

# Professional Development of College English Teachers in the Context of Ideological and Political Education

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of China's higher education is to cultivate students' moral characters and enhance their social responsibilities. To realize the target, China has carried out ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum. College English courses, as an indispensable part of the higher education, also play an important role in achieving this aim. College English teachers are regarded to be the key elements that determine the success or failure of the current teaching attempt. However, faced with these new challenges and demands, college English teachers have obvious problems of insufficient motivation and ability, which will hinder the process of teaching reform. Therefore, to redefine and constantly promote the professional development of college English teachers turns to be urgent. Only by stimulating the core driving force for the professional development of college English teachers and promoting their growth can teachers better cope with the changes and challenges brought about by the new educational situation and make contributions to achieving the educational goal of higher education.

**Keywords:** Professional development, Ideological and political education, College English teachers, The core driving force of the teacher professional development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cultivating students' moral characters and enhancing their social responsibilities is the fundamental task of higher education, and ideological and political education integrated throughout the curriculum is an effective way for universities to achieve teaching aim. As an important component of higher education, college English courses should also positively probe in the field, through which teachers are the key. However, faced with this new situation of educational reform, college English teachers have obvious problems of insufficient motivation and ability. Only by stimulating the core driving force for the professional development of college English teachers and promoting their professional development can teachers better cope with the changes and challenges brought about by the new educational situation and make contributions to achieving the goal of higher education.

## 2. THE NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

The research on teacher professional development began in the 1960s. In the traditional sense, the professional qualities that college English teachers should possess are mainly considered to include: language knowledge, teaching concepts, teaching skills, and academic research abilities. The typical requirements for college English teachers' professional abilities are mainly aimed at the improvement of the professional teaching and students' comprehensive use of the English language. However, the development and the ever-changing situations of the society have new requirements for teachers' professional abilities. *The Guidelines for College English Teaching* (2020)

clearly states that socialist core values should be organically integrated into college English courses. This means that new dimensions have been added to College English curriculum in terms of both educational responsibilities and teaching contents. It can be seen from that on the way of education, China is combining its own actual situation, more and more clearly defining the goal and direction of educating people with Chinese characteristics and is moving towards a characteristic road that conforms to its own actual situation. The new teaching objectives have put forward new requirements for the professional quality of college English teachers, and the professional development of college English teachers should be endowed with new connotations and extensions. In addition to various abilities centered on professional knowledge, they should also include relevant qualities and abilities centered on ideological and political education, such as the ability to improve teaching concepts and one's own ideological and political literacy, to establish ideological and political teaching objectives, and to explore ideological and political materials. Besides, the ability to design and evaluate ideological and political education and to learn and research is also desirable. So, how should college English teachers better respond to the changes and challenges brought about by ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum?

### **3. PROMOTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS AND MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION**

The continuity, diversity, and autonomy of teacher professional development are the guarantees for promoting the growth of college English teachers. The ideological and political aspects of college English courses pose new challenges to teachers' teaching concepts, teaching skills, teaching contents, and evaluation methods. These challenges also become triggers for teacher professional development, promoting them to continuously absorb and expand new teaching knowledge, and independently and continuously explore and progress towards new teaching goals and needs.

Firstly, from the trajectory of teacher professional development, it can be seen that

teacher professional development is sustainable. The core of Perry's (1980) definition of teacher professional development lies in "growth". He believes that teacher professional development is the growth of teachers in their professional life, such as the expansion and improvement of teachers' professional knowledge and skills. It can be seen that teachers' professional literacy is not static, but a dynamic process of continuously deepening and updating teaching literacy and skills in the process of meeting teaching needs and goals. The sustainability of teacher professional development determines that in the face of the challenges of ideological and political education reform in college English courses, college English teachers can strive to achieve their professional development and meet the teaching needs of ideological and political education in college English courses in the new era. Therefore, teacher professional development is the route for teachers to grow to meet the needs of English teaching reforms.

Secondly, from the perspective of the content covered by teacher professional development, it can be clearly known that the content of teacher professional development is inclusive and diverse but not singular. It covers the growth of teachers in multiple dimensions of their professional life, such as the continuous updating of concepts, skills and methods, the accumulation of experience, and the expansion of models, and the like. That is to say, any content that contributes to promoting teacher professional development, meeting teaching need, and achieving teaching objectives can be included in the scope of teacher professional development. So, to meet the challenges of ideological and political education in college English courses, the literacy and abilities related to ideological education should also fall within the scope of teacher development and become one of the contents of teacher professional development. At the same time, the development of ideological education related literacy and abilities can also effectively promote the professional development of teachers, thereby achieving the growth of teachers and meeting the needs of ideological and political education reform in university English courses.

Thirdly, teacher professional development has the nature of autonomy, which provides a continuous driving force for teacher professional development and drives teachers to grow with the constant changes in teaching needs. Teachers all have strong autonomy in professional development, which is an inherent attribute brought about by the

sense of responsibility and mission of the teaching profession. The reason comes from the following aspects: firstly, the effectiveness of the teacher's teaching can receive feedback immediately. This feedback comes from the participation and interaction level of students in class learning, teachers' self-evaluation and reflection on teaching effectiveness and evaluations and suggestions from colleagues and students. The second is derived from teachers' self-evaluation and self-monitor of teaching effectiveness. This feedback can bring positive or negative emotional experiences to teachers, enabling them to spontaneously summarize and organize good teaching practices or think about ways to break teaching bottlenecks in a timely manner after class. In short, the autonomy of teacher professional development endows teachers with the ability to proactively discover and solve problems and learn from experiences in teaching practice and reflection. The proposal of the goal of ideological and political education in college English courses will inevitably trigger teachers to continuously grow in teaching practice and reflection, in order to meet the needs of ideological and political education reform in college English courses.

#### **4. STIMULATING THE CORE DRIVING FORCE FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS**

The professional development of college English teachers is the result of a combination of external incentives and internal decisive factors. Anything is the result of the joint action of internal and external factors. Internal factors are the fundamental driving force for teachers' professional development, while external factors act through internal factors. Firstly, the internal factors of teacher professional development mainly refer to the autonomy of teacher professional development. Autonomy is the core driving force for teacher professional development, mainly referring to a professional development method in which teachers independently determine development goals, develop and utilize learning resources, design development strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes based on their self-development and school development needs in the school context. To achieve teacher professional autonomy development, teachers need to possess the following characteristics: firstly, the sense of

professional mission and responsibility is desirable. The second is the ability to actively reflect, and the third is the ability to learn independently. Secondly, the construction of a reasonable external environment can help stimulate the internal factors of teachers' professional development. Especially at present, college English teaching needs to go hand in hand with ideological and political education. This is a new approach that is different from traditional college English teaching. Teachers' teaching concepts, teaching content, teaching models, and evaluation methods have all entered a new exploration field. For teachers, this is an unfamiliar field where they may experience feelings of fear, laziness, and even frustration and helplessness. In this context, it is even more necessary for external factors to help teachers stimulate their core motivation for professional development, also providing a good external environment for teachers' professional development and providing necessary guidance and assistance.

#### **4.1 Stimulating the Social Responsibility of College English Teachers**

The sense of professional mission and responsibility of teachers is the driving force for their independent professional development, as well as the driving force and traction for their conscious growth. The traditional sense of responsibility and mission of traditional college English teachers is more within the scope of the discipline, committed to cultivating students' abilities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, and improving their comprehensive English proficiency. As college English teaching plays an increasingly important role in national strategic decision-making, college English teachers should also enhance their sense of social responsibility, incorporate the implementation of ideological and political education in college English courses into their professional responsibilities, help students establish a correct outlook on life and values, and cultivate qualified socialist builders and successors with a sense of patriotism and international perspective for the country. Only when college English teachers establish their sense of social responsibility can they better drive their growth and meet the needs of ideological and political education in college English courses. The professional mission and sense of responsibility of college English teachers have added new dimensions in the context of the reform of ideological and political education. Teachers can gradually realize their sense of social responsibility in their learning and social

observation. However, this process is slow and lacks systematic and comprehensive understanding. External factors need to be coordinated to effectively stimulate teachers' sense of social responsibility. Firstly, relevant departments of the school can guide and assist teachers in understanding students' ideological dynamics. Contemporary college students face several ideological problems, including impatience, lazy thinking, spiritual emptiness and confusion. Some of them excessively pursue quick success and overlook the importance of hard work and persistence. Some rely too much on the Internet, lacking independence observation and creative thinking. Others feel lost and confused in their pursuit of knowledge and growth without a clear direction and meaningful spiritual support. All these are hindering students' growth. In traditional teaching research, teachers mainly focus on investigating students' learning situation, concentrated on understanding students' learning goals, motives, situations, difficulties, strategies, and other aspects. Schools can help teachers learn and produce scientific and reasonable survey questionnaires, allowing them to timely understand not only the learning situation but also the dynamic ideological confusions of students. By using intuitive data, teachers can understand the urgency and necessity of ideological education for students, stimulate their sense of social responsibility and identification with ideological education, and also ensure the accuracy of ideological education. The second is to build teacher ethics and conduct through various channels, both online and offline, to improve teachers' ideological literacy, consolidate their professional ideals, help college English teachers identify with the teaching philosophy of "moral education" and "cultivating talents", love and be responsible to students, and thus stimulate their sense of social responsibility.

#### ***4.2 Increasing the Dimension of Reflection Content for College English Teachers***

Reflection is an important mechanism for teachers to achieve professional development, which has great significance for their self-growth. It is a necessary path to achieve teachers' professional development and a "catalyst" to stimulate teachers' self-professional development. Teaching reflection is the process for teachers to explore, to understand and to research teaching concepts and elements in teaching practice, and it is also a ladder for teachers to improve their teaching ability. The new round of teaching reform and the implementation of

ideological and political concepts in curriculum in China have put forward higher requirements and new challenges for college English teachers. New requirements are put forward in every aspect of teaching ranging from curriculum concepts and educational goals to teaching methods. This requires college English teachers to clarify and update their reflection content in a timely manner and strengthen their reflection awareness to achieve their self-development and improvement. Traditional reflection was mainly centered around the English language teaching goal and learning goal which apparently cannot satisfy today's reform needs. The scope of reflection should be broadened and injected with new dimensions. To achieve the above goal, relative departments should be more creative and organized and offer teachers any help they can to accelerate teachers' growth. Through learning, training, regular communication, and conscious training, schools and relative departments can assist teachers in breaking through the limitations of traditional reflection both in content and modes and push them to continuously explore and expand the new areas of their reflection. In addition to achieving knowledge goals, teachers should be also guided to incorporate ideological education goals into the content of reflection. Through communication, reflection, and practice, teachers can constantly update their teaching concepts, improve teaching skills, material mining, and teaching design abilities, so as to implement the ideological and political aspects of college English courses.

#### ***4.3 Improving the Learning and Research Abilities of College English Teachers***

The implementation of the new round of college English teaching reform makes the professional self-development of college English teachers urgent. Improving the learning and research abilities of college English teachers is of great necessity. For one thing, it is conducive to discovering and promoting the improvement of teachers' teaching skills; for the other thing, by studying relevant theories and methods, it is helpful for the update and progress of teachers' teaching concepts and ideological literacy. To meet the requirements of ideological and political education reform in college English courses, teachers should clarify their own areas of learning and improvement. In addition to traditional teaching qualities, college English teachers also need to enhance their political awareness, strengthen their understanding and understanding of national politics, culture, history,

and other aspects, and clarify their political responsibilities and obligations. Firstly, college English teachers should have an interdisciplinary perspective to have a good interdisciplinary perspective and ability, understand the relationships and interactions between different disciplines, and pay more comprehensive and in-depth attention to students' ideological and political education in teaching. Secondly, teachers should also need to pay attention to the guidance and shaping of students' emotional needs, configure students' moral qualities and cultivation, enable them to have the ability to think independently and make independent judgments, and provide responsible and creative talents in the new era. Finally, teachers should have strong problem awareness. It is desirable for teachers to be able to ask questions and think critically and actively learn and communicate with expert teachers. Teachers are also supposed to strengthen literature search and reading skills, gradually form their own opinions, and promote the continuous improvement of professional quality.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In short, in the context of ideological and political education in college English courses, one of the most efficient ways to meet the new needs is to promote the professional development of college English teachers constantly. However, the new times and demands have injected the traditional professional development with new contents and dimensions. It is obliged for schools and teachers to learn and redefine the development in the new context, based on which, college English teachers can better understand the meaning and way of their professional growth and then successfully stimulate the core driving force of their professional development. Through enhancing their social responsibility and improving their abilities of reflection, and learning and researching, they can effectively achieve their professional growth, continuously improve their professional ideals, constantly update teaching concepts and improve their own ideological and political literacy and educational ability. Thus, college English teachers can not only be qualified to improve students' comprehensive English application ability but also play a leading role in ideological and political education, by which they can truly achieve the goal of moral education and cultivate talents with the sense of social responsibilities, thereby making positive contributions to the cultivation of high-quality English talents.

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