

Review Article

Improve the Capacity of Regular Pedagogical Professional Training for Students of Preschool Education According to the Competency-Based Approach at Vinh University

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Abstract: Pedagogical training is the process of forming and training core pedagogical competencies for students, contributing to the formation of qualities and abilities for future teachers. Consistently enhancing the pedagogical skills of preschool education students can foster their professional capacity and equip them for successful careers. This approach also provides lecturers with more teaching experience and opportunities for professional growth. The connection and cooperation between the school and other units can lead to significant improvements in the quality of our educational programs.

Keywords: Training Pedagogical Skills Regularly, Preschool Education, Competence-Based Approach.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 13th Party Congress emphasized the importance of shaping and developing personal qualities, innovation, and core values for citizens, particularly fostering patriotism, national pride, and inspiring sustainable national development [3]. To achieve this goal, universities must focus on "organizing and building open training programs, with a particular emphasis on improving the quality of comprehensive training, prioritizing education on morality, ethics, lifestyle, professional ethics, and increasing the duration and content of training, practice, and pedagogical internships" [1]. In particular, regular pedagogical training activities for pre-service teachers in general and preschool education students in teacher training institutions must "combine practical skills training with theoretical teaching to enable learners to practice and develop their profession according to the requirements of each job" [8].

Regular pedagogical training for pre-service teachers, especially for preschool education students, is a continuous process that equips future educators with the skills, teaching methods, pedagogical mindset, and

passion for the profession. When discussing the perception of truth, President Ho Chi Minh stated: "Practice gives rise to knowledge, knowledge leads to theory, and theory guides practice" [2]. Practice giving rise to knowledge is the initial cognitive process stage, which is discovering new theoretical understanding. The principle of "learning by doing, combining education with productive labor, and linking theory with practice" has been proven to be an important foundation in teacher education. To realize this principle, pedagogical training activities should aim to integrate theoretical knowledge and practical skills closely. Specifically, equipping pre-service teachers should not only focus on transmitting foundational knowledge but also on cultivating pedagogical skills and developing the necessary qualities to meet the demands of the profession. To ensure the effectiveness of the training process, pedagogical training activities should be designed based on real-life situations in educational environments. Organizing practical activities and internships at educational institutions will provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge to practice, thereby improving and enhancing their professional competence. Moreover, encouraging students to engage in self-study and

research is a crucial factor in developing independent thinking and the ability to adapt to societal changes. This training not only equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills but also cultivates their passion for the teaching profession.

In recent years, the Preschool Education Department at Vinh University's School of Education has implemented a flexible, integrated, and open credit-based training model. This model has facilitated the enhancement of pedagogical training capabilities. Specifically, training activities have been adjusted in terms of objectives, content, methods, and organizational forms to better align with actual teaching practices. As a result, students are equipped with all the necessary professional skills, meeting the demand for high-quality human resources in preschool education nationwide.

2. RESEARCH CONTENT

2.1. Issues in Regular Pedagogical Training for Preschool Education Students at Vinh University

2.1.1. Objectives

Based on the Party's guidelines, the Education Law, and the regulations on pedagogical practice and internship of the Ministry of Education and Training, Vinh University has set the following objectives for regular pedagogical training in preschool education:

Integrating theory and practice: Applying the educational principle of "learning by doing" to enable students to directly practice pedagogical skills, linking theoretical knowledge of child psychology, preschool education, and related disciplines to activities of caring for and educating children.

Developing professional competence: Equipping students with a comprehensive system of knowledge and skills, including: (1) Knowledge: A deep understanding of child development theories, teaching methods, and organization of educational activities; (2) Skills: Proficiency in observation, assessment, communication, classroom management, and lesson planning skills; (3) Attitude: Fostering a love for the profession, affection for children, and a high sense of responsibility for their work.

Cultivating qualities: Nurturing the necessary qualities of a preschool educator such as humanity, creativity, adaptability, and a collaborative spirit.

Preparing for the reality: Helping students familiarize themselves with the actual preschool environment, understanding the roles and responsibilities of teachers, and thereby building a suitable career development path for themselves.

Enhancing teaching quality: Updating knowledge, skills, and teaching methods in the field; Improving teaching methods and techniques to enhance student learning outcomes; developing classroom

management, class management, and technology use skills.

2.1.2. Pedagogical Training Program and Content

Within the competency-based preschool education curriculum at the University, there are 126 credits, of which 25 credits are dedicated to practical training, internships, and pedagogical practice (accounting for 19.84%) [7]. Practical credits are doubled compared to theoretical class hours and multiplied by five compared to training hours at practice preschools. Practical credits are divided into small groups of 10-20 students per group. In addition to classroom-based practical training, students also practice planning and conducting activities with children at preschools. This demonstrates that the training program places a strong emphasis on pedagogical training for students. The curriculum is not only designed based on content logic but also on professional competency logic, integrating three knowledge blocks: subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, cultural-social knowledge, ethics, responsibility, professional values, and the preschool environment.

The content of pedagogical training is distributed as follows:

- First year: Students conduct field visits to preschools for courses such as Introduction to Education, Child Psychology, Preschool Education, and practice hygiene and disease prevention for children in the classroom laboratory, and practice teaching at satellite preschools.
- Second year: Practice in courses such as Child Nutrition; regular pedagogical training 1; and organizing play activities in the classroom laboratory and practice teaching at satellite preschools.
- Third year: Practice in methods courses in the classroom laboratory and practice teaching at satellite preschools.
- Fourth year: Practice in methods courses in the classroom laboratory and practice teaching at satellite preschools, regular pedagogical training 2; and pedagogical internship.

2.2. Enhancing Pedagogical Training for Preschool Education Students through a Competency-Based Approach

Pedagogical training, also known as practical training, is the "practice of the professional work of teaching" or, in other words, the process of forming and developing core pedagogical competencies for students, contributing to the formation of qualities and abilities for future teachers [4]. At the First National Conference on Training and Learning in May 1950, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed, "Learning and doing must go hand in hand. Learning without doing is useless. Doing without learning is not smooth" [2]. Therefore, in the training of any profession, attention must be paid to the issue of

training and developing vocational skills for learners. Training pre-service teachers requires a scientific, flexible, and creative approach in the overall training program, especially in regular pedagogical training activities for students from the very first days of their enrollment. To do this well requires the participation of the entire school and each pre-service teacher. In this trend, the method of regular pedagogical training oriented towards the development of professional competencies for learners has been implemented by the Preschool Education Department, School of Education, Vinh University as follows:

2.2.1. Innovation in the Content of Regular Pedagogical Training

From the very first semester, preschool education students have been oriented toward their careers through the Introduction to Education course. An experiential learning approach has been applied, allowing students to familiarize themselves with the real-world environment of preschools. Specifically, students have participated in activities such as directly observing the education process for children, visiting facilities, and listening to reports on the school's activities and core teachers. Group learning has encouraged students to proactively seek and exchange professional knowledge.

The design and implementation of a specific pedagogical training program, closely linked to the program outcomes, is one of the top priorities of the Preschool Education Department at Vinh University. Starting from the second semester, students have participated in practical activities at preschools, including:

Observing and analyzing sample activities: Students are allowed to observe directly the educational and childcare activities at preschools to learn from the experiences and methods of on-site teachers.

Designing and implementing activities: Based on the theoretical knowledge they have learned and observation experiences, students independently design and organize educational activities for children, from which they draw lessons and improve themselves.

Feedback and evaluation: After each practice session, students, along with lecturers and supervising teachers, conduct discussions, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the activities, and make appropriate adjustments.

To ensure the systematic and effective nature of the training process, the Department has closely collaborated with the Practice Preschool to develop a well-structured training plan, including specific activities, timelines, and supervisors. Through this program, students not only master theoretical knowledge but also develop essential practical skills such as:

- Communication and interaction skills with children: Building close, trusting relationships with children, creating a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment.
- Organization of educational activities: Planning, preparing materials, and organizing activities scientifically, suitable for the age and characteristics of children.
- Observation and assessment skills: Identifying changes in children's behavior and attitudes to adjust educational methods promptly.
- Cooperation and teamwork skills: Working effectively with colleagues and supervising teachers. The close integration of theory and practice, along with the enthusiastic support of lecturers and supervising teachers, has helped students become more confident in practicing their profession, improving the quality of training at the Preschool Education Department.

Vinh University boasts a specialized laboratory system for each course, catering to the in-depth practical needs of students. Laboratories such as nutrition, child health, music, dance, child anatomy and physiology, and teaching methods provide optimal conditions for students to practice their skills.

A team of core preschool educators from preschools in Vinh City has been established. These educators, preferentially selected from accredited preschools with outstanding experience and achievements, are responsible for model teaching and supervising student internships. This team will be further trained to enhance their professional competence and pedagogical skills, especially in creatively applying pedagogical methods in teaching. Currently, the Preschool Education Department has 12 satellite preschools within the city, along with two Vinh University Practice Preschools. This network of schools supports and collaborates with the Department in all training activities throughout the curriculum.

To continuously improve the quality of education, the Preschool Education Department regularly sends lecturers to participate in training programs and conferences on preschool education organized by management agencies and prestigious universities. Additionally, hands-on experience in educational institutions helps lecturers stay updated on the latest curriculum, teaching materials, and educational methods, allowing them to adjust teaching content to meet practical requirements.

2.2.2. Innovations in Regular Pedagogical Training

Annually, at the training implementation conference, the university and the preschool Education Department conduct regular evaluations and updates of the pedagogical training content. This process focuses on ensuring the practicality and applicability of the training

content to meet the actual needs of the teaching profession.

Through practical training and internships, students not only consolidate their theoretical knowledge but also gain practical experience by participating directly in the teaching and learning process at preschools. Simultaneously, students have the opportunity to explore new knowledge and update advanced teaching methods.

According to the CDIO-based credit system regular university program (Decision No. 2033/QĐ-ĐHV dated September 10, 2021), the Preschool Education program allocates 4 credits to practical training (equivalent to 300 practical hours at preschools) and 8 credits to pedagogical internships (equivalent to 8 weeks).

To ensure comprehensiveness, the pedagogical training process is divided into two phases: phase 1 and phase 2, helping students gradually and more deeply access the necessary skills and knowledge to become preschool educators.

Regular Pedagogical Training 1: The objective of this course is to equip students with a system of knowledge and practical skills necessary to organize activities for nurturing, caring for, and playing with young children. Specifically, the course aims to: (1) Develop the ability to apply psychological, educational, and hygiene principles to the practical nurturing and care of children; (2) Enhance skills in designing, organizing, and evaluating the effectiveness of play activities to meet the comprehensive developmental needs of children at each age; (3) Cultivate a professional and responsible attitude towards caring for and educating children [6].

Regular Pedagogical Training 2: The objective of this course is to equip students with the ability to flexibly apply preschool education methods to actual teaching. Through this, students enhance their ability to plan, organize, and evaluate educational activities oriented towards the comprehensive development of children in five domains; cultivate observation, analysis, and problem-solving skills during educational activities; and build a solid foundation to become professional preschool educators with a passion and high sense of responsibility for their profession [5].

Within the curriculum, the two regular pedagogical training courses are evenly distributed over 15 weeks in the 3rd and 7th semesters, ensuring a balance between theoretical knowledge at the university and practical experience at preschools. Each week, students dedicate 10 class periods (equivalent to one workday at a preschool). Preschools accept groups of 10-20 students, and each group is divided into pairs to work together in a classroom. Rotating through different age groups

throughout the internship process helps students accumulate diverse and flexible experiences.

Vinh University prioritizes a practical, experiential approach, involving students in real-world activities at preschools. Applying a practice-based teaching method is an effective strategy in training preschool educators, especially when leveraging the preschool system as a practice environment. This model not only helps students apply theoretical knowledge to practice but also provides a solid foundation for developing pedagogical skills.

Practice preschools serve as crucial links in the teacher training system, not only as places to receive students but also as a practice community where preschools can share experiences and enhance training quality. Building a network among preschools will facilitate the exchange of students, materials, and joint activities.

Vinh University, with its system of two practice preschools, has created an excellent training model. The close cooperation between preschools and the Preschool Education Department has contributed to improving training effectiveness and enhancing students' practical skills. Additionally, leveraging the system of satellite preschools in Vinh City expands opportunities for practical experience, training, and internships, exposing students to various work environments.

This model allows students to be equipped with solid theoretical knowledge while having the opportunity to apply it immediately to practice, thereby gaining valuable lessons.

The success of current teacher training largely depends on the effectiveness of regular pedagogical training. Innovating the organization of regular pedagogical training activities is an urgent requirement to meet the increasing demand for the quality of preschool education human resources.

Activities to strengthen regular pedagogical training have had significant effects and meanings, serving as a valuable playground for students to improve their skills. Simultaneously, they cultivate professionalism and a passion for the profession – essential qualities for today's students.

Therefore, combining theory with practice through a system of practice preschools is an optimal solution for training preschool educators. This model not only ensures the quality of training but also contributes to enhancing the competitiveness of the future teaching force.

2.2.3. Innovation in the Learner-Centered Process of Regular Pedagogical Training

Regular pedagogical training is a continuous training process throughout the eight-semester program, aiming to prioritize students' self-study and self-training; the guidance, assessment, and evaluation by lecturers play a decisive role in promoting students' proactiveness. Lecturers are responsible for helping students form ideas, practice thinking methods, and teach students how to learn, how to self-study, and how to conduct independent research. All forms of regular pedagogical training are conducted at preschools to provide students with more time for practice, experience, and reality, enabling them to have sufficient capacity to solve practical problems and promptly respond to changes, increasingly high development requirements of society, and adapt to new trends in preschool education.

2.2.4. Innovation in the Assessment of Regular Pedagogical Training

The innovation in the assessment of regular pedagogical training has contributed to improving the effectiveness and quality of training at the Preschool Education Department. Specifically, the Department has developed a system of scientifically designed assessment standards, suitable for each course and training content. These standards serve as objective "measuring tools" that accurately reflect students' proficiency and practical skills in childcare and education activities. At the same time, they also guide and adjust the teaching and learning process, helping students achieve the best results.

To concretize the assessment process, the Department has developed detailed assessment forms for each activity, from care, hygiene, nutrition, and play activities to learning activities in each developmental domain of children. Before sending students to internships, the Department has organized in-depth training sessions for both supervising lecturers and students, ensuring the effectiveness of the training process. In addition, Vinh University has invested funds to support practice preschools, creating favorable conditions for students to practice their skills in a real-world environment.

3. CONCLUSION

The method of regular pedagogical training has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from a primarily theory-focused model to a "sufficient theory, emphasis on practice" model. This change has created a positive learning dynamic among students. While some students used to underestimate or passively approach this

subject, they now devote more attention and effort to skill development.

The establishment of a system of practice preschools and the implementation of a regular pedagogical training process, focusing on the steps of implementing childcare and education activities, has contributed to the synchronous formation of basic pedagogical skills for students. Specifically, students are equipped with skills such as ideation, planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating preschool education activities. Through various training forms such as regular practice in courses, regular training, and teaching practice, these skills are concretized and become criteria for assessing students' professional competence.

Intending to train high-quality preschool educators, the university has continuously innovated and invested in regular pedagogical training. As a result, graduates possess solid practical skills, meet the demands of employers, and are highly valued by society. The employment rate of graduates exceeds 90%, demonstrating the effectiveness of the new training model.

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