



## Reconstruction of Teacher Training Management Model From the Perspective of Group Dynamics

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### Abstract

With the implementation of teacher education reform worldwide, the effectiveness of teacher training has become a new focus. In this paper, based on group dynamics theory, a teacher training management mode based on the group dynamic mechanism is constructed, and the teachers' internal psychological tension is stimulated through dynamic driving mechanism, the group cooperative learning atmosphere is maintained by static condensation mechanism, and the teachers' learning activity efficiency is guaranteed by the norm constraint mechanism, thus restoring the subject status of teachers in the training, arousing their intrinsic vitality, and improving training efficiency.

**Key words:** Group dynamics, Teacher training, Management mode

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As a key measure to promote teacher education reform and improve the quality of school education, teacher training has been highly valued by the international community. Teacher training institutions in various countries have actively explored the innovation of training resources and the practice of training methods, which have accumulated valuable experience for the improvement of the training quality. However, there are still some problems in the operation of current training programs, such as low

participation of training objects, and poor training effectiveness, etc. The main reason is that there is no positive relationship between policy support and teachers' independent development, that is, most of the projects pay much attention to other things rather than teachers themselves, so that the teachers have a mentality of "being developed". Therefore, it is necessary to regularly explore the management mode of teacher training. This study constructs a management mode of teaching training from the perspective of group dynamics, and with the help of group dynamics mechanism, the training subject status of teachers is restored, and their professional independent consciousness is stimulated, so as to make them change the situation that "I am forced to develop" into the fact that "I want to develop", thus improving the training effectiveness.

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

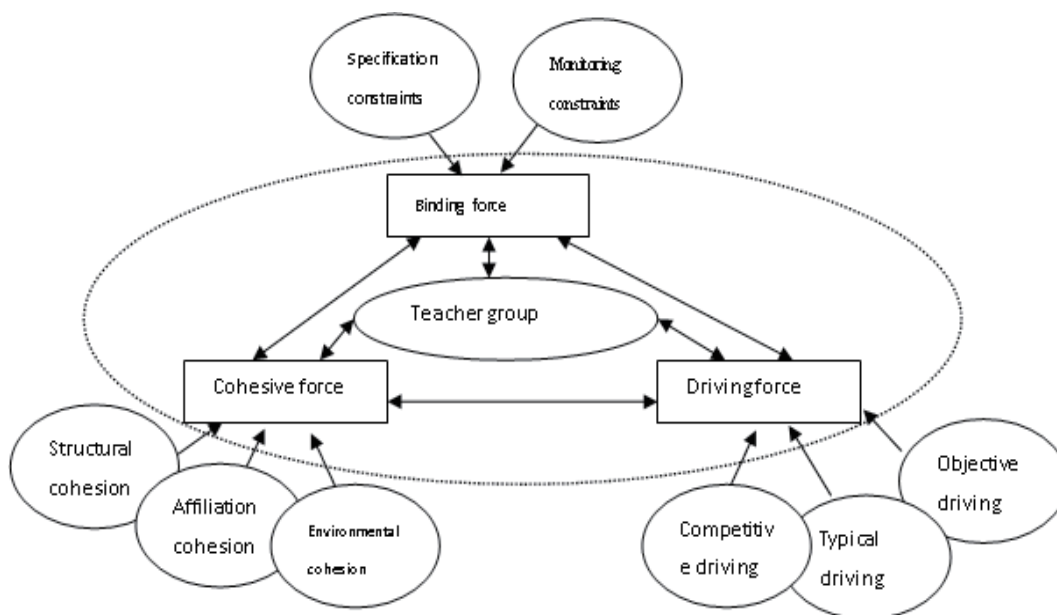
Group dynamics theory, also known as the "field" theory, was proposed by German social psychologist K Lewin on the basis of his theory of psychological dynamics in the 1930s. It regards people, environment, and mental environment generated by the interaction between the both as behavior dynamic field on the whole ("living space"), and studies the characteristics and rules of individual behaviors under the group conditions from the perspective of interaction between the internal and external environment. Meanwhile, it mainly discusses the factors which affect the population development trend in the living space as well as the interaction between these factors and the interdependence, and it is expressed by the formula  $B = f(P, E) = f(L)$ . (Zhang, 2007) Where B represents the direction and intensity of individual behavior, P represents the internal conditions of individual, E represents the group environment, and L represents the living space. The formula shows that the direction and intensity of individual behavior depends

on the influence of individuals' internal conditions and the group environment where the individuals are, and these factors are integrated in the living space with a dynamic significance and operate along with the group dynamic system, and they jointly affect the personality development of group members as well the development level and performance of the group. This theory provides an important inspiration for the construction and implementation of the teacher training management model with group cooperative learning as the main mode.

In teacher training management mode under the action of group dynamics, the teachers who participate in the training constitute a temporary study group, in which the members complete certain tasks together through communication, exchange, sharing and cooperation in the learning process, thus forming the interpersonal relationship of influencing and promoting each other as well as a relatively stable professional cultural atmosphere. In this process, any factor that affects group performance will affect the learning effect and the achievement of learning objectives of the teacher group. Therefore, in the training process, the dynamic mechanism of the group should be made full use to integrate a variety of possible influencing factors and create a training field where the group dynamics can be operated smoothly, so as to let the teacher group make efforts to achieve the common training objectives with the operation of the dynamic mechanism, unconsciously restore their subject status, and realize the ultimate training goal.

## 2. INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF TRAINING MANAGEMENT MODE BASED ON GROUP DYNAMICS MECHANISM

Seeing from the perspective of group dynamics, people and environment are an inseparable dynamic whole. Individual behavior is inevitably affected by the environmental factors and controlled by the group dynamics in the living space. Ensuring the smooth operation of dynamical system is the key to promoting the positive development of the group. The group dynamical system includes three dynamic mechanisms: driving force mechanism, cohesive force mechanism and dissipative force mechanism. (Shen, 1991) The driving force mechanism promotes the development and evolution of the group, and it is manifested in the aspects such as navigation mark driving, typical driving and system driving. The cohesive force mechanism guarantees the stability of the group, and it is manifested in structural cohesion, affiliation cohesion and environmental cohesion. The dissipative force mechanism damages the evolution and stability of the group and reduces the performance of the group, and it generally comes from conflict dissipation, non-nuclear dissipation and environmental dissipation. The above three dynamic mechanisms coexist in the group, and the checks and balances among them form the behavior field with a dynamic significance and promote the evolution and development of the group. In the teacher training management, in order to make the teacher group maintain a positive dynamic effect, it is necessary to coordinate all kinds of positive factors in the training field to give full play to the dynamic and stability safeguarding function of driving force and cohesive force, and reduce the negative impact of dissipative force with binding force.



**Figure 1**  
Teacher training management model based on group dynamics

By referring to the operation laws of the group dynamic mechanism, teacher training management is integrated into the group dynamic system to create a training field with dynamic significance, so that the teachers in it can keep a continuous teaching enthusiasm under the action of the dynamic mechanism. As shown in Figure 1, the training field is composed of three dynamic mechanisms, namely, binding force, cohesive force and driving force. Through the interaction of the three dynamic mechanisms, various structural elements are integrated into the specific training field, and the emotional infiltration and cognitive construction of individual teachers are realized in the mutual checks and balances of the dynamic mechanism.

## **2.1 Dynamic Driving Mechanism Stimulates Teachers' Internal Psychological Tension**

The driving force is the "power source" for the group's development and evolution. According to the group dynamics theory, there is a state of equilibrium between people and the environment. When the demand caused by the goal breaks the original psychological balance, there will be a certain psychological tension, which will generate a force to promote the group and individuals to act towards the goal. As long as the need is unmet, there will be a force that is connected to the goal. (Messonnev, 1996) The group's behavior is to take a series of actions to eliminate the tension and restore a more or less stable equilibrium. The driving force continuously stimulates the teachers' internal psychological needs through setting goals, establishing examples, introducing competition and other mechanisms, and promotes the learning behavior of teacher group and individuals through the psychological tension brought by the needs.

### **2.1.1 Set Attractive Training Goals**

Group goal is a position that the group is satisfied with, and it is the direction mark to promote the group behavior. Attractive training objectives can make teachers generate a strong demand tension and maintain a vigorous behavioral dynamics. The attraction of group goal mainly depends on its consistency and clarity with the average expectation level of group members. (Schunk, 1989, pp.173-208) In the teacher training, the setting of training goals should fully respect teachers' right of speech and make them become a common vision for teachers to strive for. Before the training, the trainers can carry out a demand survey into the teachers who participate in the training through questionnaires, telephone interviews, etc., so as to understand the learning basis and learning needs of the students, and formulate training goals that are suitable for the characteristics of the class students based on the social needs such as teachers' professional standards, curriculum standards and so on. During the training process, the generative nature of the goals shall be paid attention to, and the training goals shall be constantly adjusted and generated according to the actual needs of students and learning feedback, and the students

shall be encouraged to participate in the setting of specific objectives. 'Allowing students to set goals for themselves can increase self-efficacy and learning behavior, because setting goals can lead to a commitment to achieving higher goals.' (Chen, 2003, p.148) At the same time, the clarity and appropriate difficulty of goals shall be paid attention to, so that it can be achieved in a relatively short time, and the characteristic of "immediacy of learning effect" of learners as adult learners shall be met. (Zhou, 1991, pp.104-106) For example, the general goal can be refined into specific operable sub-goal systems, and the teachers can be guided to complete the tasks in stages and steps in the form of "activities (tasks)".

### **2.1.2 Set Leading Learning Models**

Goals play a guiding role, while models aim to "lead the way" and leads the group to strive for the common goal. First of all, the professional leading role of the trainer and the function of "trainer assistant" of the class committee shall be given full play to jointly guide the trainees to carry out various teaching activities in a planned and organized way. Secondly, the typical role of students themselves shall be focused on. The students' existing experience shall be fully respected, accepted and supported as adult learners, and each student's advantages shall be consciously explored and a display platform shall be provided for them consciously, for example, students who are good at expression can serve as "speakers" in the group, and those who are good at writing can serve as "editors" of the class' bulletin. In addition, because the basis of the students is different and each of them has their own advantages, the trainer should also pay attention to guiding each group to learn actively, and the students who are good at thinking and more passive shall learn in pairs. Meanwhile, students' needs for self-development and perfection as well as their motivation for collaborative learning are stimulated through "self-model" and "other-model".

### **2.2.3 Carry out Competitive Activities With Stimulative Significance**

External pressure and threat are an effective means to enhance group dynamics. Carrying out appropriate competition activities among cooperative learning groups can create an appropriate tension and stimulate strong interaction needs among learning partners within the group with the help of competitive pressure. For example, the column of "comparison and evaluation of achievements" is set up in the class publicity column or in the class bulletin, and the head teacher and class committee regularly evaluate and select the learning achievements of each group, and the excellent achievements will be displayed in the column for students to share. In addition, the learning resources of the teachers who participate in the training shall be combined to carry out the "daily sharing" activity, and the members of each group will take turns to introduce their teaching experience and stories

to the whole class, and vote for the “best sharing group” at the end of the training. The competition activities can not only effectively stimulate students’ collective sense of honor and enthusiasm for participation, but also promote the exchange and communication of experience between students and enhance their sense of ownership.

## **2.2 The Steady-State Cohesion Mechanism Maintains the Group Cooperative Learning Atmosphere**

Cohesive force is the collection of forces that act on all members and make them participate in the group. It maintains the stable state of the internal structure and operation of the group by enhancing the attraction of the group to members and between members. (Messonnev, 1996) Only improving the cohesive force of the teacher group can the teachers truly unite together, create a harmonious relationship of cooperation and mutual assistance, make them willing to take responsibility for the development of the group and try their best to help other members of the group, and improve their and others’ learning efficiency. The core of the group cohesion mechanism is to create an ambience with centripetal force and enhance the members’ sense of belonging, identity and responsibility. Combining with the dynamic mechanism of teacher training, the following strategies can be adopted.

### **2.2.1 Build a Balanced Group Structure**

The training management mode based on the group dynamic mechanism is on the basis of the group collaborative learning. The increasingly enhanced group cohesion is the key to promote the cooperation and interaction among team members, and the first task to strengthen the group cohesion is to build a balanced group structure. According to the theory of group dynamics, two factors should be considered when building the group structure: one is appropriate group size, which is the basis for the existence of group dynamics, so the selection of group size should be most conducive to the contact and interaction between teachers. According to the existing work experience, a group containing 7 to 8 people is more suitable. The other is a balanced group role system. Appropriate role allocation and connection are an effective means to enhance the members’ sense of identity and belonging and promote their rapid cohesion into a whole. The interdependence and supplement between roles can promote the members to have a high-density interaction, help them establish a positive self-concept and sense of responsibility, and make the learning process not only a cognitive process but also a communication and exploration process. In the specific operation, the trainer can organize the students to carry out the “ice-breaking training” at the beginning of establishing the class, the strangeness between students can be eliminated by relaxing ice-breaking games, and the students can be guided to form a learning team and assign roles, for

example, the caller, recorder, reporter and so on are set in the group to make everyone undertake a certain responsibility, and complete the active task together through the interaction between different roles. It should be noted that the roles in the group are not fixed, but the rotating system should be adopted, so that each member has the opportunity to experience different roles, and the subjective initiative of group members can be maximized through the balanced role operation.

### **2.2.2 Promote Equal and Open Interactive Discussion**

Equal and open interaction is not only the core concept of training management but also an important measure to enhance group cohesion. The equal communication and interaction between the trainer and students and students can not only accelerate the process of integrating members and group and the emotional intensity of “we”, but also fully embody the subjectivity of teachers for adult learners and their learning constructiveness, so that the trainers and trainees can stand on the position of equal dialogue and realize the dialogue comprehension and knowledge construction between the double subjects. In the current teacher training, the forms of interactive discussion mainly includes case analysis, observation and discussion, scene experience and so on. In whatever form, the following two aspects should be noted: One is the role orientation of trainers and trainees. Trainers are “leaders” and teachers participating in the training are experience-based “learners”. (Zhu & Song, 2013) Trainers carry out guidance on the basis of the participants’ experience, and the participants make active thinking and feedback based on the participants’ interpretation and guidance, and connect the ideas of the trainees with their practical “education pattern” (Zhang & Cai, 2013) at the cognitive level and process into their own point of view, and realize the internalization of the theory and the sublimation of the practice through the dialogue or written expression. The other is to encourage group discussion. In a relatively long training activity, one or two specific issues can often be discussed within the group. The trainer creates a problem situation, which causes “cognitive conflicts” among the participating teachers through questioning, encourages the teachers to discuss and communicate around the problem, so that they can transcend personal experience and generate new ideas and practices in the collective dialogue.

### **2.2.3 Carry out Various Forms of Collaborative Activities**

Collaborative activities can effectively attract team members to unite together, so as to promote the flow and construction of knowledge between each other, enhance the sense of belonging and identity of team members, and strengthen the group cohesion. In the specific implementation process, the training content of each stage can be combined to guide students to jointly complete certain “activities (tasks)” in the way of group

collaboration to deepen the learning of the training content. "Activities (tasks)" refer to the collaborative activities such as theme salons and thematic studies carried out by students through experience sharing, scenario simulation and role playing. The selection of specific methods depends on the characteristics of the training content. The advantages and strengths of each method should be given full play to promote the active participation of students as well as the improvement of the training effect. For example, in terms of professional knowledge, the theme salon activities such as "students' learning characteristics and learning methods" can be carried out. In terms of professional ability, students can be organized in small groups to simulate school-based teaching and research activities or visit the school education site for observation and discussion. With the help of virtual and real work scenes, the dialogue and communication between students and front-line experts, university professors and between students are promoted, so as to gradually clarify students' explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge as well as the conflicts between the both, and promote the growth and development of their reflective practical wisdom.

### **2.3 The Normal Constraint Mechanism Guarantees the Efficiency of Teachers' Learning Activities**

Binding force is the guarantee mechanism of group development and evolution. It maintains the consistency and synergy of the group by formulating group norms, implementing evaluation and monitoring measures, so as to prevent the destructive effect of dissipative force on the group and guarantee the group's activity performance.

#### **2.3.1 Group Norms**

Group norms are behavior standards which are generally accepted by groups and group members. (Shen, 2005, p.254) They play an important role in maintaining group cohesion and keeping group members in harmony. "Class convention" and "group learning contract" are the concrete explicit forms of group norms in teacher training management. "Class convention" is a class code of conduct jointly established by the head teacher and the students through mutual consultation, and it aims to conduct regular management on the behavior of class members to maintain the normal order of training activities. According to the training needs, the punctuality of the activity participation, the discipline of the activity site and the impartiality of the assessment can be emphasized in the "class convention". "Group learning contract" is an explicit learning agreement jointly signed by the group members, including role assignment, task responsibility and activity rules determined by the members through consultation, for example, "listen carefully to everyone's speech; The reporter should introduce the group's opinions faithfully". It is not only a "written contract", but also a "psychological contract",

and it aims to enhance the sense of responsibility of team members through self-commitment, so that they can be responsible for their own behavior, thus preventing the dissociation of marginal figures. In the meantime, the explicit rules can make team members have a clearer understanding of the cooperative symbiotic relationship between each other, so that each member has a positive psychological trust and expectation on the other members at any time, thus promoting the cooperation and interaction between them.

#### **2.3.2 Implement Evaluation Monitoring**

Evaluation monitoring is an important measure to prevent group dissipation and guarantee training performance. In the participatory training of kindergarten teachers, evaluation monitoring can adopt a way of combining process evaluation with summative evaluation. The so-called process evaluation refers to the evaluation and supervision of students' learning behavior through their classroom performance and homework. At the end of each activity, the trainer can organize students to make an oral evaluation of each other's performance in the activity, and also ask students to fill in the "daily learning record form" to urge students to reflect on and improve their learning process. Summative evaluation refers to the evaluation and assessment of students through thematic report and thesis writing at the end of the training. In addition, the tutorial system can also be used to guide students to formulate a short-term professional development plan, and track and guide them through the return visit of experts, so as to promote students to transfer their self-development awareness and ability to their own work site and give full play to the radiation role of seeded teachers.

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## **3. REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION**

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With the implementation of preschool teacher education reform worldwide, the research on the management mode and way of teacher on-the-job training has become a hot spot of international teacher research, while paying much attention to the teachers' professional and independent development and self-renewal is the common sense of the educational circles in the world. (Jiang, et al., 2012) The training management mode based on the group dynamic mechanism has become the preferred mode of teacher training with its open and independent training concept. However, most of the relevant training implemented currently is a mere form and lacks in-depth thinking on how to arouse teachers' multi-dimensional participation. As a "practical theory", group dynamics provides a proper methodological basis for the implementation of teacher training management. Based on this, this study constructs a teacher training management mode which relies on the group dynamic mechanism. However, the mode's exploration and application cannot be achieved

overnight, but we need to carry out more in-depth and continuous research. Seeing from the existing work basis, the following two points should be well done to promote the mode operation.

First of all, there should be a perfect training program as a guidance. Training program is a guiding document for teacher training, and any training mode should be centered on the training program. The key to successfully carry out the teacher training management mode based on group dynamics mechanism is to comprehensively consider various factors such as driving force, cohesive force and binding force in the process of formulating training plan, and all the elements from the target setting, curriculum setting, training methods, site selection strive to serve the the normal operation of the training field, adhere to reflect the subject status of the participants, and be conducive for the participants to carry out multi-dimensional dialogue and communication.

Secondly, there should be attractive “training ground” as a support. “Training field” is a carrier of mode operation and dynamic operation, and its effectiveness depends on the simultaneous effect of psychological field and physical field. The formation and development of psychological field lies on the cohesive force and centripetal force of teacher group, and is mainly derived from the coordination and cooperation of various dynamic factors. The effectiveness of physical field depends on the appeal of the training site, and the interaction and migration between training site and the teachers’ working scene should be emphasized especially, namely, the teachers’ education practice scene is continuously restored by simulating the scene and real scene, so as to make them realize individual growth and development in the practice

activity, (Wenger & Snyder, 2000) and improve their role consciousness, education ability and strategy required by a teacher.

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