

Article

Research on the Cultivation of Professional Ethics for Pre-school Education Majors in Universities under the Concept of Fostering Virtue through Education

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Abstract: Under the guidance of the concept of fostering virtue through education, the cultivation of professional ethics for pre-school education majors in universities holds significant practical importance. This paper analyzes the existing problems in the cultivation of professional ethics for pre-school education majors, focusing on the disconnection between curriculum design, talent training programs and teaching practices, as well as issues like insufficient integration of professional ethics education. Combining the concept of fostering virtue through education, this paper proposes specific pathways to enhance the effectiveness of professional ethics education, aiming to provide some reference for cultivating pre-school education majors with noble professional ethics.

Keywords: fostering virtue through education; pre-school education majors; professional ethics

1. The Connotation of the Concept of Fostering Virtue through Education in the Cultivation of Professional Ethics for University Teacher-Training Students

Implementing the task of fostering virtue through education is a key starting point for promoting the quality improvement of higher education, relating to high-quality development. From the perspective of universities implementing fostering virtue through education, "who to cultivate, how to cultivate, and for whom to cultivate" are important issues in contemporary education, possessing distinct characteristics of the times. On the one hand, "who to cultivate" is the core question of education. In the context of the new era, universities should, based on following national unified requirements, cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents with a sense of dedication and craftsmanship spirit; on the other hand, regarding "how to cultivate," universities demonstrate a rich theoretical connotation when implementing the task of fostering virtue through education. In the process of fostering virtue through education, universities should simultaneously focus on the dual objectives of social progress and the comprehensive development of individuals [1]. From a macro perspective, universities need to cultivate high-quality talents for the sustained and healthy development of society and the enhancement of national competitiveness according to national strategic needs; from a micro perspective, universities should pay attention to the personal growth needs of students, promoting the improvement of their overall quality [2].

2. The Strategic Significance of Cultivating Professional Ethics in the New Era

The cultivation of professional ethics for pre-school education majors is not merely a requirement for academic graduation, but a strategic necessity for the high-quality development of early childhood education. First, it is the fundamental guarantee for the "Fostering Virtue through Education" (Lide Shuren) task. As the first mentors for children,

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the ethical standards of pre-school teachers directly influence the formation of children's worldviews and values. Second, it serves as an essential tool for risk prevention in the industry. In light of increasing social attention toward teacher conduct, a solid ethical foundation helps students establish legal awareness and self-discipline before entering the workplace. Finally, professional ethics education provides an internal drive for career longevity. Students with high ethical standards are more likely to find professional fulfillment, which effectively mitigates career burnout and maintains long-term commitment to the educational cause.

3. Problems in the Cultivation of Professional Ethics for University Pre-school Education Majors

3.1. Insufficient Setting and Implementation of Professional Ethics Courses

Currently, many universities have not fully recognized the core role of professional ethics in shaping the values of pre-school education majors. In terms of curriculum design, courses involving professional ethics are relatively scarce. Many universities offer only limited professional ethics courses within their academic structure, and the content of these courses often does not match the actual needs of pre-school education majors. Furthermore, the value orientation of pre-school education faculty and management also affects students' understanding of professional ethics, leading them to focus more on the learning of professional skills while neglecting the importance of professional ethics education. Simultaneously, professional ethics content is rarely involved in extracurricular activities and practical teaching. Students mainly rely on limited theoretical courses to understand professional ethics, lacking opportunities to apply the learned theories to practical work, thereby affecting the practical effectiveness of professional ethics education.

3.2. Mismatch between Talent Training Programs and Course Practice

The training objective of the pre-school education major is to cultivate comprehensively developed teacher-training students. However, in the teaching process, course content and talent training programs fail to connect effectively. Students lack sufficient understanding of the training programs and course objectives, making it difficult for them to clarify their learning direction during the learning process. Teachers often fail to clearly explain the course objectives and significance at the beginning of a course, making it difficult for students to understand the practical application value of each subject. Additionally, professional teachers' research and analysis of talent training programs are also insufficient. This leads to professional ethics education being merely arranged as a basic course in a simplistic manner, failing to provide targeted teaching based on the actual needs of pre-school education majors, thereby reducing the practical effectiveness of professional ethics education.

3.3. Insufficient Penetration of Professional Ethics Education and Lack of Student Initiative

In the pre-school education major, the integration of professional ethics education mainly relies on public courses. However, due to public course teachers' insufficient understanding of the students' majors, the targeting of these courses is poor, easily leading to student misunderstandings. At the same time, pre-school education teachers often overemphasize the teaching of professional courses, neglecting the expansion of professional ethics education. The limitations of course time and content restrict the space for professional ethics education [3]. Many students find professional ethics courses boring, lacking practical application, leading to a lack of concentration in class, which affects the educational effectiveness. Moreover, the cultural quality of many university students is relatively low, and their self-discipline and active learning abilities are weak. Therefore, they subjectively neglect the study of professional ethics, further affecting the improvement of their professional ethics literacy.

4. The Synergistic Mechanism of "Psychology + Ideological and Political Education" and Red Culture

4.1. Spiritual Guidance through Red Culture

Red Culture, emphasizing values such as dedication, selflessness, and service, provides a meaningful foundation for cultivating professional ethics. By integrating local historical narratives and inspiring stories of exemplary figures into the curriculum, abstract ethical principles can be translated into concrete and relatable experiences for students. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility, care, and commitment in the context of professional practice, encouraging students to embody ethical ideals in their interactions with young children.

In practical terms, incorporating Red Culture into educational programs allows students to engage with real-life examples of perseverance, ethical decision-making, and service-oriented behavior. Through guided reflections, classroom discussions, and role-playing exercises based on historical narratives, students can connect theoretical concepts with everyday practice, developing empathy, moral judgment, and a professional attitude grounded in integrity. This combination of historical perspective and ethical reflection helps students internalize professional values, reinforcing a spirit of commitment and conscientiousness that they carry into their future careers.

Overall, leveraging Red Culture as a source of spiritual guidance strengthens the synergy between psychological education and ideological instruction. It provides students with a structured framework for understanding ethical responsibilities, enhances moral reasoning, and cultivates professional qualities essential for the holistic development of educators. By embedding these narratives throughout training programs, universities can support the growth of ethically aware, reflective, and socially responsible professionals.

4.2. Methodological Support from Psychological Education

While ideological education provides the guiding principles and ethical direction, psychological education plays a crucial role in fostering the internalization of professional ethics. By applying cognitive-behavioral approaches and other evidence-based psychological frameworks, universities can support students in managing uncertainties and concerns related to their future career paths and anticipated professional responsibilities. Developing strategies to cope with stress, anxiety, and performance pressure ensures that ethical behavior becomes an intrinsic choice rather than merely a set of externally imposed rules.

Practical implementation of psychological education includes structured workshops, guided reflection exercises, and mentoring programs that help students recognize the connection between personal values, emotional regulation, and professional conduct. For instance, students can learn to identify potential stress triggers in early childhood education settings and practice constructive problem-solving and emotional self-regulation. Such interventions cultivate resilience, promote ethical decision-making, and reduce the likelihood of maladaptive behaviors in demanding work environments.

Moreover, psychological education encourages the development of self-awareness and moral reasoning, enabling students to make informed and conscientious decisions when facing ethical dilemmas. By embedding these practices into curricula and internship experiences, universities ensure that students' commitment to professional ethics is sustained over time, forming the foundation for lifelong ethical engagement and reflective practice. This integration strengthens the overall education model, linking theoretical understanding with personal and professional growth, and prepares students to navigate complex interpersonal and organizational situations with integrity and confidence.

4.3. The Synergistic Effect of the Integrated Model

The integration of psychological education with ideological guidance establishes a comprehensive "Value-Emotion-Action" pathway for the cultivation of professional ethics. In this framework, Red Culture provides a source of moral inspiration and ethical values (Value), psychological guidance supports emotional regulation and mental stability (Emotion), and professional ethics translate these internalized values into concrete professional behavior (Action). By combining these dimensions, universities can help pre-school education students develop both the intrinsic compassion and ethical sensitivity expected of teachers, as well as the resilience and adaptability required to navigate the challenges of professional practice. This multi-layered approach not only fosters moral awareness and emotional balance but also ensures that students are equipped to apply ethical principles consistently in real-world educational settings, ultimately promoting the holistic development of both character and professional competence.

5. Exploration of Pathways for Cultivating Professional Ethics of University Pre-school Education Majors under the Concept of Fostering Virtue through Education

5.1. University Level

In the process of cultivating the professional ethics of pre-school education majors, many universities have begun to emphasize the combination of practice and theory, exploring ways to optimize professional ethics education. For example, some universities offer specialized professional ethics courses, combining them with the characteristics of pre-school education to deeply discuss the impact of teacher professional ethics on children's education and development. For instance, some schools have set up a "Pre-school Education Worker Ethics" module in their curriculum, explaining how to handle relationships with parents, colleagues, and society, and how to embody a sense of responsibility and dedication in educational work. Furthermore, institutions also organize professional ethics internships for students through cooperation with kindergartens and early education institutions, enhancing their cognition and understanding of professional ethics. For example, some schools arrange for students to participate in volunteer activities in kindergartens and guide students to reflect on the embodiment of professional ethics in practical work during the process, such as how to interact with children, how to collaborate within a team, and how to face the needs and expectations of children and parents. These practical activities not only improve students' moral literacy but also help them better adapt to future job positions.

5.2. Teacher Level

In the talent cultivation process for pre-school education majors, the moral literacy and positive guidance ability of pre-school education teachers play a crucial role in student growth. First, opportunities for teacher learning and training should be significantly increased to help teachers encounter practical problems from the teaching frontline and absorb the latest teaching concepts. For example, regularly organizing teachers to visit and learn in educationally advanced regions, participate in educational seminars, and comprehend the importance of professional ethics education, thereby enabling them to exert greater initiative and creativity in teaching. Additionally, care for teachers should be strengthened to enhance their professional well-being. By providing professional training and establishing incentive mechanisms, such as setting up an "Outstanding Teacher Ethics Award," teachers are motivated to pursue excellence and the work environment is improved. Simultaneously, changing teaching philosophies is also crucial. Pre-school education majors are active in thinking and have outstanding talents. Teachers should adopt a caring attitude to understand students, transform traditional teaching methods, and enhance students' professional ethics literacy through immersive experiences and task-driven approaches. For example, in the "Teacher Professional Ethics" course, adopting an interactive learning method led by students and guided by teachers

allows students to internalize professional ethics in practice, truly achieving the unity of theory and practice.

5.3. Student Level

Students are the core subjects of professional ethics education. Only by establishing correct concepts of professional ethics can pre-school education students be fully prepared for their future careers, achieving the unity of self-development and social responsibility. First, foster subjective initiative. In terms of self-education, the lack of professional ethics among many current students is related to a lack of active learning awareness. To address this, classroom interaction and case analysis can be enhanced to help students more clearly understand the importance of professional ethics. Second, enhance students' professional identity [4]. Due to the imbalance between the income of pre-school educators and their work pressure, students sometimes feel confused about pursuing an education career. By organizing students to visit excellent kindergartens and participate in volunteer service and other practical activities, they can personally experience the social significance and value of the teaching profession. For example, in an internship program at a certain university, students deeply realized the importance of the educational cause for children's growth during their kindergarten internship, which greatly enhanced their professional identity. Third, cultivate good study habits and self-management abilities. Although students in vocational colleges generally have weaker self-discipline, they possess strong plasticity. Through methods such as formulating study plans, regular reflection, and group discussions, pre-school education majors can gradually develop self-management awareness.

6. Construction of the Evaluation and Guarantee System for Professional Ethics

A sustainable model of pre-school education requires the establishment of a systematic and comprehensive evaluation and guarantee framework to ensure that professional ethics education achieves measurable and lasting effects. Such a framework not only assesses students' knowledge and understanding of ethical principles but also promotes ongoing self-reflection, personal development, and the consistent application of ethical standards in daily professional practice. By embedding these elements into the educational process, universities can create a structured pathway for students to develop both ethical awareness and practical professional competence, laying the foundation for responsible and reflective teaching in early childhood settings.

6.1. Multi-dimensional Evaluation System

Universities should move beyond traditional assessment methods, such as written examinations, and implement a multi-dimensional evaluation system that captures various aspects of ethical development. This approach can include multiple complementary strategies, such as peer evaluations, detailed feedback from internship mentors, and structured self-reflection logs maintained by students throughout their studies. By developing a dynamic "Professional Ethics Archive" for each student, institutions can track ethical awareness and professional conduct continuously from the first year through to graduation. Such longitudinal monitoring allows both educators and students to gain a comprehensive understanding of ethical growth, highlighting areas of proficiency as well as aspects requiring additional attention.

In addition, a multi-dimensional system encourages active engagement with ethical principles rather than passive memorization. By incorporating real-world scenarios, reflective exercises, and interactive feedback mechanisms, students are prompted to internalize professional ethics as a conscious choice that guides their behavior in practical settings. This layered evaluation not only strengthens moral reasoning and decision-making skills but also cultivates habits of self-assessment and continuous improvement, ultimately fostering a generation of educators who can consistently integrate ethical

considerations into their professional practice while maintaining a balanced and responsible approach to challenges encountered in the early childhood education environment.

6.2. University-Kindergarten Collaborative Guarantee

An effective guarantee mechanism requires the establishment of a structured and institutionalized collaboration between universities and partner kindergartens. Within this framework, experienced educators and practitioners from kindergartens can serve as "Ethical Mentors," providing students with rich, real-world case studies related to teacher-parent communication, classroom management, and professional ethical decision-making. By observing and participating in these authentic scenarios, students gain the opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications, allowing them to internalize professional ethics in tangible contexts rather than treating ethical principles as abstract concepts.

During internship periods, this cooperative model creates a supportive and immersive learning environment. Students are encouraged to actively engage with ethical dilemmas, reflect on their own responses, and practice applying theoretical principles to the challenges encountered in daily teaching. Through guided observation, mentorship, and hands-on experience, students develop a habit of continuous ethical reflection and professional responsibility, enhancing their capacity to make informed and conscientious decisions in early childhood education settings.

Formalizing such university-kindergarten collaboration ensures that professional ethics education extends beyond classroom instruction and becomes an integral part of experiential learning. By providing structured support, regular feedback, and mentoring opportunities, this mechanism helps students progressively develop a coherent ethical framework that informs their behavior, strengthens their moral reasoning, and reinforces the integration of ethical standards into professional practice.

Overall, when combined with a comprehensive multi-dimensional evaluation system, university-kindergarten collaborative mechanisms create a continuous, reinforced structure for monitoring, guiding, and promoting students' ethical development. This dual approach not only improves the quality of professional ethics education but also fosters a culture of reflective practice, accountability, and professional integrity, equipping future educators with both the knowledge and the practical skills necessary to uphold high ethical standards in their teaching careers.

7. Conclusion

University pre-school education majors carry the important responsibility of preparing the next generation of kindergarten teachers. The cultivation of professional ethics is central to the effectiveness and quality of their teaching work, serving as the foundation for their professional conduct and decision-making. Universities should adhere to the principle of fostering virtue through education, systematically and comprehensively promoting professional ethics education throughout the teacher-training process.

By focusing on moral development, universities can help students establish sound educational values, develop empathy and responsibility, and internalize the principles of professional conduct. This includes nurturing qualities such as integrity, fairness, patience, and dedication, which are essential for creating a positive learning environment for young children. Professional ethics education should also emphasize the development of practical skills in ethical reasoning, problem-solving in complex classroom situations, and reflective practice, ensuring that students are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying ethical principles in real-world teaching scenarios.

Moreover, professional ethics education for pre-school education majors should continuously evolve to reflect contemporary educational needs. It should strengthen

students' ideological and moral development, enhance their critical thinking, and support the balanced growth of their knowledge, abilities, and character. By integrating ethical cultivation with practical training, universities can ensure that future kindergarten teachers emerge as well-rounded professionals, equipped with the moral compass, professional competence, and reflective capacity necessary to foster the holistic development of young learners and contribute positively to the educational community.

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