

Exploring the Path of Professional Ability Advancement for College English Teachers in the Era of New Quality Productive Forces

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Abstract: *This article focuses on the exploration of the career advancement path for college English teachers under the background of new quality productive forces. On the basis of a profound understanding of the connotation of new quality productive forces, this paper deeply analyzes the inherent correlation between new quality productive forces and the professional development of college English teacher, and then explores from the aspects of building a lifelong learning system, deepening teaching reflection ability, cultivating digital literacy, and shaping professional resilience. The aim is to provide theoretical reference and practical direction for college English teacher in the new era to break through career development bottlenecks and adapt to the digital transformation of education, thereby helping them achieve sustainable professional growth in the education ecology driven by new quality productive forces.*

Keywords: *New Quality Productive Forces; College English Teacher; Professional Ability*

1. The Connotation of NQPF

In September 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping first proposed the expression of “new quality productive forces (NQPF)” during his inspection and research in Heilongjiang. He emphasized: “Actively cultivate strategic emerging industries such as new energy, new materials, advanced manufacturing, and electronic information, actively cultivate future industries, accelerate the formation of NQPF, and enhance new driving forces for development.” The Central Economic Work Conference held in December of the same year proposed to promote industrial innovation through technological innovation, especially to use disruptive and cutting-edge technologies to stimulate new industries, new models, and new driving forces, and develop NQPF.^[1] The emergence of NQPF is a significant leap in the development of productive forces to a new stage, an important theoretical proposition of Marxist political economics in the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and a major theoretical innovation in the political economy of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is closely related to the development of emerging and future industries, representing a new form of productivity that is technology intensive, innovation driven, and has broad development prospects.

Essentially, the “new” in NQPF is mainly reflected in three aspects. Firstly, it is characterized by the development and application of breakthrough and revolutionary high-tech; Secondly, it relies heavily on new economic forms and emerging industries such as digital economy and green economy; Thirdly, technological innovation plays a leading role in all aspects of its development process. It can be said that NQPF can give birth to new technologies, create new value, and adapt to the needs of new industries. It is an advanced productivity that is both innovative and of high quality. The “quality” in NQPF reflects the new advanced forms of productivity generated by technological innovation breakthroughs and industrial transformation and upgrading under the conditions of informatization, digitization, and intelligent production. This qualitative leap is not only a technological innovation, but also a systematic transformation of the entire production mode and industrial ecosystem. In the context of the digital age, the combination of productivity factors, value creation models, and industrial organization forms have undergone profound changes, forming a new quality that is completely different from traditional productivity.

Compared with traditional productive forces, NQPF have significant differences in essence. Its production factors have shifted from traditional labor and capital to data, technology, and knowledge as the core, its development mode has shifted from scale expansion to quality and efficiency improvement,

and its industrial form has shifted from single division of labor to cross-border integration. The transformation of this social production mode has put forward new requirements for the talent cultivation mode of universities, and the innovation of talent cultivation mode has new expectations for the career development of university teachers. Therefore, a profound understanding of the basic connotation of NQPF is the logical starting point for exploring the path of enhancing the professional abilities of college English teachers.

2. The Correlation between NQPF and the Career Development of College English Teacher

As the core force driving high-quality social development, the NQPF have also brought new challenges and requirements to the career development of college English teachers. In the wave of technological innovation, the widespread application of artificial intelligence and information technology is quietly changing the ecological pattern of language education. The widespread use of intelligent translation tools and language learning software has reduced the importance of traditional language knowledge teaching. Nowadays, college students generally rely on intelligent tools to assist in English learning, which forces teachers to readjust their teaching focus. At the same time, new technologies such as virtual reality and big data analysis have created conditions for creating immersive language environments, which requires teachers to master the application skills of these emerging technologies. The rise of emerging teaching models such as simulating real international business negotiation scenarios through VR technology, or using learning analysis systems to provide targeted personalized teaching and guidance for students, requires teachers to adapt to the needs of the times, keep up with the pace of the times, and continuously improve their digital literacy.

From the perspective of industrial demand, the flourishing development of new business models has put forward new requirements for talent cultivation in universities. The development of emerging industries such as cross-border e-commerce and international technology services has made compound talents who are proficient in professional knowledge and possess cross-cultural communication skills more competitive. The changing demand for talent from employers has prompted College English teachers to break through the traditional single language teaching model and transition to an interdisciplinary training model of “language + major” in the teaching process. This requires teachers to understand relevant industry knowledge, master ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teaching methods, and integrate real work scenarios into the process of teaching practice.

In addition, the advancement of educational modernization is also driving a fundamental transformation in the role of teachers. In the context of NQPF, the responsibilities of teachers are no longer limited to simply imparting knowledge, but need to assume multiple roles such as learning designers and innovation guides. This change in role requires teachers to make adjustments in their teaching methods, shifting from a “teacher centered” approach to a “student centered” approach, emphasizing the cultivation of students’ autonomous learning and innovation abilities. In the evaluation system, teachers need to shift from mastering language knowledge to the comprehensive development of students’ abilities. The path of professional development also needs to integrate multiple abilities for collaborative improvement based on in-depth research in a single subject.

The correlation between this new quality of productive forces and the career development of college English teachers determines the necessity of advancing their professional abilities. To adapt to the objective needs of digital transformation in education, teachers can not only effectively avoid being marginalized in the wave of technology, but also respond to the policy call of building a strong education country, meet the strategic needs of cultivating composite international talents, and serve the development of NQPF. At the same time, it can also achieve sustained appreciation of teachers’ personal value and seize development opportunities in higher education reform. Of course, this advancement in professional skills is not a denial of traditional teaching abilities, but rather an expansion and improvement based on inheriting the core advantages of language teaching.

3. The Path of Professional Ability Advancement for College English Teachers

3.1 Building a Lifelong Learning System: From Knowledge Updating to Ability Iteration

The NQPF present a dual feature of “vertical deepening + horizontal expansion” in the knowledge needs of English teachers, requiring teachers to break through the limitations of traditional education models and establish a dynamically updated knowledge management system. Not only can it

continuously update professional subject knowledge, but it is also necessary to move from passive acceptance of knowledge to actively building a knowledge system, ultimately forming a dynamic and lifelong learning professional competence framework.

Vertically deepening language knowledge means that teachers should keep up with the development of linguistic theories, grasp the research results of cutting-edge fields such as cognitive linguistics and multimodal discourse analysis, and transform them into endogenous driving forces for teaching innovation. For example, introducing parallel corpus comparative analysis in translation teaching can help students better understand translation strategies for different language styles. Teachers should systematically learn the relevant terminology system in response to the emerging language domains generated by NQPF, in order to avoid the disconnection between theoretical teaching and reality caused by untimely knowledge updates. In today's society, English education is deeply integrated with multiple fields such as business, technology, and culture. On the basis of vertically cultivating language knowledge, teachers also need to horizontally expand interdisciplinary knowledge and build a composite knowledge reserve of "English + X". Integrating knowledge such as supply chain management and cross-border payments into business English courses; Master basic programming logic and data visualization principles in the course of Science and Technology English; Understand cultural power relations in the global value chain in cross-cultural courses. Through the "English + X" project, relevant interdisciplinary knowledge and skills are integrated into English teaching, enabling students to master English professional knowledge while also catering to the hot topics of economic and social development, and enhancing their personal comprehensive abilities.

In the current era of booming digital education, technological tools have become an important carrier for knowledge transmission. However, if teachers only stay at the level of simply and mechanically operating technical tools, technology empowered education may become a superficial form. To truly enhance the efficiency of knowledge transmission, the key lies in teachers' deep understanding of the application logic of intelligent teaching tools, and closely integrating them with the laws of education and students' cognition, so as to achieve precise matching between "technical characteristics" and "educational laws". Taking speech recognition tools as an example, if teachers only use them as "pronunciation scoring machines", students will only receive cold scores; However, once teachers have a deep understanding of its model principles, they can guide students to analyze specific pronunciation issues such as vowel fullness and consonant clarity, and even develop personalized pronunciation correction plans for students by comparing their pronunciation data from different dialect regions. This teaching design based on the underlying logic of technology can transform knowledge transmission from fuzzy to precise.

3.2 Deepening Teaching Reflection Ability: From Experience Summary to Paradigm Reconstruction

In the era of NQPF, teachers' teaching reflection ability urgently needs to achieve a qualitative leap, that is, from shallow experience summary to deep paradigm reconstruction. This transformation requires teachers to engage in comprehensive and systematic thinking on multiple levels such as teaching objectives, teaching content, and teaching methods, break through the constraints of traditional college English teaching models, and construct a new teaching paradigm that meets the needs of the development of NQPF.

Traditional teaching objectives often focus on the completion of knowledge transmission, while in the process of paradigm reconstruction, teachers need to be guided by the demand for composite talents in NQPF, and deeply reflect and reposition teaching objectives. At the cognitive level, teachers should reflect on whether the teaching objectives cover the cultivation of students' higher-order thinking abilities, such as whether critical thinking training is designed in addition to traditional text comprehension in reading instruction. At the level of competence, attention should be paid to the collaborative cultivation of cross-cultural communication skills and digital literacy. Whether the teaching objectives formulated by teachers clearly specify the requirements for using digital tools for cross-cultural communication, such as whether cross-cultural communication tasks based on virtual simulation scenarios are arranged in oral teaching. At the value level, consideration should be given to whether the teaching objectives have humanistic care. In today's era of widespread application of intelligent technology, teachers should properly handle the relationship between technological efficiency and humanistic education, and avoid neglecting humanistic education due to excessive reliance on technology. While using an intelligent grading system to improve work efficiency, does it still retain emotional communication and personalized guidance between teachers and students.

Regarding the selection of teaching content, teachers should not be limited to the established scope

of the textbook, but should build a three-dimensional content system of “basic language + cutting-edge fields + interdisciplinary knowledge”, actively pay attention to the new developments of the discipline, regularly evaluate and update teaching content, and ensure that teaching content keeps pace with the times. NQPF emphasize interdisciplinary integration, which requires teachers to deeply reflect on whether the teaching content has achieved organic integration between the English subject and other fields. For example, whether the Business English course integrates knowledge related to the digital economy, and whether academic English teaching incorporates research ethics education. Teachers should start from themselves and focus on promoting the transformation of teaching content from a “static knowledge base” to a “dynamic cognitive network”, thereby enhancing students’ adaptability to technological changes.

The adjustment of teaching methods should move from simply applying technical tools to innovating teaching paradigms. Blended learning should not be limited to the frequency of online platform usage, but should delve into how to use virtual simulation technology to create an immersive language learning environment, or use intelligent grading systems to achieve more targeted personalized feedback loops. At the same time, actively exploring new paradigms of “generative AI assisted teaching”, such as guiding students to use modern tools such as ChatGPT for English debate rehearsals. In addition, teachers should make full use of big data platforms to track students’ learning progress in real time, analyze their learning behavior in depth, and provide timely assistance and guidance to students at risk of failing courses, helping them grow and succeed.

3.3 Cultivating Digital Literacy: From Tool Applications to Ecological Construction

With the rapid development of NQPF, digital technology has become a key force driving systemic changes in education. As planners, implementers, and guides of language education, the digital literacy level of college English teachers has a direct impact on teaching quality and educational effectiveness. Nowadays, with the sweeping wave of artificial intelligence and informatization, most teachers have basic digital tool operation abilities and can use multimedia courseware, online dictionaries, audio and video resources, etc. to assist classroom teaching, successfully taking the first step from traditional teaching mode to digital tool application transformation. However, most of these applications still remain at the level of simple tool replacement and content display, and the potential of digital technology in reshaping teaching processes, optimizing learning experiences, and innovating educational models has not been fully explored. Faced with the urgent demand for high-quality foreign language talents in the face of NQPF, teachers’ digital literacy urgently needs to achieve a leap from using a single tool to building a systematic digital education ecosystem.

The deep connotation of digital literacy is not only the proficient use of technical tools, but also covers many aspects such as digital thinking, resource integration, data application, and ethical and security literacy. College English teachers should abandon the traditional concept of viewing technology solely as an auxiliary tool, establish digital thinking, and reconstruct the teaching process. For example, using learning analytics technology to track students’ language learning process, tailoring instruction according to individual needs, and achieving precise and personalized tutoring; By conducting cross-cultural virtual communication projects and utilizing digital technology to create a realistic pragmatic environment, students’ international communication skills can be enhanced. The young student group in the new era has a strong sense of boundaries in their daily learning and life, and has a strong dependence on new media and applications such as online information. College English teachers should actively understand the ideological and behavioral characteristics of contemporary college students, strengthen interaction and communication with students, build harmonious teacher-student relationships, enhance emotional connections, understand the specific situation of students’ English learning through digital technology or various platforms, and select practical and effective technical tools to scientifically integrate them into classroom teaching. Through this benign and continuous interaction and mutual learning, teachers and students jointly accumulate knowledge reserves in the digital age, deepen their understanding and application ability of digital technology, and promote the transformation and upgrading of English curriculum teaching towards digitization and intelligence.^[2]

To effectively promote the advancement of teachers’ digital literacy to the level of ecological construction, universities and educational authorities need to provide multidimensional support. For example, organizing high-level and systematic digital teaching training to help teachers establish a complete digital education knowledge structure. Increase investment in building a smart teaching environment, and through the construction of a comprehensive intelligent digital teaching platform, achieve the integration of English teaching management, resource supply, online and offline English teaching, ability assessment, and learning monitoring. Promote the deep integration of modern

information technology and traditional English teaching, provide basic support for teachers to carry out deep digital practices, and enhance the ability of English teachers to collaborate in educating students in a digital environment.^[3] In addition, the improvement of evaluation and incentive mechanisms is a key link in optimizing the quality assurance system of higher education in the digital age.^[4] Universities and relevant regulatory departments should improve incentive mechanisms, recognize teachers' achievements in digital curriculum construction, teaching innovation exploration, and other aspects, and stimulate their internal motivation for continuous self-renewal. Only by fully stimulating the enthusiasm and creativity of teachers to participate in digital teaching reform can we better promote a qualitative leap in the quality of higher education.

3.4 Shaping Career Resilience: From Stress Management to Value Restructuring

In today's rapidly developing economy and society, the ecology of higher education is undergoing unprecedented profound changes. College English teachers face multiple professional pressures, including rapid technological iteration, deepening teaching reform, and increasing demands for scientific research and innovation. In such a situation, possessing strong professional resilience has become a key ability for teachers to effectively cope with various uncertainties and achieve sustainable career development. Traditional stress management methods mostly focus on psychological counseling for teachers. However, under the new requirements of NQPF, the construction of occupational resilience needs to shift from passive coping with pressure to active adaptation to changes, from simply focusing on individual psychological regulation to promoting the reconstruction of systemic values.

The primary way to enhance the professional resilience of college English teachers is to help them establish a correct understanding of professional stress and a positive coping mechanism. Teachers themselves should be aware that the challenges brought about by technological and educational transformation are not just difficulties and obstacles, but also rare opportunities for their own career development and ability enhancement. By developing long-term learning plans and actively participating in interdisciplinary communication activities, we aim to systematically enhance our adaptability to digital teaching and research environments, gradually transforming external pressures into driving forces for personal growth. At the same time, universities should also take corresponding responsibilities and establish a sound teacher support system. Providing professional mental health services to help teachers alleviate psychological stress; Develop flexible work arrangements to enable teachers to better balance work and life; Establish a crisis intervention mechanism to provide timely assistance to teachers when they face significant pressure and challenges, ensuring that teachers can maintain stable work and life conditions.

More importantly, the shaping of career resilience should not be limited to superficial aspects such as technical operations and psychological adjustment, but should go deep into the deepening of professional identity and the reconstruction of value systems. Under the promotion of NQPF, English teachers need to re-examine their role positioning, organically combine technology application, scientific research innovation, and humanistic care, rediscover the intrinsic value of education and teaching in the intelligent education environment, and thus gain a sense of achievement and satisfaction in this profession. Of course, universities and relevant education departments also play a crucial role in cultivating teachers' professional resilience in terms of institutional support and cultural atmosphere creation. Colleges and universities should actively promote the reform of evaluation mechanisms, abandon single evaluation criteria such as the "paper only" tendency, recognize the achievements of teachers in diverse professional fields, and fully pay attention to the contributions of teachers in various aspects. In addition, universities can establish specialized programs for career resilience development, organize training activities on topics such as career planning and digital ethics, and help teachers enhance their ability to cope with future changes and self-innovation.

4. Conclusion

The improvement of teachers' professional abilities cannot be achieved overnight, it is a complex process with systematicity, dynamism, and sustainability. In this process, teachers should not only focus on improving their teaching skills, but also broaden their horizons, concentrate on creating a dedicated digital education ecosystem, and deeply reshape their professional value system. At the same time, support at the institutional level also plays a crucial role. A sound institutional guarantee, sufficient resource supply, and the construction of a positive cultural atmosphere are all indispensable. In the future, with the continuous evolution of NQPF, teachers should always maintain an open and inclusive learning

attitude, actively embrace innovation. Under the trend of deep integration of technology and education, we are constantly exploring teaching models and development paths that not only conform to the characteristics of the times, but also highlight the charm of the subject and meet the actual needs of students. Only by achieving these can teachers better serve the national strategic needs through the continuous improvement of their professional abilities, realize the sublimation of their personal value in the magnificent journey of educational modernization, and contribute their wisdom and strength to the cultivation of new foreign language talents that meet the needs of the times.

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