

Investigation on the mentoring strategy to improve the teaching innovation ability of young teachers

Hui ZHANG

School of Literature and Communication, Hubei Minzu University, Enshi 445000, China

Abstract: With the deepening of educational reforms, young teachers have become the core force in the teaching profession, yet their innovative teaching capabilities require enhancement. The mentorship system, as an effective talent development model, plays a vital role in improving young teachers' instructional innovation. This study explores the application of mentorship strategies in enhancing young teachers' teaching innovation. Through literature analysis and practical research, it is found that mentorship can guide young teachers to establish correct teaching concepts, master advanced teaching methods, and stimulate innovative thinking through mentors' verbal guidance and personal example. In implementation, emphasis should be placed on selecting mentors with rich teaching experience and research capabilities. Simultaneously, a comprehensive mentorship system should be established to clarify rights and obligations for both parties, ensuring orderly conduct of mentorship activities. Additionally, diverse mentorship formats such as mentor-apprentice pairing, specialized training, and observation learning should be adopted to provide young teachers with more learning opportunities and platforms. Ultimately, the implementation of mentorship strategies can effectively enhance young teachers' teaching innovation capabilities, injecting new vitality into the development of education.

Keywords: young teachers; teaching innovation ability improvement; mentoring strategy

1 Introduction

With the deepening of educational reforms, enhancing teaching innovation capabilities among young teachers has become a focal point in the education sector. Teaching innovation not only impacts individual career development but also profoundly influences school teaching quality and academic reputation. However, many young teachers currently lack sufficient innovative teaching practices, urgently requiring effective strategies for guidance. In the context of high-quality development in higher education, cultivating teaching innovation capabilities among young faculty members has become a crucial issue in university teacher team building. Li Jing (2025) found that an effective mentorship mechanism significantly improves young teachers' instructional design and classroom management skills, outperforming traditional centralized training models [1]. Wang Qiang (2025) emphasized that the "dual-mentor system" tailored to disciplinary characteristics offers unique advantages in fostering teaching innovation, effectively integrating teaching experience with innovative thinking. Currently, as educational informatization advances, mentorship models are transitioning from traditional apprenticeship systems to digital and collaborative approaches [2]. This study explores how to optimize mentorship

strategies under new era conditions, aiming to establish a more scientific and efficient framework for cultivating young teachers' teaching innovation capabilities, providing theoretical references and practical guidance for professional development in higher education institutions.

2 Research hypotheses

Chen Li (2024) found that the mentorship strategy effectively enhances young teachers' teaching innovation capabilities by helping them rapidly master pedagogical skills and shorten their adaptation period. Through experienced teachers' guidance, new instructors can integrate into teaching environments more efficiently and improve instructional quality [3]. Zhao Gang (2024) emphasized that this mentoring approach not only boosts teaching proficiency but also stimulates innovative thinking. During mentorship sessions, new teachers collaboratively explore teaching methods with seasoned colleagues, fostering mutual learning that ignites creative awareness and drives continuous exploration in practice [4]. The mentorship strategy plays a vital role in developing young teachers' innovative abilities, accelerating professional growth while nurturing creative thinking. This approach provides robust support for cultivating a new generation of educators who combine innovative spirit with teaching expertise.

3 Research design

In the context of deepening educational reform, it is particularly important to enhance the teaching innovation ability of young teachers as a new force in the field of education. As a traditional and effective teacher training model, mentoring plays an important role in improving the teaching innovation ability of young teachers.

3.1 Transmission: imparting innovative teaching ideas and methods

The "transmission" in the mentorship strategy primarily refers to veteran teachers sharing innovative teaching concepts and methodologies with junior colleagues. Liu Fang (2024) suggests that experienced educators should guide young teachers in establishing proper perspectives on pedagogical innovation and understanding its significance through activities like organizing thematic lectures and sharing teaching cases. Furthermore, senior teachers should demonstrate practical innovations such as project-based learning and flipped classrooms, helping newcomers broaden their instructional approaches and enhance their teaching creativity [5].

3.2 Help: help young teachers to solve practical problems in teaching innovation

In the mentorship process, "support" primarily manifests in helping young teachers address practical challenges in teaching innovation. Sun Ming (2024) emphasizes that experienced educators should focus on the difficulties and challenges young teachers encounter during innovative teaching practices. Through regular exchanges and discussions, they can provide concrete guidance and assistance. For instance, senior teachers may assist young teachers in designing innovative lesson plans, guide them in effectively utilizing modern educational technologies, and help them manage various student responses during creative teaching sessions [6].

3.3 Leading: to drive young teachers to participate in teaching innovation practice

The "mentorship" component serves as the cornerstone of the mentorship strategy, where experienced teachers guide young educators in innovative teaching practices. Zhou Hua (2024) emphasizes that senior teachers should actively encourage and mentor junior colleagues to participate in various teaching innovation initiatives, such as curriculum reform projects and teaching competitions, enabling them to develop and enhance their pedagogical creativity through hands-on experience. Furthermore, seasoned teachers should collaborate with newcomers on educational research, exploring student-centered teaching models that foster distinctive instructional styles [7].

Zheng Li (2025) argues that implementing mentorship strategies can effectively enhance young teachers' innovative teaching capabilities. Through the "teach" phase, young educators gain exposure to advanced pedagogical concepts and

methodologies; during the "assist" phase, they receive concrete guidance to address practical challenges in innovation; and through the "lead" phase, they develop and refine their teaching innovation skills in real-world practice [8]. Therefore, schools should prioritize the implementation of these mentorship strategies to create favorable conditions and environments for young teachers' professional growth and development.

4 Empirical analysis

In the context of deepening educational reforms, young teachers emerging as frontline educators face significant challenges in enhancing their teaching innovation capabilities. However, issues such as insufficient teaching experience, inadequate subject knowledge reserves, and limited teaching methods have created multiple obstacles for young educators. To effectively boost their innovative teaching skills, the mentorship strategy has emerged as a promising approach worth exploring.

4.1 Analysis of the implementation effect of the mentoring strategy

Through field research and case analysis, we found that the mentoring strategy has a significant effect on improving the teaching innovation ability of young teachers. The following table summarizes the implementation effects of different types of mentoring activities:

Passing on the knowledge	Implementation points	Effect of innovation promotion	Typical case
Mentorship	One-to-one guidance and regular communication	Quick mastery of basic teaching skills	A school "Blue Project" pairing program
Teaching observation	Attend lectures on site and study after class	Explore intuitive learning and innovative teaching methods	Interdisciplinary teaching observation activities
Collective preparation of instruction	Team work to design lesson plans	Stimulate innovative teaching design ideas	Theme-based unit lesson preparation group
Lesson study	In-depth analysis of typical cases	Improve the ability of teaching reflection	"Same lesson, different structure" teaching and research activities
Project guidance	Participate in teaching research projects	Develop systematic research ability	School-based teaching and research group

4.2 Key success factors analysis

Based on practical experience, we summarize the key factors that affect the effectiveness of the mentoring strategy:

Influencing factor	Importance	Specific manifestations	Recommendations for improvement
Quality of mentors	★★★★★	Rich teaching experience, strong sense of innovation	Establish mentor selection criteria
Frequency of interaction	★★★★	Communicate regularly and give feedback in time	Make a schedule for activities
Content relevance	★★★★	Combine the characteristics of the subject with personal needs	Conduct needs research
System safeguard	★★★	The assessment and incentive mechanism has been improved	Incorporate it into the teacher evaluation system
Resource support	★★★	Provide necessary time and material support	Set up a special fund

4.3 Existing problems and improvement direction

In view of the existing problems in the current practice of passing on skills, the following suggestions are put forward:

Problem types	Embody	Corrective actions	Expected accomplishments
Formalism	The campaign was superficial	Strengthen process supervision	Improve the effectiveness of activities
Continuity is lacking	Lack of follow-up	Establish long-term mechanisms	Ensure sustainable development
Lack of innovation	The content is traditional and monotonous	The content is traditional and monotonous	Stimulate innovation
The evaluation is not scientific	Lack of effective evaluation	Improve the evaluation system	Objectively reflect the effectiveness
Resource imbalance	Urban and rural areas are significantly different	Optimize the allocation of resources	Promote balanced development

The analysis demonstrates that effective mentorship strategies require systematic design and scientific implementation. These approaches should balance the preservation of traditional expertise with fostering innovative thinking, thereby providing sustained support for enhancing young teachers' pedagogical innovation capabilities. Wu Bo (2024) highlights this mentoring system as a proven pathway to boost teaching innovation among junior educators. By establishing mentorship frameworks, promoting peer collaboration, and allocating essential teaching resources, such initiatives can ignite young teachers' passion for educational innovation while elevating their instructional competencies and professional development [9]. This comprehensive approach lays a solid foundation for improving educational quality and supporting students' holistic growth.

5 Conclusion

In summary, enhancing young teachers' pedagogical innovation capabilities is pivotal to improving educational quality and advancing educational reforms. Theoretically, this study deepens our understanding of the role of the "mentorship" mechanism in cultivating teaching innovation among young educators. Through systematic analysis of how this model influences young teachers' instructional philosophies, teaching skills, and research innovation capabilities, it not only reveals the mechanism's core value in promoting professional growth but also expands the application scope of teacher education theories. Particularly in the critical area of nurturing teaching innovation among young faculty, it provides new theoretical perspectives and analytical frameworks, laying a solid foundation for subsequent research. Practically, the proposed mentorship strategies demonstrate significant real-world applicability. By establishing clear mentor selection criteria, optimizing mentoring approaches, strengthening process management, and implementing evaluations, these strategies offer concrete operational guidance for schools and educational authorities. Their implementation not only helps young teachers quickly adapt to teaching responsibilities and enhance their innovative capabilities but also optimizes faculty structure and elevates overall educational quality. In the long run, this holds profound significance for driving sustainable development of education in China. Building upon existing research achievements, this study has made advancements in three key areas: First, it focuses more on cultivating teaching innovation capabilities among young teachers rather than generalizing professional development approaches. Second, it proposes concrete mentorship strategies with detailed measures covering mentor selection, method optimization, process management, and evaluation systems. Third, empirical analysis validates the effectiveness of these mentoring strategies in

enhancing teaching innovation among young educators, providing robust evidence for future research. While significant progress has been made, unresolved challenges remain. For instance, how to quantify the specific impact of mentoring strategies on improving teaching innovation? How to develop personalized mentoring plans tailored to different disciplines and developmental stages? Future research should explore quantitative assessment methods for mentoring strategies and design customized mentoring programs based on disciplinary and developmental differences. Additionally, examining the evolving roles of mentoring strategies in various career phases could strengthen support for building a comprehensive teacher education system. These explorations of mentoring strategies for enhancing teaching innovation not only enrich educational theory but also provide practical guidance for implementation. Building on this foundation, future studies should deepen and expand research to contribute to the sustainable development of education in China.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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About the author

Hui Zhang (1988.10--), Male; Tujia ethnic group; Hometown: Enshi, Hubei; Education level: Master's Degree; Title: Lecturer; Research Direction: Educational Leadership and Management.