***Insufficient condition on cultivating excellent teacher***

By series of interviewing, talking and discussion with primary , secondary school teachers and headmaster, we conclude that a general teaching ability, certain arts skills, dedicated professionalism ,solid fundamental teaching and class management ability, especially desire of dedication for rural education is the high demand to excellent teachers. But because of history, personnel system and other factors, institute who undertake the training is facing the shortage of Art, music, calligraphy and subject teaching teacher. At the same time, dancing room, piano room, studio and other special teaching space is also relatively inadequate.

### ***Excellent teachers evaluation measures were not in place.***

Excellent teacher development is a spiral and gradually appeared process, evaluation can ensure the process. But the institute who undertake the training prepared not enough on cultivating measures especially on evaluation of excellent teacher's professional development. That effects the efficiency of the excellent teacher cultivation, make educator and normal students themselves not clear whether they have made some progress on their knowledge expanding and ability improving after they have accepted a period of training. Therefore, it is necessary to set up development files for every students and implement

incremental evaluation during their professional development. so that colleges, teachers and normal students themselves can be clear of own development track.

***The consciousness on outstanding development of normal students is not awakened.***

Whether normal students can continue to develop or not depends not only on the external motivation and supervision, but also on whether the students have the consciousness of independent development. However, within the cultivation of outstanding teachers, there is a lack of a kind of education on awakening of the ideals, beliefs and the outstanding development consciousness of excellent teachers. That Led to normal students' passive development, lack of motivation of active enterprising, hard working in its continuing professional development.

Other problems in the cultivation of outstanding teachers are brought up in a seminar held by the Shanghai Normal University aims to discuss the topic "outstanding teacher cultivating model". Views of the scholars are the following aspect:

First, some scholars think that the high quality development of excellent teachers can not be separated from the high qualified teaching and guiding in university, it is difficult to imagine that the old teaching methods and curriculum in university can cultivate excellent teacher who can adapt to changing primary and secondary school teaching. Therefore, to carry out the reform of classroom teaching in Colleges and universities and to improve the teaching quality of college teachers in order to improve the quality of classroom teaching in Colleges and universities is the prerequisite for the development of excellent primary school teachers.

Secondly, excellent teachers should have the ability to lead and not just adapt to life, a scholar listed with two same excellent students in which one worked in city primary school and another worked in rural primary school after graduation. A few years later, the former became a very excellent teacher and the later became a teacher who like drinking wine, smoking and playing card most of the time. Therefore, colleges and universities should pay attention to the cultivation of teachers' ideals, beliefs and the ability to lead life.

Thirdly, the training of excellent teachers should be targeted regionally, outstanding teachers who will work in the city need not only to improve their ability and skills of teaching dancing and drawing, but also need to have a wide range of knowledge and so on. The normal students who will work in rural areas should have the faith and determination to take root in rural areas, have the ability of multi subject teaching and the ability to improve the artistic accomplishment, humanities and scientific literacy of rural students.

### **3. Strategies and measures of excellent teachers' training**

***To develop a comprehensive system of excellent teacher training***

As the implementation unit of the excellent teacher training project, in order to improve the cultivating quality of outstanding teachers, we think that we should make a scientific and comprehensive training plan. In order to formulate the best excellent teacher training plan, we refer to other normal university's excellent teacher training plan of Beijing Normal University, Shanghai Normal University, Ludong University, Hangzhou Normal University, and other famous normal universities. At the same time, we also participated in relevant academic seminars just to develop a talent training program with the following characteristics.

***First, dilute the discipline, emphasizing the comprehensive development.***

In the traditional primary school teaching talent training, many teachers pay too much attention to student learning and development of the subject. Normal students of the primary school division is divided into mathematics, Chinese, English and other directions. From the effect of training, the professionalism of

students has been enhanced, but the comprehensive development of knowledge and skills has been greatly restricted. The normal students can only adapt to the teaching of a certain subject in primary school. This kind of normal students who can only adapt to a certain subject teaching cannot satisfy the primary school principals, especially in rural primary schools. According to the interview of nearly 40 principals in six counties in a certain area, they generally reflect that the imbalance of teachers of every subject in primary, especially in rural primary schools is very serious. The demand for teachers in various subjects will vary depending on the number of pupils, the teacher's sick leave, teacher's retirement. That need some young teacher who is energetic to make up the absence at any time. However, some young teachers refused to do this because they are math, Chinese or English teachers or they have no ability to do so. Therefore, the primary school principals believe that we should strengthen the cultivation of the comprehensive quality and the awareness of the overall situation. So that the training of normal students in school teaching needs to be able to do this, and are willing to do so. In order to meet this need, excellent teacher training should focus on integration and divide the subject of basic courses into compulsory and elective courses. Compulsory courses take Chinese, math and English three modules, students must elect two modules and get 22 credits. Elective course, including three core courses-- Chinese, mathematics, English, requiring students to choose two and get six credits. The above training program will play a great role in promoting the comprehensive development of normal students.

***The second, pay attention to the characteristic development of students' skills***

Due to the limitation of space, equipment, teachers and lack of emphasis on the cultivation of the talents, there is shortcoming of paying too much attention on students' theory learning and emphasizing not enough on students' teaching skill's training.

According to the survey of primary and secondary school's headmaster, the new primary school teachers are not only lack of writing skills, research skills, class management and other aspects of abilities, but also lack of characteristic skills of music, painting, dancing and others. Headmasters believe that new primary school teachers' standard on writing and teaching language have important influence on Pupils' corresponding development. At the same time, teacher with one or two art skills such as dancing, music and painting will be more welcomed by pupils and can arouse students' interest better in learning.

Therefore, in the talent cultivating teaching plan, we not only let the students have opportunity to chose two from music, sports and art as a required skills. At the same time, we increased the amount of the elective courses like music, sports, arts and others and there is a larger increasing in the number of credit requirements. At the same time, there is also some increase in the teaching plan on some subjects such as science, art, sports, educational technology and other auxiliary teaching modules, students must select two auxiliary modules at least to learn and can obtain corresponding certificate, with the help of the curriculum plan, students' characteristic development can be promoted greatly.

***Thirdly, pay attention to practical guidance, extend the internship period***

According to the reports of primary and secondary school headmasters, it is difficult for new teachers to teach directly unless training and guiding on them for a period of time. Therefore, headmasters suggested that teacher educators should try their best to cultivate normal students' practical ability in the university, such as shifting practice time to an earlier date, allotting each intern with a mentor and so on. For this reason, not only did we increase the internship time on the internship arrangements, extended the original 8 weeks of centralized internship time to 10 weeks.

We not only equipped each student with one college teacher to provide students a full range of guidance of living, learning, writing during the school time, but also equipped each student with the most outstanding primary school teacher as practice teacher. Under the guidance of practice teacher, it's convenient for students to accept edification of primary school teaching atmosphere at any time. At the same time there are also some changes in the content and form of practice. For example, not only let each student have subjects teaching opportunities of Chinese, math, English and others , but also have

opportunities on music, sports and art teaching. Thus, we shifted single subject teaching practice into multidisciplinary subject teaching practice.

***Consummate culture conditions and facilities.***

There is a great correlation between the quality of normal college students training and training facilities and conditions. For example, in the past, due to the lack of Micro-teaching lab, piano room, gym room and other hardware facilities, primary school teachers' teaching training and the training of the normal university students are criticized by primary school principals that the students only have eloquence, but are lack of the ability of presenting themselves. In order to compensate for this defect, we concentrate from a variety of project funding to build a piano room, a dance room, a painting room, two multimedia classrooms and teaching resources development room, creating perfect conditions for cultivating excellent teachers. At the same time, in order to make up for the defects of teachers, our faculty has established normal cooperation with other colleges and schools, to employ their excellent teachers who teach music, calligraphy and sports as pluralistic teachers, also to increase the intensity of talent introduction and growth, to improve the cultivation of outstanding teachers teaching team.

***Strengthening cooperation on normal student's cultivation, Improving cultivation mode***

The target of excellent teacher training programs should not only include normal school students, but also include all in-service young teachers in primary and secondary schools.

On the cultivation of outstanding teachers, there will be different cultivating tactics or measures on the basis of different objects. For the cultivation of normal school students, teaching skill practice through observing, simulating and direct teaching should be emphasized. While for young teacher in-service, we should cultivate them through exploration, experiment, reflection and action research in teaching and self-directed learning to promote their excellence.

On promoting cultivation of two types of talents, people usually use two modes, "one is a kind of CS (College and School) model, namely normal university and primary school, middle school jointly with teacher education. This mode is fully appreciated and confirmed the elementary, middle schools teachers' main body in teacher education.

Another is UGS (University of Government and School) model, namely University, local Government and elementary ,middle schools participated, cooperate together to cultivate teaching talent. Provincial and local government will connect normal colleges and primary, secondary schools together to fully exert its function in building platform for teacher education and providing policy and funding support for teacher education.

In addition, implementing the tactic of promoting university teachers and excellent primary or secondary school teachers to exchange teaching, promoting students' active participation has direct and indirect role in promoting the growth of normal students.

***Value-added assessment on the cultivation of excellent teachers***

Value-added assessment originated from "The Report on Equality of Educational Opportunity" that James Coleman has submitted to Capitol Hill. The report has aroused a worldwide debate on school effectiveness and promoted the emergence of value-added assessment on school effectiveness. Since then, value-added assessment has been widely prevalent around the world. In 2004, Chinese scholars managed to apply the value-added assessment to the investigation of the relationship between school input, school performance and the academic performance of students. Considering the cultivation of excellent teachers and the effectiveness of cultivation. Ministry of education required colleges to establish the quality supervision and evaluation mechanism of excellent teacher cultivation. The value-added evaluation which is used as the measurement and evaluation of excellent teacher training efficiency in a period of time can be used as excellent teacher training quality control and evaluation method. Value-added assessment is

divided into three aspects: value-added assessment on training effectiveness of colleges, value-added assessment on teachers' teaching effectiveness and value-added assessment on normal students' learning efficiency, and value-added assessment on normal students' learning efficiency is the foundation and core. The Value-added assessment on normal students is not just evaluating students' performance by a single test, but to acquire the information of students' progress and evaluate the development of students by tracking the added value of each student's learning condition with the time going on. The best evaluators on excellent normal students' development quality and the degree of progress should be the normal students themselves, normal students make records and descriptions through their initial level (knowledge, ability, skill, morality, state and other aspects) and the feeling of condition, and they record the self-progresses and self-changes through external guidance, help, autonomic learning and practice in written forms, in works, in videos or other forms. The dramatic changes that normal students feel are the best reflections on the effectiveness of cultivation project. Therefore, the self-evaluation of normal students is the best way of value-added assessment on the cultivation of excellent teachers.

In conclusion, in order to guarantee the quality of excellent teachers and to achieve the original intention of the excellent teachers program, it is essential for cultivation unit or main department to work out the explicit training objectives or standards, as well as to improve the condition of quality, curriculum, environment, policy, faculty and others which is indispensable for the high-quality development of normal students, and more importantly, in order to ensure the improvement of the quality of talent training, it is necessary to apply the value-added assessment to monitoring the process of the cultivation of excellent teachers in the process of project implementation.

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