



Reconstruction of the “Three Practices” Practical Teaching System for English Education Programs Based on OBE

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Abstract

Based on the issues identified by the Ministry of Education’s Teacher Education Professional Accreditation Expert Group during their on-site inspection of the English education programs at Zhaoqing University—specifically that the “Three Practices” (Educational Observation, Educational Internship, and Educational Research) were not integrated, objectives were vague, supervision was insufficient, and evaluation was one-dimensional; this study systematically explores the path for reconstructing the “Three Practices” practical teaching system. The study proposes a systematic scheme from four aspects: top-level design, institutional guarantee, faculty support, and the main framework. It further elucidates specific reconstruction methods from the dimensions of curriculum systems, syllabus standardization, quality improvement, tutor mechanisms, and evaluation optimization, aiming to form a whole-process practical education model featuring progressive objectives, complementary content, coherent processes, and scientific evaluation, thereby providing a reference for enhancing the professional competence of English (Education) majors and promoting the connotative development of teacher education.

Keywords: Outcome-based Education; Integration of “Three Practices”; Practical Teaching System; Teacher Education Professional Accreditation.

1. Introduction

From September 14th to 17th, 2025, the Ministry of Education’s Teacher Education Professional Accreditation Expert Group conducted an on-site inspection of four teacher education majors at Zhaoqing University, including Ideological and Political Education, English, Biology, and History. The Expert Group for the English major convened four work meetings of various types, observed 10 teaching sections, and reviewed over 900 examination papers and assessment materials, as well as 50 graduation theses. They consulted over 500 management documents and teaching archives, held seven symposiums, and interviewed 49 students and 43 teachers. Following the review of materials, class observations, and interviews, the experts pointed out certain problems existing in the English teacher education major and put forward directions and suggestions for continuous improvement (Expert Group of Teacher Education Professional Accreditation, 2025). Among these issues, problems within the practical teaching system were particularly prominent. This study aims to analyse these problems and explore the reconstruction of the practical teaching system for English teacher education majors, meticulously implementing the integration of the “Three Practices”: Educational Observation, Educational Internship, and Educational Research.

2. Background of the Research on the Integration of “Three Practices”

China’s policy system for teacher education is becoming increasingly perfect, with growing emphasis placed on practical teaching. To strengthen the practical components, the Ministry of Education issued the *Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening the Educational Practice of Normal Students* in 2016 (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2016), explicitly proposing the construction of a “whole-process” practical teaching system and enriching practical forms and content. This provided clear policy guidance for the overall design of the “Three Practices” (Observation, Internship, and Research).

The accreditation of teacher education majors, launched in 2017, established the philosophy of “Student-centred, Production-oriented, and Continuous Improvement”. The *Interim Measures for the Accreditation of Normal Majors in*

Institutions of Higher Education (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2017) required from an institutional level that professional teaching must be closely centred on the output of student graduation capabilities. This provided the fundamental adherence for the alignment of objectives and the evaluation of effectiveness across all practical teaching links. The *Standards for Teachers' Professional Competencies of Normal Students Majoring in Secondary Education (Trial)*, released in 2021 (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021), constructed a detailed competency framework of "One Practice, Three Learnings" (practising teacher ethics, learning to teach, learning to educate, and learning to develop), providing specific benchmarks for ability cultivation and assessment at each stage of the "Three Practices". The evolution of this series of policies marks a shift in the training of education majors in China from scale expansion to connotation construction, placing unprecedentedly high demands on the systematicity, scientific nature, and effectiveness of practical teaching.

From the perspective of theoretical logic and educational laws, teachers' professional knowledge is essentially "practical knowledge", the generation and development of which must rely on continuous experience, reflection, and construction within real or simulated educational contexts (Shulman, 1987). As the core carrier for student teachers to contact, deepen, and study practice, the "Three Practices" should constitute a continuum of capability generation that is interlocked and progressively advanced. However, a gap often exists between theory and practice. Despite repeated policy emphasis and academic appeals, the "Three Practices" often remain disjointed and fragmented in implementation, failing to form a synergistic educational force. This results in poor outcomes in cultivating education majors' practical abilities, making the expected goal of shortening the "induction adaptation period" difficult to achieve. Existing studies indicate that the practical teaching in most teacher education majors suffers from common problems such as fragmented links and vague objectives (Deng & Chen, 2024). For English education majors, owing to disciplinary characteristics, problems in cross-cultural teaching practice and language skills training are even more pronounced (Zhang, T., 2023). Therefore, exploring how to integrate the "Three Practices" and construct an integrated practical teaching system has become a core issue urgently needing resolution in the current reform of English education majors.

3. Problems Existing in the Practical Teaching of English Education Majors

Examining the current practical teaching of English education majors through the lens of teacher education professional accreditation, and particularly combining this with the issues exposed during the 2025 accreditation inspection of the English major at Zhaoqing University, the following prominent problems can be identified in the implementation of the "Three Practices":

3.1 "Three Practices" are Not Integrated and Coverage is Incomplete

There is a lack of systematic design and effective connection between the "Three Practices", failing to reflect the spiral upward logic of "Observation/Perception → Personal Practice → Reflection/Research". Observation, Internship, and Research are often arranged as three independent teaching links, suffering from disconnected timing, repetitive or missing content, and disjointed objectives. For instance, observation may be limited to fragmented listening to classes, failing to provide adequate knowledge and psychological preparation for the subsequent internship. After the internship concludes, there is a lack of an inquiry component; although the English Major Talent Training Program (2024) includes an inquiry course, no supplementary inquiry course was arranged for the current senior students (Grade 2022), failing to guide English (education) majors in deep reflection and theoretical elevation of their practical experiences, thus leaving the capability goal of "learning to develop" unfulfilled. Simultaneously, the practical content fails to comprehensively cover the four major areas emphasized in the *Standards for Teachers' Professional Competencies of Normal Students Majoring in Secondary Education (Trial)*—"Teacher Ethics Experience, Teaching Practice, Class Management, and Teaching Research Practice". Shortcomings are particularly evident in the cultivation of teacher ethics and training in teaching research capabilities, indicating insufficient breadth and depth in practical teaching. This contradicts the view proposed by Zhang, W. (2023) that "practical teaching content should cover the full dimensional capabilities of the teaching profession".

3.2 Syllabuses are Non-standard and Objectives are Unclear

The curriculum syllabuses for Educational Observation, Educational Internship, and Educational Research are written non-standardly; course objectives are stated in general, vague terms and fail to form a clear, measurable correspondence with graduation requirement indicators. For example, objectives such as "improve teaching practice ability" are too broad and are not decomposed into specific, observable, and evaluable objectives like "be able to independently design a lesson plan reflecting the English learning activity view" or "be able to effectively implement a listening and speaking class and organize classroom interaction". Unclear objectives directly lead to arbitrariness in the selection and organization of learning content, lack of focus in teaching, and an inability to ensure that practical teaching precisely supports the achievement of predetermined capabilities. The OBE philosophy emphasizes the measurability and orientation of objectives, yet the current "Three Practices" syllabuses of most English teacher education majors fail to reflect this core requirement (Fan & Xu, 2025).

3.3 Quality Supervision is Insufficient and the Collaborative Education Mechanism is Not Implemented

There is a lack of systematic and effective quality monitoring and management mechanisms for the practical teaching process. A stable, deep, and clearly defined long-term collaborative education mechanism between universities and primary and secondary schools (U-S) has not yet been established. The construction of practice bases emphasize “hanging the plaque” (nominal affiliation) over “operation”; mechanisms for the selection, training, incentivisation, and assessment of secondary school practice mentors are unsound; and there is a lack of communication and clear division of guidance responsibilities between university instructors and school mentors. This leads to a lack of continuous, timely tracking and feedback on the performance of interns at practice bases. The quality of practice depends largely on the self-discipline of the student teachers and the accidental support of the internship schools, making the effectiveness of collaborative education difficult to guarantee. Existing research confirms that the imperfection of collaborative mechanisms is a key factor restricting the practical quality of education students (Li, Yu & Liu, 2024).

3.4 Evaluation Methods are Simple and Continuous Improvement Effects are Poor

The evaluation of the “Three Practices” still relies mainly on summative internship reports, observation summaries, or simple assessment forms. The evaluation method is singular and highly subjective. There is a lack of a process evaluation system based on performance evidence, and a failure to systematically collect and effectively utilize process materials generated by student teachers during practice, such as detailed observation records and reflections, iteratively revised lesson plans, classroom teaching videos, student assignment analyses, and records of participation in teaching research activities. The main subjects of evaluation are university teachers, with a lack of multi-party participation from secondary school mentors, peers, and students. This simplified evaluation cannot truthfully and comprehensively reflect the growth trajectory and complex performance of student teachers’ practical abilities, nor can it provide effective data support and feedback loops for the diagnosis and continuous improvement of the practical teaching system itself. This represents a significant gap with the “diversified multi-dimensional evaluation system” advocated by the OBE philosophy (Biggs & Tang, 2007).

4. Design of the Integration of “Three Practices” Practical Teaching System

To resolve the aforementioned problems, a systematic reconstruction and integrated design of the “Three Practices” must be undertaken. This study proposes the following design framework:

4.1 Top-level Design: Design Guided by Outcome-based Education Philosophy

Guided by the Outcome-based Education (OBE) philosophy (Spady, 1994), the design adheres to the principles of Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), Production-oriented Approach (Wen, 2015) student-centredness, and continuous improvement. Backward design must be implemented first: taking the Standards for Teachers’ Professional Competencies and accreditation graduation requirements as the final output goals, we explicitly deduce and set the specific, staged learning outcomes to be achieved in the Research, Internship, and Observation phases. This ensures that the objectives of the three stages are progressively layered and closely supportive: observation objectives focus on cognition and experience, laying the foundation for internship; internship objectives focus on application and operation, realizing a preliminary role transformation; and inquiry objectives focus on reflection and research, promoting theoretical sublimation and professional development. This forms a clear logical chain of “Final Goal → Stage Outcomes → Teaching Activities”.

The practical teaching system is student-centred, with all practical activities designed around promoting the capability development of student teachers. It provides diverse practical contexts and choices, respecting the individual differences and interests of student teachers. It emphasizes the principal position of student teachers in practice, guiding them to transform from passive participants into active learners, reflectors, and researchers.

The practical teaching system embodies continuous improvement by establishing an evidence-based evaluation and feedback mechanism. By collecting performance evaluation data throughout the entire “Three Practices” process, the system is used not only for assessing student teachers but, more crucially, for diagnosing problems within the practical teaching system itself. This drives the continuous optimisation of syllabuses, content, methods, and management, forming a closed loop of “Evaluation-Feedback-Improvement”.

4.2 Institutional Guarantee: Formulated at University and School Levels

Sound institutions are the cornerstone of system operation. At the university level, guiding documents such as *Administrative Measures for Practical Teaching of Normal Students* should be issued to clarify the basic positioning, organizational structure, funding guarantee, and safety responsibilities of the “Three Practices” integration. At the school-level (or subordinate faculty level), implementation rules need to be formulated, including: standardized “Three Practices” course syllabuses revised based on OBE philosophy; *Construction and Management Measures for “U-S” Collaborative Education Bases*, regulating base selection, mutual appointment of mentors, resource sharing, and regular

consultation mechanisms; and *Work Specifications for Practical Teaching Instructors*, clarifying the responsibilities, training, assessment, and incentive measures for dual mentors from both the university and the secondary school.

4.3 Faculty Support: Construction of the “Three Practices” Teaching Team

A high-level, collaborative “Three Practices” guidance team must be built. The team is composed of university disciplinary pedagogical teachers, major courses teachers, and frontline secondary school backbone teachers (teaching researchers). A “Dual Mentor System” is implemented, equipping each student teacher with a university mentor and a secondary school practice mentor. Through regular joint teaching research, thematic training, and workshops, university teachers are encouraged to gain a deep understanding of basic education practice, while secondary school teachers enhance their level of educational theoretical guidance, forming a guidance community with shared concepts, shared methods, and shared responsibilities.

4.4 The Main Framework of the “Three Practices” Practical Teaching System

Based on the above analysis, a “Three Stages · Four Dimensions · Multi-evaluation” main framework is proposed. “Three Stages” refers to the three progressively advanced and logically coherent phases of Perception (Observation), Practice (Internship), and Inquiry (Research). “Four Dimensions” refers to the four major content dimensions running through the three stages: Teacher Ethics Experience, Teaching Practice, Educating Practice, and Teaching Research Practice, ensuring the comprehensiveness of practical content. “Multi-evaluation” refers to constructing an evaluation system based on performance evidence, integrating process and summative evaluation, involving multiple subjects such as university mentors, school mentors, peers, and self-evaluation, and utilizing evaluation results for the dual purposes of student capability appraisal and teaching system improvement.

5. Reconstruction Path of the Integration of “Three Practices” Practical Teaching System

To translate the proposed “Three Stages - Four Dimensions - Multi-evaluation” framework from a theoretical construct into a functional pedagogical reality, a comprehensive operational overhaul is required. This reconstruction process must transcend mere structural adjustments and instead focus on the deep integration of curriculum resources, management protocols, and assessment strategies. Consequently, the specific reconstruction path involves a multi-faceted approach that aligns curricular content with professional standards, standardizes instructional documentation, enforces rigorous quality control, optimizes mentorship dynamics, and establishes a closed-loop evaluation system. The following sections detail the five key pathways essential for realizing this systemic transformation.

5.1 Forming a Systematic Practical Teaching Curriculum System

Dispersed observation, internship, and research activities are integrated into a series of courses or course modules that run through the entire training process. The general objectives of the module, the sub-objectives of each stage, the allocation of credits and hours, the sequence of prerequisites, and the assessment methods are clarified. Modular and thematic practical tasks are designed so that the content of the “Three Practices” revolves around common themes (such as “Unit-based Teaching” or “Class Culture Construction”) and deepens layer by layer, achieving organic connection in content and a spiral ascent in capability.

5.2 Standardizing the Curriculum Syllabuses of the Practical Teaching System

Following the Outcome-based Education (OBE) philosophy, reconstructing the “Three Practices” course syllabuses is the institutional cornerstone for ensuring practical teaching quality. This link must adhere to the principle of reverse design, ensuring that course objectives are clear and measurable, teaching content is specific and detailed, and assessment standards are explicit and scientific, thereby forming precise support for graduation requirement indicators.

First is the Educational Observation stage, where the course objective should be positioned at strengthening perceptual experience and emotional identification. The instructional design needs to guide student teachers in the transition from theoretical learning to the practical field. Through deep frontline classroom observation, teacher interviews, and teaching records, students gain comprehensive insight into the ecological norms of secondary school English teaching, the post responsibilities of teachers, and the cognitive characteristics of secondary school students. This stage emphasises the internalization of teacher ethics norms, the establishment of professional identity, and the effective stimulation of the willingness to teach through writing high-quality observation records and reflective logs.

Second is the Educational Internship stage, where the course objective should focus on comprehensive application practice and all-round role transformation. This stage requires a substantive leap from observer to practitioner; student teachers must fully assume core functions such as subject teaching, class management, and guidance of extracurricular activities. The syllabus should explicitly stipulate the quantity of independent teaching hours and quality standards, requiring students to systematically complete lesson plan designs, courseware production, and teaching reflection,

transforming theoretical knowledge into independent classroom management ability and educating practice ability within real educational contexts.

Finally is the Educational Research stage, where the course objective should be dedicated to task-driven reflective inquiry and professional development. This stage aims to cultivate the literacy of research-oriented teachers, requiring student teachers to base their work on real experiences during the internship, select specific teaching problems such as the “junior high school English learning activity perspective”, and utilize standardized educational research methods for deep analysis. Through writing research papers or in-depth reflection reports, a qualitative change from experience accumulation to theoretical sublimation is achieved, thereby cultivating student teachers’ preliminary awareness of educational research and ability for continuous improvement.

5.3 Improving the Quality of the Practical Teaching Curriculum System

A whole-process quality monitoring mechanism is established. Detailed quality standards and operating procedures for each link of practical teaching are formulated. Information platforms (such as the “Xiaoyoubang” APP) are utilized to dynamically manage the practical process of student teachers, with real-time submission of logs, lesson plans, reflections, and other materials. University and secondary school mentors conduct regular guidance and consultation combining online and offline methods. The school of foreign languages regularly organizes practical teaching mid-term inspections, open class observations, and experience exchange meetings to identify problems and intervene in a timely manner.

5.4 Optimizing the Dual Tutor Mechanism

“University-School” cooperation is deepened by clarifying the selection standards, responsibilities, authority, and collaboration methods of dual mentors. Stable “Teacher Professional Development Schools” or “Teaching Practice Bases” are established to realize mutual personnel appointment, curriculum co-construction, and joint project research. Secondary school mentors are provided with formal letters of appointment, special subsidies, and professional development support (such as priority access to university resources and participation in academic activities). A regular tripartite meeting or online seminar system involving university mentors, school mentors, and education interns is established to ensure the continuity and pertinence of guidance.

5.5 Continuously Improving the Evaluation Mechanism

A diversified evaluation system centred on “performance assessment” is constructed. Detailed evaluation rubrics are developed for each stage of the “Three Practices”, clarifying evaluation standards and levels for different capability dimensions. The basis for evaluation shifts from a single report to a “Practice Growth Portfolio”, systematically collecting process works such as lesson plans, teaching videos, student assignment samples, reflective journals, and research papers. Multi-subject evaluation is implemented, particularly by increasing the evaluation weight of secondary school mentors. Evaluation data is regularly analyzed not only to grade students but also to diagnose the degree of achievement of “Three Practices” course objectives, the appropriateness of teaching content, and the effectiveness of the guidance mechanism, thereby driving the continuous optimization and improvement of the practical teaching system and forming a closed loop of “Design-Implementation-Evaluation-Improvement”.

6. Conclusion

The construction of an integrated “Three Practices” practical teaching system represents an inevitable choice and a core strategic lever for deepening the educational reform of English education majors and enhancing the quality of talent cultivation. As highlighted by the professional accreditation feedback, traditional practice models—characterized by fragmentation, vague objectives, and singular evaluation—are no longer sufficient to meet the demands of modern teacher education. This study, grounded in the Outcome-based Education philosophy, has systematically diagnosed these critical deficiencies within the current system. By addressing the specific gaps identified during the accreditation of Zhaoqing University, the research underscores the urgent necessity of transitioning from isolated practical components to a cohesive, outcome-oriented continuum that prepares education students for the complexities of the classroom.

The core contribution of this research lies in the proposal of a holistic “Three Stages · Four Dimensions · Multi-evaluation” framework, which fundamentally reconstructs the logic of practical training. By breaking down the barriers between observation, internship, and research, the system fosters a spiral ascent of capability where each stage purposefully builds upon the previous one. The integration of a robust “University-School” collaborative mechanism and a dual-mentor system ensures that theoretical instruction and practical application are not parallel lines but interwoven strands of professional development. Furthermore, the shift from subjective, summative assessments to a diversified, evidence-based evaluation system—utilizing portfolios and multi-subject feedback—provides a more scientific and granular measurement of student growth, ensuring that the acquisition of teaching competencies is both observable and verifiable.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of this reconstructed system extends beyond the immediate improvement of curriculum metrics; it serves as a catalyst for the profound professional transformation of English student teachers. It facilitates their smooth transition from passive students to active, reflective educational practitioners capable of navigating the challenges of basic education. Moreover, this systemic overhaul establishes a sustainable ecosystem for teacher education, where the continuous flow of feedback from practical bases drives the iterative improvement of university curricula. This creates a mutually beneficial symbiosis between higher education institutions and secondary schools, providing a replicable model for the connotative development of English education programs nationwide.

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