

# Quality Assurance System for Teachers in Australian Rural Primary Schools and its Implications

Zhengyu Bi, Xiaohui Feng

South-central University for Nationalities, Wuhan, Hubei Province, 430000

---

**Abstract:** Improving the quality of teachers is a common goal in countries around the world today. Australia, as one of the countries with a high degree of teacher education in the world, has invested more in guaranteeing the quality of rural teachers and has also achieved remarkable results. Its teacher quality assurance system is relatively complete, which has strong significance for the reform of rural teachers in China and the promotion of high-quality development of rural teachers. This paper examines the entry, induction and retraining of new teachers, and the withdrawal of teachers in Australia, according to the different stages of teacher development. The study examines the quality assurance system of teachers in Australian rural primary schools, analyses the advantages of the Australian system of high-quality teacher training, and draws the following inspirations in the light of China's actual situation: firstly, a strict teacher entry system to ensure a good entry barrier for teachers; secondly, a collaborative training system among the government, schools and teachers to promote the professional development of primary school teachers; and thirdly, a sound teacher withdrawal system to improve the teacher quality assurance system.

**Keywords:** Australia; Rural primary school teachers; Teacher quality assurance system

---

## 1. Introduction

An effective way to ensure that rural teacher education continues to develop healthily and steadily, and that students enjoy an fair and high-quality "education at home", is to establish an efficient and coordinated quality assurance mechanism for teachers. As a developing country, China still faces significant challenges in ensuring the quality of rural primary school teachers in the future. As one of the world's leading countries in the development of teacher education, the study of Australia's rural teacher quality assurance system can provide a direction for China's efforts to build a rural teaching force and ensure the quality of rural primary school teachers.

## 2. A conceptual study of 'teacher quality'

Most national and international studies have analysed the meaning of "teacher quality" in different dimensions. For example, the US federal government's The No Child Left Behind Act Of 2001 defines teacher quality as having a state-issued teaching certificate, at least a bachelor's degree, and a high level of proficiency in the corresponding subject matter<sup>[1]</sup>. However, the concept of 'teacher quality' is developmental rather than static. Thus there is more research on the extension of teacher quality. There are two main different perspectives on the extensions of teacher quality, such as Laura Goe, an American scholar who divides teacher quality into three stages of input, process and outcome dimensions from the perspective of the quality management process<sup>[2]</sup>. Another perspective on the extension of teacher quality is based on the 'stages of teacher education', which can be divided into pre-service training quality, in-service education quality and in-service training quality.

Therefore, this paper follows and develops the above-mentioned viewpoints and examines the quality assurance system for teachers in Australian rural primary schools in the three stages of teacher entry, use and withdrawal, from the four aspects of teacher entry, new teacher induction and retraining, and teacher withdrawal, to analyse the advantages of its system for quality teacher training in order to improve the quality of teachers in Chinese rural primary schools and promote quality development of rural education.

### **3. Quality Assurance System for Teachers in Australian Rural Primary Schools**

#### **3.1 Teacher Admission System**

To become a primary school teacher in Australia, one needs to complete at least a rigorous process of a pre-service teacher education accreditation system and teacher registration before being awarded a teaching qualification.

In recent years, a new system of accreditation for pre-service teacher education has been established in Australia. The accreditation criteria for this system correspond to two separate components depending on the target audience, one being the graduate criteria. The other is the preparation standard, which covers admissions to teacher education institutions, curriculum teaching, and assessment procedures.

Before one enters the teaching profession, he is supposed to obtain a teaching qualification and go through three stages: teacher preparation, provisional registration and full registration. The teacher preparation phase refers to the completion of a professional course of study at a college (department) of higher education. Provisional registration stage, this stage is to verify pre-service teachers by the Teachers Registration Authority. At the full registration stage, provisionally registered teachers are required to provide sufficient evidence that they are competent to teach. The new teacher will then apply again to the Teachers Registration Board for full registration and full teacher status.

#### **3.2 Induction system for new teachers**

Due to the lack of sufficient work experience, new teachers' lack of understanding of their future work, and many teachers, especially those in rural areas, are in a precarious position. In order to enable new teachers to adapt to their new working environment and change their role as quickly as possible, Australia has adopted different training strategies to meet the needs of new teachers at different times during their induction period. There are three periods of teacher induction: Orientation, Establishment and Development.

During the orientation period, the school will arrange for them to get to know the school and its surroundings, identify their teaching responsibilities and develop a proper understanding of the teaching profession. New teachers are also assigned an 'initial mentor', whose tasks are more detailed and closely related to the new teacher's later teaching. During the establishment period, the new teacher's main task is to learn. And then, after experience has been gained, they can take on a small amount of teaching work. During the developmental period, New teachers begin to leave their mentor teachers and take on independent teaching tasks.

#### **3.3 Retraining system for in-service teachers**

In Australia, in-service teachers can be retrained in either a full-time face-to-face format at a higher education institution for six months, or in a school for 12 months without interfering with their regular teaching duties. What both types of training have in common is the importance they place on the performance of teachers and their level of professional practice. In order to improve the quality of teachers after retraining, the strategy for ensuring retraining includes: criteria for passing retraining, with input from various representatives (curriculum experts, school committees, teachers, etc. ); retraining programmes that are not "one-size-fits-all" but are designed and evaluated by different advisory committees during implementation; rigorous selection of participating teachers; annual evaluation of retraining, with the results serving as a basis for later monitoring; and exploration of new forms of retraining<sup>[3]</sup>.

#### **3.4 Teacher withdrawal system**

Teacher withdrawal mechanisms play an integral role in stabilizing the teaching force and are therefore an important part of teacher quality assurance. It is important to note that the Australian teacher withdrawal system does not simply 'remove' unqualified teachers, but that the legitimate rights of teachers are fully protected at every stage. For example, new teachers are often given the opportunity to improve and make amends for their inexperience or difficulties in adapting to teaching, and are given more professional coaching; after the coaching, they are assessed and evaluated accordingly, and teachers who pass the evaluation and pass the assessment are allowed to return to teaching, otherwise they are still subject to review.

### **4. Implications for quality assurance of teachers in rural primary schools in China**

#### **4.1 Strictly enforce the admission system for teachers**

Firstly, attention is paid to the pre-service educational preparation of primary school teachers. It has developed to the point where the requirements for teachers in Australian rural primary schools now reach a bachelor's degree or higher. In China, the requirement for primary school teachers is to graduate from a secondary teacher training school. For rural areas, the require-

ment may be even lower, and it is even more difficult to ensure the quality of primary school teachers.

Secondly, to clarify the standards of teacher preparation for primary schools. Drawing on the Australian experience, graded standards of professional preparation for primary school teachers and professional standards for teacher education should be developed and clarified according to different levels of recipients, such as teacher education training institutions and teacher training graduates; at the same time, some of the systems need to be innovated to bring them into line with the actual development of pre-service training for rural teachers in China.

Thirdly, teacher certification is strictly controlled. China's teacher qualification system was only formally established in law in 1993, and there are still many problems in the specific work, its standard requirements and standard management need to be further improved and improved

#### **4.2 Building a collaborative training system among the Government, schools and teachers to promote the professional development of primary school teachers**

First of all, the government, as a guide, must clarify its main responsibilities, plan the direction and objectives of teacher training in rural primary schools, scientifically forecast the number and structure of future teacher needs in rural areas, and effectively match recruitment and training with the actual needs of teachers in rural areas. At the same time, the Ministry of Education and the provincial education administrations can divide and adjust the relevant teacher education policies in accordance with the principle of "hierarchical management", and divide the work to implement teacher education policies.

Secondly, as an important organisational body in education, schools can provide an effective platform for teachers to practice and develop. Therefore, for higher teacher training institutions, on the basis of setting up good theoretical and practical courses related to pre-service teachers, each institution should have a clear mission and plan to train a group of students of a specific location and discipline to serve in rural areas. In the case of weak rural schools, timely feedback should be given on the actual needs of rural areas, so that universities can train teachers in a targeted manner according to the actual needs.

Finally, teachers should give full play to their main role and should clarify the task of teaching rural education and, through each stage of practice and internship, form their own perceptions and reflections and build their own exclusive practical knowledge.

#### **4.3 Improving the teacher withdrawal system and the quality assurance system for teachers**

First, establish uniform withdrawal criteria for rural teachers. There are serious differences between rural teachers and urban teachers in terms of teacher qualifications, teaching equipment and teaching environment, and the criteria for judging them should be different.

Secondly, the procedure for withdrawing teachers is regulated. We can learn from the advanced experience of Australia and adopt a system of notice and hearing in the process of dismissal of teachers, so that unqualified teachers have the opportunity to defend themselves. The authority for accepting unqualified teachers must also be determined, and an authority with a specific assessment for unqualified teachers must be established to undertake the withdrawal of teachers.

Thirdly, teachers who are incompetent to teach may be subject to scientifically sound remedial measures depending on the circumstances. Moreover, we will improve the re-employment system for teachers and help ex-teachers to find suitable careers and acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills to achieve re-employment as soon as possible.

## **References**

- [1] President George W. Bush. The No Child Left Behind Act Of 2001. [R/OL]. [2021-02-02]. <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>. 2001
- [2] Laura Goe. The Link Between Teacher Quality and om Outcomes: A Research Synthesis [EB/OL]. [http://secc.sedl.org/orc/resources/Link Between TQ and Student Outcomes pdf](http://secc.sedl.org/orc/resources/Link%20Between%20TQ%20and%20Student%20Outcomes.pdf), 2012-08-30.
- [3] Xiaochun Lei, ed. Teacher education in Australia [M]. Guangzhou: Guangdong Higher Education Publishing Press, 1991.

### **About the author:**

Zhengyu Bi, PhD in education, is an associate professor in the School of Education, South-central University For Nationalities, and her research interests include education policy, teacher education, and basic theory of education management.

Xiaohui Feng, is a Master's student in 2020 batch at the School of Education, South-central University For Nationalities, with a research area of teacher education.