

Practical Research on Cultivating Students' Game Creation Ability in the Vocational Early Childhood Care Major

Juan Wu*

Bengbu Industrial and Commercial Technical School, Bengbu 233000, Anhui, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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Abstract: Kindergarten Games is a core compulsory course for vocational early childhood care majors. At present, there are common problems in curriculum teaching, such as emphasizing theoretical lectures, neglecting creative and practical training, deviating from the actual needs of the kindergarten front line, and an insufficient proportion of practical training. Based on the standards for cultivating talents in early childhood care positions and closely related to the actual needs of kindergarten care positions, this article combines the characteristics of vocational school students' learning situations with the real care and education scenes in kindergartens, reconstructs the curriculum teaching content guided by job tasks, and relies on the collaborative education path between kindergartens and schools to construct a five step practical teaching mode of "research creation simulation implementation expansion". Through on-site observation in kindergartens, group program development, classroom real-life exercises, on-site implementation in kindergartens, and theme expansion creation and other teaching measures, it breaks down the barriers between theoretical learning and job practice, gradually exercises students' comprehensive creative abilities in observation and judgment, program design, and game implementation optimization, and effectively improves the practical level of game creation for students majoring in early childhood care to adapt to the early childhood education industry.

Keywords: Kindergarten games; Game creation; Campus school cooperation; Vocational school; Early childhood care

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1. Question raised

With the standardized development of preschool education, kindergartens have continuously improved the comprehensive literacy requirements for childcare professionals^[1]. Being able to independently design, create, and organize games for eligible children has become an essential core skill for childcare positions. The vocational school's early childhood care major aims to train composite frontline caregivers, and the "Kindergarten Games" course plays a key role in cultivating students' abilities in game design and creation. Kindergarten games are divided into creative games and rule games. Rule games include three categories: sports, intelligence, and music. They have clear goals, fit the developmental laws of young children, and are suitable for daily educational activities. They are also the most frequently used game type by childcare

practitioners. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring the cultivation of rule game creation ability for vocational school students ^[2].

Currently, most vocational schools' early childhood care majors fail to keep up with the changes in kindergarten positions in terms of curriculum design, textbook selection, and classroom implementation during the teaching of "Kindergarten Games". There is a disconnect between talent cultivation and industry standards for actual employment. After graduation, students generally have shortcomings such as a lack of creative thinking, an inability to adjust game plans according to the age of young children, and weak practical abilities in implementation ^[3]. In this context, based on the real needs of early childhood education positions, optimizing the curriculum implementation path, improving the game creation and training system, and exploring teaching implementation plans that are suitable for vocational school students have become important measures to optimize the quality of talent cultivation in early childhood care.

2. The current shortcomings of game courses in vocational preschool care majors

2.1. Teaching focuses on theoretical indoctrination and weakens the cultivation of creative skills

Through field research in multiple vocational colleges in the region, it was found that most teachers focus on explaining theoretical knowledge points such as game concepts, classifications, and educational values, and take theoretical memorization as the main assessment content in the classroom, lacking guidance on creative thinking and practical exercises. The curriculum teaching is disconnected from the connection between knowledge and application. Although students are familiar with the theoretical knowledge in textbooks, it is difficult for them to conceive game content based on the physical and mental development characteristics of young children ^[4]. The long-term emphasis on theoretical teaching mode has resulted in a lack of concrete understanding of children's game behavior, making it difficult for students to create games according to real educational scenarios, leading to the dilemma of theoretical knowledge not being able to be transformed into practical skills in education.

2.2. The content of the textbook focuses on the knowledge system and deviates from the practical needs of the kindergarten for education and care

The general textbooks used in the course are arranged with subject knowledge logic as the main line, and the content is written in a modular structure based on concepts, characteristics, and principles. Various games are broken down into isolated knowledge points, detached from the real activity scenes of kindergarten. The textbook lacks examples of local folk games and garden-style games, as well as practical cases that are differentiated and created for children in small, medium, and large classes. Students relying on textbooks for learning can only master standardization theory, without understanding the real pain points of game development in kindergarten daily activities. The content learned in school is difficult to meet the needs of frontline care and education, and lacks a professional quality cultivation carrier that cares for children and designs games based on their development ^[5].

2.3. The classroom teaching method is single in form, and there is a lack of practical training and operational links

Daily teaching mainly relies on teacher lectures and case video demonstrations, with students passively receiving knowledge and lacking practical training activities such as group discussions, hands-on design, and real-life trials. Students lack the opportunity to observe children's interests and behavior habits up close in kindergarten, and cannot accurately grasp the activity preferences of children of different age groups. The games designed are detached from children's actual acceptance ability. The lack of practical and polished teaching models has led to students' rigid creative thinking, serious homogenization of game plans, low feasibility of implementation, and difficulty in meeting the diverse needs of kindergarten game activities.

3. Curriculum construction path for cultivating game creation ability in the early childhood care major

3.1. Based on the understanding of the learning situation, accurately anchor the starting point of teaching

The course is offered in the second year of the early childhood care major, combining online learning platform data, daily classroom observations, post-class interviews, and phased homework results to sort out the learning situation comprehensively:

In terms of knowledge reserve, after one year of professional learning, students have mastered the basic content of developmental psychology and early childhood education for preschool children, and have a preliminary understanding of the physiological and psychological development characteristics of children of different ages, possessing the basic theoretical reserve for game creation^[6]. From the perspective of practical shortcomings, students have a limited frequency of internships in kindergartens, lack practical experience in frontline childcare, have insufficient ability to translate theory into practice, and have not participated in game creation projects based on real kindergarten tasks. In terms of student learning characteristics, students have a strong willingness to participate in the classroom, but their foundation in cultural courses varies greatly. More than half of the students have weak abilities in logical organization and written plan writing, and have difficulty understanding abstract theories. Teaching methods such as scenario-based teaching, task-driven teaching, and group collaboration are preferred to reduce learning barriers and stimulate creativity.

3.2. Based on the tasks of the kindergarten position, reconstruct the curriculum content and educational objectives

Deepen the cooperation mechanism between kindergartens and schools, regularly connect and cooperate with public and private kindergartens, collect real work tasks of kindergarten teachers, and make “creating sports, intelligence, and music rules and games for different age groups” the core project task of the curriculum. Synchronize the exploration of internal educational elements in the curriculum, integrating traditional cultural infiltration and humanistic care for young children into the entire curriculum^[7]. Specifically, it is manifested in two aspects: firstly, in terms of professional skill objectives, students are proficient in the logic of creating three types of rule games, able to independently write complete game plans based on the developmental differences of children in small, medium, and large classes, possess practical abilities to organize, debug, and optimize games on site, and establish a scientific concept of early childhood game education. Secondly, in terms of professional ethics goals, relying on the creation and training of traditional folk games, we will deeply explore the excellent traditional Chinese folk culture and cultivate students’ patriotism; Based on the perspective of young children in game design, cultivate the professional character of caring for children and patiently studying, and establish a scientific view of the childcare profession.

3.3. Establish a four-stage teaching process and implement game creation training in layers

Adopting a four-stage teaching process, including field research, group creation, classroom trials, optimization of campus implementation, and theme transfer expansion, class hours are allocated in modules, and project tasks are linked to the entire course learning to enhance students’ creative abilities [8] gradually.

Module 1: Conduct on-site research to solidify the foundation of pre-creation. Set up 2 class hours, led by the teaching teacher to enter the cooperative kindergarten, observe the normalization process of sports, intelligence, and music games in different classes, record the performance of children’s activities and the advantages and disadvantages of existing games; The classroom focuses on sorting out research data, systematically teaching the basic theories of game creation based on three types of rules, clarifying the requirements of the park’s tasks, and allowing students to find the direction of creation based on real scenarios.

Module 2: Group design, initial draft polishing to form a plan. Allocate 2 class hours for a single type of game, divide into study groups of 4-6 people, and write a preliminary plan based on research results and course theory to form the first

generation game plan. Teachers will evaluate the details of the plan group by group, and provide revision suggestions from four dimensions: age suitability, safety, fun, and educational value. After group discussions and revisions, the second version of the optimization plan will be formed.

Module 3: Classroom simulation+practical operation in the kindergarten, iteratively improving the game plan. Assign 3 class hours for a single type of game. Firstly, create a simulated kindergarten activity scene in the classroom, and each group will demonstrate their self-developed game on site. During the practical operation, problems such as rule loopholes, unreasonable props, and difficulty mismatch will be discovered, and immediate rectification will be carried out to form the third version of the plan; Subsequently, we will go to the cooperative kindergarten to carry out real-life implementation, fully implement the game for the corresponding class of children, and simultaneously fill out the observation record form for children's activities. We will collect on-site improvement suggestions from the teacher in charge and the principal, and combine them with the actual feedback of children's play for secondary optimization, polishing, and forming the final landing version of the fourth mature plan.

Module 4: Theme expansion and creation, realizing knowledge transfer and application. Set up 2 class hours, arrange expansion tasks in combination with the theme of International Children's Day, Mid Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and other festivals, require students to select age groups independently, create special music or sports games around festival characteristics, complete scheme design and small scale trial play in the park, rely on new projects to consolidate creation skills, and achieve the ability to draw inferences from one example to another. The entire process gradually extends from campus classrooms to real kindergarten scenarios, where students continuously improve their design ideas through a cycle of initial draft writing, multiple revisions, and on-site trial and error, achieving a step-by-step improvement in creative ability.

3.4. Building a diversified evaluation system with multi-party linkage

Breaking the single teacher's final exam assessment model, establishing a multi-party, comprehensive evaluation mechanism throughout the entire process, integrating process data, multi-party feedback, and project results as three major assessment dimensions. Firstly, the evaluation subjects should be diversified. The evaluators include the teaching teacher, group peers, kindergarten lead teacher, kindergarten principal, and children participating in the game, and summarize feedback from multiple parties as the basis for grading the student program. Secondly, the entire process of assessment content. Using online teaching platforms to record the entire process data of student research attendance, group participation in division of labor, number of initial draft revisions, classroom simulation performance, and on-site practical results, quantifying daily academic performance, and finally, the final project-based assessment. Abandoning paper-based closed-book exams, the final assessment will be based on independently completing a complete game creation plan for the appropriate age group and demonstrating practical experience in the park. The final score will be evaluated based on the quality of the written plan and the on-site implementation effect. Relying on multiple evaluations forces students to pay attention to every step of practical training, ensuring the effective implementation of creative and creative training^[9].

4. Conclusion

The ability to create games is a core competency for students majoring in early childhood care in vocational schools. In response to the current problem of the "Kindergarten Games" curriculum emphasizing theory over practical operation and deviating from industry needs, based on the idea of collaborative education between kindergartens and schools, guided by real work tasks in kindergartens, and relying on a four-stage layered practical training teaching model, it connects the entire chain of teaching from theoretical learning, program conception, to on-site optimization. Through on-site research in the kindergarten, group collaboration, layered exercises inside and outside of class, and diverse comprehensive evaluations, we have effectively filled the gaps in traditional curriculum training, helping vocational school students break free from the limitations of textbooks and design games that are suitable for the growth patterns of young children^[10]. Continuing

to deepen the cooperation between kindergarten and school in sustainable teaching, continuously updating the case library of kindergarten-based creation, continuously optimizing curriculum content in combination with new developments in the preschool education industry, steadily improving the quality of talent cultivation in early childhood care, and providing high-quality childcare talents with strong practical abilities for the preschool industry.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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