

Research on the Optimization Path of Preschool Education Majors' Activity Design Ability: Taking Preschool Children's Social and Cultural Activities as an Example

Chengjun Zhang, Xingling Zuo, Yuping Cao*

Yuxi Normal University, Yuxi 653000, Yunnan, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: The “*Professional Competence Standards for Preschool Education Majors (for Trial Implementation)*” specifies the requirements for designing educational activity plans in the practical abilities of care and education for preschool education majors. However, the following problems still exist in the teaching of preschool children's social and cultural activities: first, the formulation of activity objectives needs to be optimized; second, the responsiveness to social and cultural content is insufficient; third, the activity process is inconsistent with the achievement of objectives; fourth, the application of activity materials lacks effectiveness. Strategies are proposed, including high-standard refinement and verification of the design of preschool children's social and cultural activity objectives, multi-channel collection and application of content for preschool children's social and cultural activities, interdisciplinary enrichment of the presupposition and implementation of the process of preschool children's social and cultural activities, and extensive enhancement of the types and effectiveness of materials for preschool children's social and cultural activities.

Keywords: Preschool children's social and cultural activities; Activity design; Preschool education

Online publication: April 26, 2026

1. Introduction

Connolly pointed out that children aged 3–6 can acquire stereotypes from social culture under the infiltration and influence of the social and cultural environment, gradually form positive emotions towards the culture they live in, and mark, recognize and construct self-identity based on emotional characteristics. The cultural-historical development theory holds that social and cultural knowledge and experience are the foundation of children's socialization. Preschool children's social and cultural activities refer to educational activities designed for children aged 3–6 with social and cultural experience as the core. They are highly compatible with ideological and political education elements in courses, which not only add rich teaching resources to the teaching reform of “*Preschool Children's Social Education*,” but also provide an original possibility for preschool education majors to respond to the national integrated pattern of “great ideological and political

education". Mature design ability of preschool children's social and cultural activities is the primary premise to turn possibility into reality. The "*Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers (for Trial Implementation)*" states that "planning and implementation of educational activities" is one of the necessary professional abilities of kindergarten teachers, requiring kindergarten teachers to "formulate phased educational activity plans and specific educational activity schemes". As a compulsory course for juniors, normal university students are familiar with the basic elements and requirements of designing centralized teaching activity plans in kindergartens, and have completed the formulation of activity plans in corresponding fields. However, in the process of curriculum construction, it is found that preschool education majors have the following problems in designing preschool children's social and cultural activities: first, the formulation of activity objectives needs to be optimized; second, the responsiveness to social and cultural content is insufficient; third, the activity process is inconsistent with the achievement of objectives; fourth, the application of activity materials lacks effectiveness. This paper selects two sessions of undergraduate students majoring in preschool education who have completed the course of "*Preschool Children's Social Education*" as the research objects, with a total of 200 students. The action research method is adopted to carry out "problem analysis – refinement and correction – practical operation verification – experience extraction", focusing on text analysis and trial lecture evaluation on the formulation of objectives, content sources, process design and material delivery when normal university students design preschool children's social and cultural activities, tracing the causes in interviews, and summarizing the existing problems and corresponding strategies of normal university students in designing preschool children's social and cultural activities^[1].

2. Principles for preschool education majors to design preschool children's social and cultural activities

2.1. Unity of national policy orientation and social culture

Raising children for the country is a political direction that kindergarten teachers must firmly grasp. The "*Preschool Education Law*" stipulates that preschool education should implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, inherit and carry forward the fine traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture. This further consolidates the important position of carrying out social and cultural activities in kindergartens and provides policy guidance for normal university students to design preschool children's social and cultural activities. Meanwhile, Mr. Fei Xiaotong mentioned in the theory of cultural consciousness: "Every beauty appreciates its own beauty, appreciates the beauty of others, and all beauties coexist in harmony for a world of great harmony". On the basis of establishing a correct view of social culture, normal university students apply and innovate the pluralistic and integrated culture of the Chinese nation, and concretize it into perceptible and learnable social and cultural activities for children aged 3–6, so that they can meet the national moral education expectations in the infiltration of subculture^[2].

2.2. Unity of the universality of field objectives and the particularity of age development

The "*Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6*" points out that the overall objectives of the social field are "interpersonal communication and social adaptation", which are indispensable field experiences in cultivating children's personality and sociality, and lay the curriculum attributes and practical direction of preschool children's social activities. Meanwhile, Zhang Chunying's research shows that the development of cultural identity of children in small, middle and large classes is continuous and staged; the effect of social and cultural cognitive experience improves with age. Barrett (2007) and others believed that children aged 5–6 have understood and familiarized themselves with the cultural symbols of their country or nation and developed positive behavioral tendencies. Normal university students need to decompose the age characteristics of children in small, middle and large classes on the basis of grasping the overall objectives of preschool children's social and cultural activities, and design activities hierarchically to reflect appropriateness.

2.3. Unity of scientificity and ideological nature of activity design

Vygotsky believed that the lower psychological functions obtained through biological evolution and the higher psychological functions mediated by spiritual production tools are the two functions for human beings to understand the world, and the design of scientific activity is an important prerequisite for children to acquire symbols. Scientificity means that the design of kindergarten teachers in formulating objectives, selecting content, delivering materials and presupposing problems for social and cultural activities should conform to the essential disciplinary attributes of preschool children's social education, especially highlighting subjective experience according to the characteristics of social and cultural learning of children aged 3–6. In addition, brain science research shows that the age of 3–6 is a critical period for the development of behavioral and emotional areas in the brain. Firmly grasping the focus of preschool children's social and cultural activities should be emotional penetration rather than mechanical instillation of knowledge and skills, and giving children space to feel and form emotional resonance through various scientific education and care methods^[3].

3. Problems in preschool education majors' design ability of preschool children's social and cultural activities

In 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the “*Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheriting and Developing Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture*,” which clearly states that “the excellent traditional Chinese culture should be integrated into all links of ideological and moral education, cultural knowledge education, art and physical education, and social practice education in an all-round way”. It is an inherent requirement to realize the national education purpose for normal university students to refine the factors of excellent traditional Chinese culture and integrate them into the design of preschool children's social and cultural activities. Through investigation, it is found that there are the following problems in the activity design texts of normal university students:

First, the formulation of activity objectives needs to be optimized. Activity objectives play a guiding, regulating and evaluating role in the whole activity design.

Normal university students basically memorize and understand the social adaptation abilities and characteristics of children aged 3–6 in the *Outline* and *Guidelines*, but fail to transfer knowledge in time to formulate activity objectives in the face of diverse cultural manifestations of children. On the one hand, social and cultural activities ignore emotional objectives as the focus of activities; on the other hand, the objectives of social and cultural activities are not specific enough. For example, the knowledge objective of the large-class social and cultural activity “*Chopsticks*” is: to know chopsticks. It does not specify the specific dimensions such as the shape, material and function of chopsticks that children should achieve in this activity, which easily leads to the phenomenon that the subsequent teaching links are not focused and teaching content is randomly delivered.

Second, the responsiveness to social and cultural content is insufficient. On the one hand, the understanding of social and cultural connotation by normal university students is not highly compatible with the real subculture, and they lack the ability to extract usable and teachable resources for preschool children's social and cultural activities by applying embodied subculture; on the other hand, the attention to the embodied cultural experience of children aged 3–6 needs to be further deepened, especially to give responsive cultural symbols on the basis of grasping the social and cultural learning space of children with different family capital, gender and age backgrounds.

Third, the activity process is inconsistent with the achievement of objectives. The promotion of the “three links and six steps” in the activity process corresponds one-to-one or crosswise to achieve the activity objectives, and the key and difficult points of the objectives should be deeply achieved through diversified methods. The setting of activity links is “chaotic, biased, and scattered,” failing to deeply think about the relationship between the activity process and objectives. For example, the introduction link of the large-class social and cultural activity “*Three-course Tea*” is that teachers lead children into the venue dressed in Bai ethnic costumes, speaking Bai language, and accompanied by Bai music, and then the teachers continue to lead children to sing and dance. It obviously deviates from the disciplinary key points of social

and cultural activities. The purpose of this introduction link is to eliminate the psychological barrier between teachers and children and create a living situation of the Bai people, rather than a singing and performing activity.

Fourth, the application of activity materials lacks effectiveness. The accumulation of preschool children's social and cultural experience is inseparable from effective interaction with environmental materials. Teachers need to make overall planning and experimental screening to determine the way, time and spatial relationship of material delivery. There is a lack of in-depth thinking on the materials delivered around the activity content. On the one hand, the materials for social and cultural activities are limited to PPT, videos and pictures, and it is lazy to explore tangible materials that children can feel and learn; on the other hand, the quantity and types of materials serving social and cultural activities are incomplete. For example, in the large-class social and cultural activity "*Chopsticks*," only one pair of disposable wooden chopsticks is used for children's perception, and all children's perception of different types of chopsticks is only through videos and pictures.

4. Optimization path of preschool education majors' design ability of preschool children's social and cultural activities under the background of ideological and political education in courses

4.1. High-standard refinement and verification of the design of preschool children's social and cultural activity objectives

Activity objectives have the functions of guidance, adjustment and evaluation, which not only respond to the requirements of national talent training, but also test the grasp of children's social and cultural perception ability, initially reflecting the scientificity of preschool children's social and cultural activity design. First, explain the connotation of preschool children's social and cultural education objectives in the "*Outline and Guidelines*" with typical frontline cases; second, draw a knowledge map to form the hierarchical relationship of preschool children's social and cultural education objectives, so that normal university students can clarify the relationship among overall objectives, field objectives, unit objectives and activity objectives, and independently experience and form an initial framework for objective design; third, internalize the connotation of subjectivity, operability and specificity of social and cultural activity objective design in positive and negative cases, and independently verify the principles, key and difficult points of preschool children's social and cultural activity objective design in practical operation.

4.2. Multi-channel collection and application of content for preschool children's social and cultural activities

Clarify the dual orientation of "self-education and child-education" of this course. The self-judgment of normal university students' personal subcultural resources is the first step in designing preschool children's social and cultural activities. First, build an effective cultural resource library on the learning platform using the Deepseek large model from the perspective of smart education, add steps of sharing and joint research of social and cultural elements in the knowledge map, and efficiently realize the possibility of perceiving cultural resources and forming designs; second, integrally apply the factors of excellent traditional Chinese culture in the "three practices" of preschool education majors, summer "three going to the countryside" activities, community activities and campus cultural activities of ethnic minorities; third, extract the intersection of excellent traditional Chinese culture and preschool children's social and cultural activities, boldly think about the content of excellent traditional Chinese culture and reorganize specific three-level indicators according to the social and cultural cognitive laws of children aged 3–6, classify the cultural education function in a dual way, apply it in practical operation by teachers and students synchronously, and finally form the educational content of preschool children's cultural activities shared and practiced by teachers and students.

4.3. Interdisciplinary enrichment of the presupposition and implementation of the process of preschool children's social and cultural activities

Break the traditional tendency of “discipline-based”, and enrich the means and approaches for designing the process of preschool children's social and cultural activities by combining the basic principles of activity design in the five fields of preschool education and artistic techniques. Widely absorb applicable elements around the theme of preschool children's social and cultural activities for effective integration, avoid “piling up” in activity steps, but achieve the scientificity of activity design in rational thinking and presupposition. For example, the third link of the large-class social and cultural activity “*Arabica*” is to let children operate and make coffee. However, there are potential safety hazards in the brewing process, so it has been changed to teachers providing different ingredients and guiding children to match coffee with different flavors in teaching and research. It not only responds to the preschool education principle of child-oriented, but also makes children feel the charm of Yunnan coffee in safe, practical activities.

4.4. Extensive enhancement of the types and effectiveness of materials for preschool children's social and cultural activities

Material delivery is the integration of physical materials by teachers after an in-depth grasp of the internal connection of activity design to assist the smooth development of activities. On the one hand, extensively collect materials according to the needs of preschool children's social and cultural activities, and flexibly design them for activities. In the large-class social and cultural activity, “Interesting Shadow Puppetry,” waste cartons are used to build a shadow puppet stage, and self-made bulbs are used to complete shadow puppet performances; on the other hand, the transformation from “having materials” to “having excellent materials” occurs in the process of activity implementation. The so-called “excellence” does not mean high quality or overly exquisite materials, but redesign to achieve teaching objectives. In order to let children feel the superb skills of shadow puppet craftsmen, the shadow puppets delivered for the first time are not easy to operate. Children successfully perform shadow puppets after trial and error, and understand the ingenuity and wisdom in the contrast, so as to highlight the recognition of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

Preschool children's social and cultural activities are a concentrated expression of children's experience of social emotions. Normal university students establish the concept of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into preschool children's social education, improve professional literacy in establishing national identity, building cultural confidence and adhering to dedication to work, realize the child-oriented view of social and cultural education, conform to the education requirements of the social field in the “*Guidelines for Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6*,” implement fostering virtue through education with culture as the carrier, and highlight the social and cultural activity design ability of preschool education majors with “affection, willingness to dig deep and skillful application” in “perception – prediction – practical operation – verification”, so as to achieve the two-level progressive effect of teachers' love for children and parenting love.

Funding

Preschool Children's Social Education, a University-Level First-Class Course Construction Project of Yuxi Normal University

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Connolly P, Kelly B, Smith A, 2009, The Cultural and Political Awareness of 3–6-Year-Olds in Northern Ireland. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 17(2): 187–204.
- [2] Zhang C, Zhang M, Shi W, 2023, Developmental Characteristics of Cultural Identity in Children Aged 3–6: Based on a Three-Year Longitudinal Study of 579 Children. *Journal of Shaanxi Xueqian Normal University*, 2023: 10.
- [3] Barrett M, 2013, *Children’s Knowledge, Beliefs and Feelings About Nations and National Groups*. Taylor and Francis, London.

Publisher’s note

Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.