

## Article

# Integrating the Spirit of Educators into the Curriculum System for Rural-oriented Teacher Trainees: Value, Dilemma, and Breakthrough Path

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**Abstract:** Rural directional teacher trainees serve as the core backbone of rural education revitalization, and their spiritual quality alongside their professional ability is directly related to the high-quality development of rural education systems. Integrating the foundational spirit of educators into the curriculum system of rural directional teacher trainees represents an inevitable choice for implementing the strategic goal of building strong teachers with a strong soul. Furthermore, it serves as an effective pedagogical path to solve the persistent dilemma of rural teachers being unable to adapt, unable to remain in their posts, and unable to teach effectively in remote areas. Based on the six core connotations of the educator spirit, and in conjunction with the practical needs of contemporary rural education and the rapid development trend of smart education technologies, this paper comprehensively expounds the value implications of integrating this spirit into the modern curriculum system. It critically analyzes current practical dilemmas, including ideological deviation, fragmented instructional content, rigid teaching methods, and single-dimensional evaluation metrics. To address these challenges, this study proposes a comprehensive breakthrough path utilizing a concept-content-method-evaluation four-in-one approach. By restructuring the educational framework, this research provides robust theoretical support and actionable practical guidance for cultivating rural educator-type teachers equipped with deep local sentiment, advanced pedagogical skills, and enduring professional competence.

**Keywords:** educator spirit; rural education; curriculum system; teacher training; smart education

## 1. Introduction

The essence of the spirit of educators encompasses ideals and beliefs centered on selflessness and national service, moral integrity exemplified through actions and words, educational wisdom that enlightens and nurtures, personalized teaching approaches, a diligent pursuit of truth and innovation, a benevolent passion for teaching and student care, and a cultural mission to promote global understanding. The 2024 directive from the central authorities emphasizes that by 2035, this spirit should be a conscious pursuit among teachers. The spirit of educators, as highlighted by national leadership, addresses fundamental questions in teacher education: the type of teachers to cultivate, the methods of cultivation, and the beneficiaries of this cultivation. It is essential for the development of a high-quality teaching workforce. In January 2025, a directive was issued to integrate this spirit throughout teacher training, influencing classroom teaching, research, and social practice [1]. Rooted in traditional Chinese culture, this spirit is a legacy of educational pioneers, providing a value framework, behavioral model, and spiritual support for teacher ethics and style. It guides teachers to internalize these values, transforming them into conscious actions, thus driving the improvement of moral and spiritual standards in the teaching profession.

Received: 18 February 2026

Revised: 25 March 2026

Accepted: 05 April 2026

Published: 12 April 2026



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In rural teacher development, challenges such as reluctance to work in rural areas, retention issues, and teaching quality persist. The core issue is the lack of educational sentiment among rural teachers. Training programs aimed at rural teachers are crucial for developing a workforce that is committed, stable, and effective. However, the curriculum for these trainees lacks a cohesive framework that incorporates the spirit of educators, often resulting in superficial and imbalanced approaches. Spiritual cultivation is often limited to formal activities and fragmented case studies, without deep integration into curriculum goals and content, leading to a focus on form over effectiveness. Additionally, teacher training programs often lack courses that support teacher ethics and practical training, with many focusing primarily on technical teaching skills [2]. This results in graduates who, despite having basic teaching abilities, lack immersion in ideals, local sentiments, and a long-term commitment to rural education. The national education strategy emphasizes the integration of educator spirit into teacher education as a core requirement, highlighting its importance for building a high-quality rural education system and supporting broader educational and rural revitalization strategies.

Existing research has examined the integration of educator spirit into teacher education from various angles. Some studies suggest that educator spirit can be incorporated into courses as explicit, implicit, and practical knowledge. Others discuss the value and practical logic of integrating this spirit into pre-service teacher education. However, there is a gap in research regarding the integration of smart education technology for rural-oriented teacher trainees. This paper explores the value, challenges, and integration paths of incorporating educator spirit into the curriculum for these trainees, offering a new perspective on their development [3].

## **2. The Value Implication of Integrating the Spirit of Educators into the Curriculum System for Rural-oriented Teacher Education Students**

### *2.1. Foster a firm belief in rural education and strengthen the spiritual resolve to take root in the local soil*

The root cause of the loss of rural teachers lies in their spiritual detachment [4]. Some teachers, lacking a deep-seated value identification with rural education, cannot resist the challenges of reality and leave. The idealistic belief of having a great heart and sincerely serving the country in the spirit of educators is the spiritual key to solving this problem, which can shape a solid professional spirit coordinate for rural-oriented normal students. Historically, modern rural educators have interpreted the characteristic of taking root in the local soil through practical actions. One educator believed that rural education was an important way to alleviate social crises and transform rural education; another proposed the concept of life is education and founded a school with the ambition of recruiting one million comrades, creating one million schools, and transforming one million villages to engage in rural education reform; another put down his urban glasses and put on his farmer glasses to carry out civilian education experiments in a county in Hebei Province; another founded a rural normal school, advocating that rural teachers become mentors and leaders who irrigate farmers' knowledge, improve farmers' lives, and develop rural social undertakings. The practices of these sages provide spiritual models for contemporary normal students. From a practical perspective, the deeds of an educator who founded a girls' high school and another who has been teaching in a mountainous teaching point for 36 years illustrate that firm spiritual beliefs play a crucial supporting role in long-term commitment to rural teaching platforms. Integrating the above historical practices and realistic examples into the curriculum through special lectures, case discussions, and other methods can guide normal students to fully understand the strategic significance of rural education in blocking the intergenerational transmission of poverty, inheriting local culture, and promoting comprehensive rural revitalization. This allows them to link their personal career choices with national strategic needs, gradually forming a professional identity of taking the countryside as home and education as a career, using a deep sense of rural education to alleviate the practical impact of harsh

environments, and thus building a strong spiritual determination to resist job burnout and take root in the countryside for the long term.

*2.2. Improve the educational function of courses and promote the coordinated development of both professional skills and moral cultivation*

The traditional training of teacher education students often emphasizes teaching skills while neglecting the guidance of values and spiritual cultivation. This results in students who possess basic teaching abilities but lack the intrinsic motivation and comprehensive qualities needed to thrive in rural areas. The spirit of an educator represents the highest level of teacher professionalism, combining value guidance with practical application. Integrating this spirit into the curriculum development of subject teacher education is crucial for enhancing the educational function of the curriculum and promoting the simultaneous development of spiritual qualities and professional abilities. To cultivate moral sentiments such as "setting an example for scholars and serving as a model for society," courses like "Teacher Ethics" and "Rural Teacher Morality Cultivation" should be offered [5]. These courses explore the dedication spirit of educators and the professional ideal of service, helping teacher education students establish good teacher ethics and recognize the public role and moral leadership responsibility of rural teachers as community leaders. Regarding the inheritance of educational wisdom for "enlightening the mind and nurturing the heart, and teaching students according to their aptitudes," relevant courses should be offered to achieve this educational goal. Given the emotional deprivation and uneven learning foundations of left-behind children in rural areas, courses such as "Rural Differentiated Teaching Strategies" and "Psychological Counseling for Left-behind Children" should be incorporated into subject teaching theory and educational psychology courses. Cases like transforming a cornfield into a classroom and leading rural children in writing poetry should be integrated to enhance the teaching ability of teacher education students to precisely match the needs of rural students. In terms of cultivating the attitude of "diligent study, perseverance, truth-seeking, and innovation," courses like "Rural Education Research Methods" and "Lifelong Learning and Professional Development" should be offered to encourage teacher education students to engage in local curriculum development, rural education surveys, and other activities, fostering their potential to continuously learn and innovate in resource-scarce rural environments. This integrated model completes the educational loop of "spiritual guidance-ability improvement-practical innovation," strengthening both the professional skill foundation and spiritual qualities of teacher education students, aligning with the direction of rural teacher education that integrates the roles of a "classroom teacher" and a "mentor."

*2.3. Respond to the needs of rural education and enhance the practical effectiveness of precise education*

There is still a significant gap between the soft and hard environments of rural schools, especially those in remote areas, and those of urban schools. The reality of uneven knowledge bases among students, scarce teaching resources, and a lack of emotional support for left-behind children poses higher demands on teachers' practical wisdom and comprehensive response capabilities. The spirit of educators is the core spiritual force in the field of education, which constructs a complete and rich spiritual world for teacher trainees and provides solid internal support and value guidance. The educational wisdom of "enlightening the mind and nourishing the heart, teaching students according to their aptitudes" and the diligent and practical attitude of "studying hard and pursuing truth and innovation" embodied in the spirit of educators are highly aligned with the practical needs of rural education, providing core guidance for enhancing the precision of teacher trainees' educational abilities. Given the reality that rural students have varying levels of knowledge, we can draw on Confucius' educational concept of "teaching without discrimination" and practical experience of "educating through teaching and cultural activities", and add topics such as "rural stratified teaching design" and "differentiated counseling strategies" to the curriculum. By simulating rural classroom situations and

analyzing multi-disciplinary stratified teaching cases, teacher trainees can be trained to teach students at different levels. In response to the scarcity of teaching resources in rural areas, we can follow the concept of "life is education" and learn from the strategy of using rural life materials to develop teaching resources. At the same time, we can absorb efficient teaching methods of "precise explanation and extensive practice", and add a practical training section of "local resource development and teaching transformation" to the curriculum. This encourages teacher trainees to explore local resources such as rural natural scenery, folk customs, and agricultural production, and transform them into concrete teaching materials, optimizing their ability to integrate and innovate resources. Given the reality that left-behind children in rural areas lack emotional companionship and have obvious psychological needs, relying on the benevolent heart of "enjoying teaching and loving students, willing to dedicate oneself" embodied in the spirit of educators, we can incorporate mental health education and emotional care skills into the curriculum. Through case discussions on psychological counseling for left-behind children and simulated home-school communication scenarios, teacher trainees can strengthen their emotional perception and empathy levels, and learn how to accurately respond to students' emotional needs. By deeply integrating the spirit of educators with the specific needs of rural education, teacher trainees can comprehensively acquire practical strategies for dealing with complex situations, and implement precise and effective educational measures when teaching in the future, thereby effectively improving the effectiveness of educational practice [1].

#### *2.4. Inheriting local cultural genes and promoting the comprehensive revitalization of rural culture*

The educationalist spirit, embodying a broad vision of the world and a pursuit of enlightening people through culture, aligns deeply with the mission of rural cultural inheritance and revitalization in the current era. This endows rural-oriented teacher trainees with the important responsibility of cultural inheritance. As cultural bridges between schools and rural communities, these trainees systematically integrate the educationalist spirit into their training curriculum, effectively guiding them to explore the value of local culture and fulfill the mission of cultural inheritance [6]. In theoretical courses, special topics such as "Rural Culture and Education" and "Introduction to Local Culture" are offered, incorporating practical experiences from historical models like the "village school" in nurturing rural self-governance through culture, insights from "Local China", and the emphasis on local rural culture in "Life is Education". This enables teacher trainees to fully understand the educational characteristics of rural folklore, local elite culture, traditional skills, and other resources, establishing a sense of identity and pride in local culture. In practical courses, teacher trainees are fully engaged in activities such as the inheritance of rural intangible cultural heritage skills, compilation of village history and records, and planning of rural cultural activities. For example, assisting rural schools in offering school-based courses such as "Traditional Handicrafts in the Campus" and "Rural Red Story Presentation" turns the educationalist's concept of "enlightening people through culture" into specific teaching and practical behaviors. This model, combining theoretical learning with practical experience, not only comprehensively cultivates teacher trainees' abilities to explore, transform, and inherit local culture, but also enables them to activate the vitality of rural culture through this medium, promoting the construction of rural culture and local civilization, thereby achieving the dual goals of educating people through education and culture.

### **3. The Practical Dilemmas of Integrating the Spirit of Educators into the Curriculum System for Rural-oriented Teacher Education Students**

#### *3.1. Conceptual deviation: Ambiguous value orientation of spiritual cultivation*

Some teacher-training institutions have a biased understanding of the value of integrating the spirit of educators into the training programs for teacher trainees, which is mainly manifested as "three emphases and three neglects." Firstly, they emphasize form

over substance, equating the spirit of educators with teacher ethics lectures and themed activities, lacking systematic curriculum design. Secondly, they emphasize generality over specificity, copying the spiritual cultivation model for ordinary teacher trainees without considering the specific needs of rural-oriented teacher trainees. Thirdly, they emphasize professionalism over sentiment, with some teacher-training institutions lacking curriculum arrangements and teaching designs related to "educational sentiment" in their training programs. The resulting ideological deviation makes it difficult for the spirit of educators to be absorbed into the core of curriculum design, leading to a situation where skills and spirit are separated in the training curriculum system for rural-oriented teacher trainees [7]. On the one hand, efforts are made to cultivate the basic teaching abilities of teacher trainees, ensuring that they possess the skill set to "teach effectively." On the other hand, the nurturing of the spirit of educators is neglected, and the simultaneous cultivation of teacher trainees' value recognition and professional belief in rural education is not achieved. This imbalanced design, which "emphasizes skills over spirit," directly results in teacher trainees who, although capable of completing basic teaching tasks, are prone to the dilemma of "not being able to settle down" and "not being able to stay" due to a lack of emotional roots and mission commitment to rural areas.

### *3.2. Content fragmentation: The integration into the carrier is disconnected from the reality of the rural area*

There is a disconnect in integrating the spirit of educators into the content design of teacher education courses. Firstly, it is disconnected from the reality of rural education [2]. Most existing courses use generalized examples of educators, lacking localized content related to rural educators. Teacher trainees generally have weak knowledge about rural education and teaching, and there is no in-depth analysis of the practical wisdom of rural educators in solving rural education problems. Secondly, it is disconnected from the curriculum system. The spirit of educators is not deeply integrated into general education, professional, and practical courses. General education courses lack an explanation of the value of rural education, professional courses do not incorporate rural teaching strategies, and practical courses do not have specific designs for spiritual practice. This disconnect prevents teacher trainees from forming a systematic understanding of the spirit of educators and transforming it into the ability to address rural education issues.

### *3.3. Method solidification: Traditional models struggle to adapt to the needs of spiritual cultivation*

The spirit of educators is a value system encompassing emotional warmth and practical character. The cultivation of this spirit relies on emotional experience, practical insight, reflection, and internalization to achieve deep infiltration. However, the current curriculum for rural-oriented teacher trainees still follows the traditional "lecture-imitation" model, which is seriously out of alignment with the inherent requirements of spirit cultivation. This is manifested in three major limitations. Firstly, there is an overemphasis on theoretical indoctrination, lacking emotional resonance. Most courses are conducted through one-way transmission methods such as textbook explanations and listing of deeds, which limits teacher trainees' understanding of the spirit of educators to the level of knowledge memorization, preventing them from forming emotional identification and value resonance. Secondly, practical forms are superficial, lacking spiritual practice scenarios. Educational internships and practicals are mostly focused on skill training such as classroom observation and lesson plan imitation, without designing targeted practical tasks for spiritual cultivation [8]. There is a lack of contextualized practical carriers such as "counseling left-behind children with the wisdom of individualized teaching" and "developing local courses based on the pursuit of enlightening the way," resulting in a disconnect between spiritual cultivation and rural educational practice. Thirdly, technological empowerment is insufficient, and immersive experience methods are lacking. Smart education technology is rarely applied in spiritual cultivation, and virtual simulation technology is not widely used to recreate rural educators' school scenes. Nor is there a sufficient digital case library for teacher trainees

to engage in immersive discussions. These technologies could better enhance the effects of spiritual perception and practical transfer. This rigid model violates the essential characteristics of the practical generation of the spirit of educators and makes it difficult to transform spiritual connotations into professional beliefs and practical abilities.

#### *3.4. Evaluation is monotonous: lacking a diversified feedback mechanism for integration effectiveness*

A scientific evaluation system is crucial for ensuring the effective integration of the educator spirit. However, the current curriculum evaluation of rural directional teacher education students faces the issue of "three singleness", which hinders precise evaluation of integration effectiveness and curriculum optimization. Firstly, the evaluation content is monotonous, with a tendency to emphasize technical indicators such as teaching design and classroom management, as well as assessments of educational theoretical knowledge, while long-term neglecting the evaluation of core spiritual qualities such as professional identity, local sentiment, and dedication. It fails to incorporate aspects like "willingness to take root in the countryside" and "cultural inheritance practice" into the evaluation scope. Secondly, the evaluation methods are monotonous, with summative evaluation dominating. Most teacher training institutions adopt final exams and skill proficiency tests as evaluation forms, lacking dynamic tracking of the learning process of teacher education students [9]. They fail to capture the trajectory of their spiritual internalization through process evaluation methods such as growth portfolios and reflective journals, and cannot objectively reflect the gradual process of their intrinsic quality formation. Thirdly, the evaluation subjects are monotonous, with a relatively limited perspective. Evaluation work is mostly completed unilaterally by university teachers, without forming a diverse evaluation community of "university mentors-rural school mentors-internship students-parents". The evaluation results cannot comprehensively reflect the spiritual practice of teacher education students in real rural education scenarios. A monotonous evaluation system cannot comprehensively and truly reflect the integration effectiveness of the educator spirit, and it is difficult to form a virtuous cycle of evaluation, feedback, and optimization, seriously affecting the continuous improvement and perfection of the curriculum system.

### **4. Breakthrough Path for Integrating Educator Spirit into the Curriculum System for Rural-oriented Teacher Education Students**

#### *4.1. Conceptual innovation: anchoring the dual-oriented curriculum value core of "rural-oriented + spiritually guided"*

Guided by the six dimensions of the educator spirit, and based on the cultivation orientation of rural-oriented teacher trainees to take root in the countryside and serve the local community, a curriculum philosophy of "spiritual casting, practical empowerment, and local rooting" has been formed. This philosophy is not a simple superposition but is built on the logic of practical wisdom generation and educational ecosystem synergy, deeply embedding spiritual guidance and rural practice. From a value logic perspective, the renewal of this philosophy actively responds to the action of strengthening teachers through spiritual casting outlined in the national plan for building a strong education country, breaking the limitations of previous technical rationality in teacher education and turning the ideal and belief of having a great heart and sincerely serving the country into the core task of comprehensively revitalizing rural education. It promotes teacher trainees to shift from passive duty fulfillment to conscious responsibility, shaping their professional ideal of promoting rural revitalization through education. From a practical logic perspective, relying on the "U-G-S" collaborative training mechanism, the curriculum philosophy is highlighted throughout the entire process of pre-service training, induction adaptation, and in-service development for teacher trainees, preventing the separation of spiritual guidance and rural practice, and forming a closed loop of theoretical learning, practical experience, and spiritual cultivation [10].

In terms of implementing curriculum concepts, a three-dimensional spiritual infiltration system of "history-reality-future" is established. Through studying courses such as "Philosophy of Rural Education" and "Introduction to the Spirit of Educators", the local educational ideology is elaborated, and the intrinsic connection between local educational ideology and the spirit of contemporary educators is explored. Excellent teachers embodying the spirit of educators are used as typical cases to cultivate a benevolent heart of joy in teaching and love for students. A special module on the lineage of rural educators' spirit is added to sort out the spiritual characteristics of rural teachers in different periods and strengthen cultural identity. Based on the actual needs of rural education, the city-centered curriculum thinking is broken, and concepts such as comprehensive rural revitalization, local cultural inheritance, rural resource development, and smart education empowerment are integrated into curriculum design. The pursuit of the spirit of educators is concretized into the practice of serving the countryside, thus ensuring the guiding value of the spirit of educators and reflecting the local and contemporary characteristics of rural-oriented teacher training. The logical chain of "spiritual guidance", "practical transformation", and "wisdom generation" provides ideological guidance for the construction of the curriculum system.

#### *4.2. Content integration: Constructing a modularized curriculum system that integrates "spiritual dimension + rural needs"*

Based on the inherent alignment between the six dimensions of educator spirit and the core competencies of rural-oriented teacher trainees, we dismantle the mechanical separation between general education, professional education, and practical training in traditional courses. Instead, we construct a modular curriculum system that integrates spiritual guidance, professional empowerment, and practical innovation, enabling a deep coupling among spiritual connotation, professional competence, and rural educational practice [11]. This approach embodies the characteristics of curriculum integrity, generativity, and openness.

##### *4.2.1. Spiritual guidance module: laying a solid foundation for rural education beliefs*

With the fundamental purpose of fostering a deep sense of educational passion and building a shared spiritual understanding, we emphasize the connection between the spirit of educators and the mission of rural education. This serves as the starting point for creating course content that possesses both historical depth and contemporary relevance [10].

Firstly, the focus should be on the construction of core courses. Courses such as "The Spiritual Lineage of Chinese Rural Educators", "The Spirit of Educators and Rural Revitalization", and "The Spiritual Threads of Confucius's 'Education for All', Yan Yangchu's Popular Education in Ding County, and Tao Xingzhi's Dingzhuang Normal School" can be offered to explain the specific connotations of the ideal beliefs of "having a great heart and sincerely serving the country" in rural educational settings. Special topics on rural culture and educational value can be added to explore educational elements in rural elite culture, folk traditions, and agricultural civilization, guiding normal school students to understand the pursuit of "having the world in mind and cultivating people with culture". Additionally, in the design of characteristic courses, a dual-track system of "Rural Educator Forum + Immersive On-site Research and Learning" can be adopted, inviting outstanding teachers and educational administrators who have taken root in the countryside to share practical experience. Organizing normal school students to visit rural educational museums, former residences of educators, prestigious rural schools, and other on-site venues for immersive experiences can strengthen spiritual identification. Theme seminars on "Practicing the Spirit of Educators in the Countryside" can be held to discuss topics such as "How to use the spirit of educators to solve the dilemmas of rural education", promoting the transformation of spiritual cognition into professional beliefs.

##### *4.2.2. Professional empowerment module: enhancing core teaching capabilities in rural areas*

With the aim of adapting to rural environments and enhancing professional abilities, we strive to transform the practical wisdom of the educator's spirit into specific classroom teaching skills, achieving an organic integration of pedagogical and academic qualities.

In the integration of subject teaching, rural education characteristics are incorporated into subject teaching theory. Mathematics teaching theory includes chapters on "mathematical modeling in rural production scenarios" and "measurement and calculation of agricultural tools." Chinese teaching theory incorporates modules such as "creation and compilation of rural nursery rhymes" and "teaching of local prose and inheritance of rural culture." Science teaching theory includes the design of "exploration experiments on rural natural resources," embodying the educational wisdom of "enlightening the mind and nourishing the heart, and teaching students according to their aptitudes." In terms of strengthening specific abilities, a series of courses on "special skills in rural education" are offered, covering topics such as "mixed-grade teaching in small-scale rural schools," "psychological counseling and home-school communication for left-behind children," "development and utilization of rural educational resources," and "application of intelligent technology in rural teaching," to enhance the ability of teacher trainees to cope with special scenarios in rural education [12]. According to the TPACK framework, subject knowledge, teaching methods, and digital technology are integrated to cultivate the ability of teacher trainees to use SPOC platforms and virtual simulation tools to optimize rural teaching, responding to the needs of digital transformation in education.

#### 4.2.3. Practice and Innovation Module: Cultivating the Character of Rural Farming Practice

With the fundamental purpose of "unity of knowledge and action, and practical innovation," a tiered and full-cycle practical system has been constructed. This system enables teacher trainees to comprehend the practical significance of the spirit of educators in authentic rural educational settings.

The tiered practical course module innovates a "2+4+6+N" practical system, which includes 2 months of in-depth investigation of rural education (investigating the current status of rural schools, interviewing rural teachers, and sorting out educational needs), 4 months of educational probation (participating in the entire process of rural classroom teaching, class management, and home-school communication), 6 months of educational internship (independently undertaking teaching tasks and participating in school management), and N special practical projects (running through the entire training process) to gradually improve practical abilities. The special practical courses can lead teacher trainees to participate in projects such as rural school-based curriculum development, care plans for left-behind children, and rural cultural revitalization empowerment. They assist rural schools in creating special courses such as traditional handicrafts entering the campus and rural red culture research and study, and participate in the construction of digital resources for rural education and small-scale school teaching collaboration. Through practice, teacher trainees are cultivated to have a diligent and persevering attitude towards learning and innovation, as well as a benevolent heart of joyful teaching and loving students, and a willingness to dedicate themselves.

The selection of course content is strictly based on the "Teacher Education Curriculum Standards" and the "Digital Literacy for Teachers" industry standards, deeply aligning with the training policies for rural-oriented teacher education students [13]. It incorporates the actual needs of rural schools in the "U-G-S" collaborative training mechanism, ensuring that the courses not only provide spiritual guidance and professional adaptation but also dynamically adapt to the development and changes of rural education, achieving a closed-loop education that nurtures spiritual infiltration, enhances abilities, and fosters practical innovation.

#### 4.3. Methodological Innovation: Employing the Interactive Teaching Strategy of "Situational Immersion + Practical Reflection"

Breaking away from the traditional mode where teachers speak and students listen, and considering the practical scenario of rural education along with the essential characteristics of educators' spirit, we propose an innovative four-in-one interactive teaching strategy. This strategy includes case teaching, situational simulation, practical reflection, and digital empowerment, facilitating the transformation of educators' spirit from theoretical understanding to practical awareness.

The case teaching method focuses on the practices of rural educators, systematically developing a case library of rural educational practices. It includes classic cases such as the founding of Dingzhuang Normal School and Ding County mass education, as well as contemporary cases of rural teachers addressing issues like improving teaching quality in small-scale schools and caring for left-behind children. The method employs a four-step teaching process: case presentation, problem discussion, strategy extraction, and practical application. Analyzing the case of founding Huaping Girls' High School prompts teacher education students to explore how the ideal of "sincerely serving the country" is transformed into specific measures to overcome challenges such as the scarcity of educational resources in rural areas and insufficient student motivation. Through this analysis, transferable strategies for persevering in rural education and educational wisdom are extracted [4].

The situational simulation method relies on digital technology and the replication of real-life scenarios. It utilizes technologies such as VR and the metaverse to create typical rural education scenarios, such as "cross-grade combined teaching in rural classrooms," "communication with rural parents on educational concepts," and "psychological counseling for left-behind children," allowing teacher trainees to fully immerse themselves and use their "wisdom in teaching students according to their aptitudes" and "compassionate dedication" to solve problems. Additionally, it involves performing "rural education sitcoms" that simulate scenarios such as "intervention for student dropouts" and "teaching rural intangible cultural heritage in schools," deepening the concrete understanding of the practical connotation of educators' spirit through role-playing. Immersive experiences align with the complexity of rural education and enhance teacher trainees' emotional resonance and action consciousness.

The practice reflection method relies on the U-G-S collaborative training mechanism to implement a dual-mentor system. University mentors are responsible for the theoretical interpretation of the spirit of educators and guidance on reflection methods, while rural outstanding teacher mentors provide practical guidance and scenario-based guidance. Normal students are required to write a "Practice Diary of the Spirit of Educators," recording the process, effectiveness, and challenges of practicing the "diligent and persevering attitude of hard work" and "the benevolent heart of joy in teaching and love for students" during rural education internships and practical training. Regular "Practice Reflection Meetings" are held to conduct in-depth discussions on topics such as "how to use the spirit of educators to solve the problem of rural students' weariness of learning" and "how to implement the integration of teaching, learning, and doing based on local resources," promoting the sublimation of practical experience into theoretical cognition.

The digital empowerment method primarily relies on the deep integration of smart education and AI technology to establish a system that organically combines online special courses, rural education resource libraries, virtual practice scenarios, and AI interaction modules, named the "Smart Fusion Platform for Educator Spirit Rural Education." This aims to achieve synergistic effects of technology empowerment, spiritual infiltration, and ability enhancement. The platform embeds AI+ teacher education digital transformation special courses, systematically explaining the application of smart education tools in rural education resource integration and cross-regional remote teaching. It integrates a digital case library for the living inheritance of educator spirit, focusing on the livingization of spirit, interaction of resources, and scenario-based application, transforming the static recording of educators' spirit into dynamic inheritance. With AI digital twins and three-dimensional visualization technology, classic practices are turned into interactive scenarios. Teacher trainees can "virtually roam" into classrooms to

complete simulated teaching tasks that integrate "teaching, learning, and doing." They can also engage in AI dialogues with "digitally replicated" educators, expressing their views on how to integrate their spiritual ideas into the present, supporting teacher trainees to immerse themselves in the spiritual connotation through "scene roaming + task simulation." The platform uses AI and big data technology to shape a "learning-practice" dynamic portrait, continuously tracking data on teacher trainees' performance in course learning and practical tasks, accurately recognizing deficiencies in "local curriculum development" and "rural classroom interaction," and intelligently sending personalized resource packs. The platform adopts SPOC as its foundational architecture and integrates AI interactive teaching. It utilizes AI discussion assistants to facilitate discussions among teacher trainees on topics such as "Implementing the spirit of educators in rural digital teaching." With features like intelligent grouping and instant feedback, a collaborative learning community is created. Additionally, an "AI Practice Mentor" module is introduced, where AI simulates responses from students of different levels to a specific knowledge point or educational content. This allows teacher trainees to anticipate teaching difficulties before they actually step onto the podium [2, 10]. Teacher trainees, AI systems, and teachers jointly form a "human-machine collaborative teaching and research community." Teacher trainees execute tasks, AI generates data diagnostic resources, and teachers lead value shaping and meaning construction. Teacher trainees upload rural teaching plan practice logs, and AI integrates the core spirit of educators into rural education scenarios to provide improvement suggestions. This is coupled with online guidance from frontline rural teachers, employing a dual approach of "intelligent tools assisting + human mentors leading" to maximize the effect of wisdom sharing and practical transformation.

#### *4.4. Evaluation reform: Establish a curriculum evaluation system featuring "multi-dimensional integration + long-term tracking"*

Moving away from traditional evaluation methods that focus solely on knowledge acquisition, we have developed a "four-dimensional and multi-faceted" evaluation system guided by the spirit of educators, emphasizing both process and outcomes. This system is divided into four dimensions: cognition, emotion, behavior, and effectiveness. The cognition dimension employs written exams and structured interviews to assess students' understanding of the spirit of educators, rural education policies, and local cultural knowledge. For example, students might be asked to explain how "the pursuit of enlightening the way" is reflected in rural cultural inheritance [1]. The emotion dimension evaluates students' identification with rural education and their value recognition of the spirit of educators through reflective journal analysis, peer evaluation, and interviews. This includes assessing whether they demonstrate "the willingness to take root in the countryside" and "the care for rural students" in their journals. The behavior dimension examines students' application of the spirit of educators in teaching practice, class management, and home-school communication through classroom observation, practical performance records, and teaching work analysis. For instance, it observes whether they address the emotional needs of rural left-behind children and whether they employ the strategy of "teaching students according to their aptitudes" in teaching. The effectiveness dimension evaluates the educational impact of students through internship school evaluations, student achievement improvement, and parent satisfaction surveys. This includes tracking improvements in students' learning interest and behavioral habits in the classes they teach. The evaluation methods combine "process evaluation" and "summative evaluation," "quantitative evaluation" and "qualitative evaluation," and "multi-subject evaluation." Process evaluation spans the entire curriculum learning and practice process, collecting materials such as students' journals, case analysis reports, and practical videos in the form of growth portfolios. Summative evaluation focuses on assessing students' ability to use the spirit of educators to address rural education challenges, such as conducting project defenses for solving rural education problems. Multi-subject evaluation involves university teachers, rural school mentors, students, and parents to

ensure comprehensive and objective evaluation. Additionally, "incremental evaluation" is included to track the career development path of students from enrollment to employment over 3-5 years, examining the long-term impact of integrating the spirit of educators on their professional beliefs, teaching abilities, and willingness to remain in rural areas. This evaluation system highlights the guiding role of the spirit of educators and scientifically assesses the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, thereby ensuring the quality of training for rural-oriented students.

## 5. Conclusion

The cultivation of rural-oriented teacher trainees is a crucial pillar for the comprehensive revitalization of rural education. Addressing the persistent dilemma of rural teachers being "unwilling to go down, unable to stay, and unable to teach well" requires more than just professional skill training; it demands profound spiritual development. This paper systematically explores the integration of the educator spirit into the curriculum system of rural-oriented teacher trainees. By analyzing the current practical challenges—ranging from conceptual deviation and content fragmentation to rigid teaching methods and monotonous evaluation—this study proposes a comprehensive "concept-content-method-evaluation" four-in-one breakthrough path.

By anchoring the dual-oriented curriculum value of "rural-oriented + spiritually guided," constructing a modularized curriculum system tailored to rural needs, utilizing AI and smart education technologies for immersive interactive teaching, and establishing a multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism with long-term tracking, teacher training institutions can effectively bridge the gap between spiritual guidance and practical application. Ultimately, integrating the educator spirit is not merely a theoretical slogan, but a systematic curriculum engineering endeavor. Implementing this curriculum system will cultivate a new generation of high-quality rural educators who possess firm ideals, profound local sentiments, and excellent professional competencies, thereby providing solid talent support for building a robust education system and achieving rural revitalization.

**Funding:** This article is one of the outcomes of the Guangdong Provincial Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project titled "Research on the Paths for Educators' Spirit to Guide the New Generation of Rural Teachers to Integrate into Rural Society" (GD25CJY05).

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