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THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PRACTICAL INTERNSHIP IN THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF FUTURE PEDAGOGICAL PERSONNEL

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Abstract

This article explores the fundamental role of practical training in the development of professional competencies among future educators. While theoretical knowledge provides the foundation for teaching, it is the practical application within real classroom environments that fosters the necessary skills for effective instruction, classroom management, and psychological adaptation. The study analyzes the integration of theory and practice, highlighting how pedagogical internships bridge the gap between academic learning and professional reality. The findings suggest that a structured, reflective, and continuous practical approach is essential for producing high-quality pedagogical personnel capable of meeting modern educational challenges.

Keywords: Pedagogical practice, professional competence, experiential learning, future educators, didactic skills, teacher training.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, the quality of a nation's education system is directly proportional to the quality of its teachers. The professional preparation of future pedagogical personnel is a complex process that involves the acquisition of deep subject knowledge, psychological understanding, and methodological expertise. However, the transition from a "student" to a "teacher"



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is often a “reality shock” for many graduates. This transition is facilitated primarily through practical training or pedagogical internships.

The core objective of teacher education is not merely to transmit information but to develop the ability to facilitate learning. Therefore, the significance of practice cannot be overstated; it serves as the laboratory where theoretical concepts are tested, refined, and internalized.

The concept of practical training is rooted in the theory of experiential learning. According to this framework, knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. For a student-teacher, the university classroom provides the “what” (content) and the “how” (methodology), but the school internship provides the “context”.

In the professional preparation of educators, practice serves three primary functions:

Cognitive Function: Reinforcing theoretical knowledge through observation and application.

Developmental Function: Shaping professional habits, speech, and pedagogical tact.

Diagnostic Function: Allowing students to evaluate their own suitability for the teaching profession.

One of the most significant challenges in pedagogical education is the “theory-practice gap”. Students may excel in educational psychology or didactics exams but struggle to manage a diverse classroom of thirty children.

Practical training addresses this by:

Developing Classroom Management Skills: Learning to maintain discipline, engage students, and handle conflict in real-time.



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Adapting Methodologies: Recognizing that a "perfect" lesson plan from a textbook must be flexible to meet the varying pace and interest levels of real pupils.

Socialization: Integrating into the professional community, understanding school documentation, and interacting with experienced mentors and parents.

Modern pedagogical training emphasizes the reflective practitioner model. During internships, future teachers do not just “do”; they must “analyze”.

The process can be represented by the following cycle:

Experience → Reflection → Conceptualization → Active Experimentation

By keeping pedagogical journals or participating in feedback sessions with supervisors, students learn to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This self-analysis is crucial for the formation of professional identity, as it encourages the student to move from imitation of their own teachers to the development of their unique teaching style.

The effectiveness of practical training can be measured through the development of specific competencies:

Communicative Competence: The ability to simplify complex ideas and use non-verbal cues effectively.

Technological Competence: Utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in a live teaching environment.

Psychological Readiness: Developing emotional intelligence and resilience against professional burnout.

Despite its importance, practical training often faces hurdles such as insufficient duration, lack of qualified mentorship at host schools, or a disconnect between university requirements and school realities.

To enhance the role of practice, the following strategies are recommended:



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1. Early Exposure: Introducing observation-based practice from the first year of study rather than waiting until the final years.
2. Mentorship Training: Providing specialized training for school teachers who act as mentors to ensure they provide constructive feedback.
3. Digital Integration: Incorporating virtual simulations or micro-teaching sessions before students enter actual classrooms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, practical training is the cornerstone of professional pedagogical preparation. It is the transformative stage where academic knowledge evolves into professional wisdom. Without a robust and well-organized system of practice, the training of future teachers remains incomplete and purely academic. To produce educators who are ready for the complexities of the 21st-century classroom, teacher education programs must prioritize experiential learning, ensuring that practice is not just an add-on, but the very heart of the curriculum.

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