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Teacher Education and Teacher Training in China

By C. Xiaoduan

Introduction

Like other countries, Teacher Education is very important in Chinese education. It involves the great task to foster teachers for all levels of Chinese education. Since 1978 when China opened her door to reform, great changes have taken place in many aspects of Teacher Education. Government officials more often recognize that we must train good teachers to fostering good students. Only excellent teachers can educate excellent students. Teachers are being asked to improve their knowledge and skills. We are committed to reform the old system of teacher education and teacher training so that it can foster better teachers for our schools.

Teacher Education has spawned extensive theory and practice. I will divide my topics into two parts: Teacher Education and Teacher Training. These topics are different aspects of the same problem. In this paper, I will focus on the pre-service teacher training when I talk about teacher education. However, when I talk about teacher training, I will focus on the in-service teacher training.

The Structure of Teacher Education

In China, pre-service teacher education will be divided into four levels before 1999:

- Level 1: Normal University (we called in most cases "Teachers University" before 1997)
- Level 2: Teachers College
- Level 3: Teachers School
- Level 4: Kindergarten Teacher Training School

In addition there are some departments and classes just for teacher training in other comprehensive universities and TV universities.

Social development foments educational reform, Chinese pre-service teacher education has greatly changed its structure. Presently we are trying to develop a new structure of teacher education so that it can meet different demands in different areas of China. Beginning the year 2000, our government will develop a new system of pre-service teacher education; three levels system of teacher education. Pre-service teacher education may be divided into four levels all over country before 1999. No matter whether or not the area is developed, the model of pre-service teacher education will be the same.

The present level model cannot meet the new situation to foster the new teachers for the new century. We are therefore building a new system of pre-service teacher education. In an economically developed area, like Shanghai, we will keep down the normal university of four year for training secondary (senior) schoolteachers. In mid-economic developed area, like Shandong Province, we will keep the normal university and teachers college for training secondary (senior and junior) schoolteachers. In economic developing area, like Shaanxi Province, we will continue to keep the normal university and teachers college for training secondary (senior and junior)school and teacher training school.

The Departments and Curriculum of Normal Universities

In tradition, the Departments of Normal Universities are setup by courses from primary and secondary school. The special departments and majors of Normal Universities are Education and Psychology. Some new courses for future life have been put into the curriculum of primary and secondary school in China, i.e., Computer, Psychological Counseling. Currently, the curriculum of Normal Universities may be divided into four parts:

Part 1: Foundational Courses:

- Political Theory (Mao Zedong thought and Deng Xiaoping's Theory)
- Educational Theory (Pedagogy and Psychology)
- Foreign Language (English)
- Educational Technology and Computer

Part 2: Major courses:

- Required
- Elective

Part 3: Educational Practice

- Professional probation in school site near campus
- 6-8 weeks for educational practice in school site (we have stable schools)
- 2 weeks for Macro-teaching in campus

Part 4: Activities Courses

- Students' Community
- Club Activities

Teacher Training (in- service teacher training)

As most educators understand, excellent teaching is a developmental conception. Teacher should develop their abilities to teach continuously. There are some ways to improve teachers' abilities. For example, learning by teaching, is also called practice makes perfect, learning from colleagues, etc. In- service teacher training is the most important way to improve teachers' abilities. Hence, many countries in the world emphasis in- service teacher training, especially the developed countries like America.

Since 1985, the Chinese Government began to emphasis in- service teacher training. Because there were a lot of teachers who had lower diplomas, many teachers in the country were not adequately trained. To improve the quality of our people, we must have good education. However, good education depends on our training good teachers. Only good teachers can foster good students. So, by the end of the 1999, we developed a system for in-service teacher training.

The Structure of In-service Training Sessions in China

Formal Training Institutions:

- Educational College in Province
- Educational College in District / City Level
- Teacher Training School in County Level
- Training Center for Primary School Teachers

Other Educational Institutions:

- Teacher Training Center in Normal University
- Part-time Teacher Education in Teachers College / Normal University
- Summer School for Teacher Training
- Teacher Training in TV University
- Teacher Training of Examination for Self-Taught Students

These institutions provide the opportunity for teachers to improve their diploma level and develop their professional ability. In these institutions, Educational College and Teacher Training Center in Normal University mainly focus on training secondary teacher. Teacher Training School in County Level and Training Center mainly focus on training primary school teachers and kindergarten teachers. Other Educational Institutions are both primary school teachers and secondary school teachers. Generally speaking, the traditional curriculum of training is divided into three parts:

Part 1: Educational Theory (three courses)

- Pedagogy
- Psychology
- Teaching Methodology

Part 2: Professional Course (different section)

- Math Section
- Chinese Language Section
- English Section
- History Section
- Geography Section
- Physics Section
- Chemistry Section
- Physical Education Section
- Music and Fine Art Section

Part 3: Practical Course

- Teaching practice
- Visit other teacher's classroom
- Classroom teaching evaluating

In recent years, many teachers have become the qualified teachers according to national demands by in- service training. Table 1 shows you a numbers of the qualified teachers according to national demands by 1999.

Table 1. numbers of the qualified teachers according to national demands by 1999.

Level	Diploma of National Demands	Numbers of the qualified/Not
Senior Secondary School	Bachelor Degree four years in NU	65.82%/ 34.18%
Junior Secondary School	three or two years in TC/NU	85.61%/ 14.39% (12.44%high)
Primary School	three years	94.69%/ 5.31%
Kindergarten	in STS/KTS	(22.92% high)

Notes: NU----Normal University TC----Teachers College
STS----Secondary Teachers School KTS----Kindergarten Teachers School
High: means higher diploma than demands.

Our current task is toward the new century is to improve teacher diploma levels, and also to improve student abilities to educate, teach, and conduct educational research. We are training high quality teachers for the 21st century. There are presently a large number of rural teachers in the China countryside. Please review the following some statistics about the distribution of primary and secondary school teachers in China:

Table 2 Distribution of primary and secondary school teachers in China by 1999

Area	Senior Secondary School	Junior Secondary School	Primary School
Rural	14.36%	52.82%	63.94%
Town	46.71%	27.20%	20.38%
City	38.92%	19.98%	15.68%

Total Number of Students: 205,000,000 Total Number of Teachers:10,390,000

There are some problems with rural teacher training from the statistics about the distribution of primary and secondary school teachers. Since the early time of this year, the Chinese Ministry of Education began to implement three projects for training teachers

and head teachers or principals. The aim is to improve the teachers' quality all around so that they can meet the new demand in the new century. The three projects are: "The Project for Teacher Training", "The Project for Principal Training" and "The Project of Continue Education". The first project in China also is called "Yuanding Project". Yuanding means "gardener", namely a person who works in the garden. He cultivates the flowers and trees with his shoulder to collar day-by-day and year-by-year. The teacher's work is seen as the same as the gardener's. Here I would like to give a brief introduction to the project of teacher training.

The Chinese Ministry of Education is implementing year-round in-service teacher training. The Chinese government has invested much money for the projects. The training is divided into three levels:

- National Training for 10,000 teachers;

The task is undertaken by the Normal Universities administrated directly by the State Ministry of Education. The Curriculum consists of three Parts: Teaching, Research and Practice. They are called the Backbone Teacher of National Level. They will be the best teachers in their school after training.

- The second level is Province Training for 100,000 teachers.

The task is undertaken by the Normal Universities or Teachers College administrated directly by the Provincial Ministry of Education.

- The third level is City / District Training for 1,000,000 teachers;

The task is undertaken by the Teachers College administrated directly by the City / District Department of Education

Some Reforms of Teacher Education and Teacher Training

In recent two years, some reforms of Teacher Education and Teacher Training have been made. We will do our best to continually improve the quality of teacher education by new reform.

- To gradually open Teacher Education

Up until now the Normal University and Teachers College have been the main body for training future teachers and in-service teachers in China. But the Normal University and Teachers College will not be the only institutions to undertake the task of training future teachers for primary and secondary schools. We will take advantage of the resources of the comprehensive university to foster teachers. The Chinese government has agreed that the comprehensive university should set up the College of Education or Teachers College so that the level of teacher training can be further improved.

- To gradually open the system of teacher training and to build a bridge between pre-service and in-service, and to strengthen further partnership between university and school.

• We will make great efforts to change the system of teacher education from the four levels system to the three levels system in the developing area, and from the three levels system to the two levels or one level in the developed area.

- To make great efforts to improve the quality of teacher education by different ways.

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Chen Xiaoduan is Professor teaching at Shaanxi Normal University in Xifan, China. He is a well-published author and was recently hosted at Columbus State University as an International Visiting Scholar. He is a Backbone Teacher on the National Level in his University this year.