



An Examination of the Professional Development of English Teachers in Chinese Universities from the Perspective of Professional Learning Community

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Abstract. In recent years, the research on Professional Learning Community and teachers' professional development has become a frontier topic at home and abroad. The purpose of this paper is that clarify the impact of Professional Learning Community on the professional development of university English teachers in China. This study suggests that effective professional learning community plays a positive role in teachers' professional development, is conducive to the sustainable development of the university, and improves the overall development level of the university.

Keywords: Professional Development · Professional Learning Community · Higher Education

1 Introduction

As a new form of learning organization, Professional Learning Community is not only the object of education, but also the main body of education, and is the internal motive force of education reform [1]. The Professional Learning Community focuses on the close cooperation among teachers, advocates the common development of the whole group of teachers, and makes them build a great relationship of mutual trust and support [2].

In order to improve the level of English teaching in universities and train qualified English talents, develop and improve the university English teachers' professional ability is imperative. This paper aims to explore the professional development of Chinese university English teachers based on the perspective of Professional Learning Community, and evaluate the impact of Professional Learning Community on the professional development of university English teachers.

2 Literature Reviews

2.1 The Role of Professional Learning Community

Community was originally a concept in the field of sociology, but it was introduced into the field of education that the concept of Professional Learning Community came into being. Boyer conducted a study on learning community in 1995. In his research, he thinks that the school is a learning community, and points out that the school must have a shared vision; be able to communicate with each other; everyone is equal; have rules and discipline; care for students; the atmosphere is happy [3]. Teachers' Professional Learning Community provides opportunities for teachers to cooperate, so that teachers in the community can spread teaching ideas, learn teaching methods, share teaching experience, help each other and benefit each other through collective lesson preparation and cooperative learning.

Moreover, domestic scholars generally believe that teachers' participation in collaborative learning community can help teachers deepen their understanding of teaching theory, better guide and improve teaching practice, and ultimately improve students' learning achievement.

2.2 The Development Status of Professional Learning Community in China

In recent years, the theory and practice of teachers' Professional Learning Community in China is more and more attention. In 2018, Zheng, Shen and Yin studied the teachers need what kind of professional learning community. They conducted a survey of teachers based on their current teaching satisfaction and perceived teaching efficacy in the teaching process [4]. The results show that there are not only regular cooperative activities among teachers in China, such as collective lesson preparation, listening and evaluation, open class and other collective activities, in which teachers can share and reflect on practice; the collective activities among teachers have the goal of sharing, and this goal can be realized focus on students' learning clearly.

From the perspective of teachers' Professional Learning Community in China, there are at least two reasons for this conclusion. One is the system and structure of teachers' cooperation. The collective learning activities of teachers in China have a history of more than 60 years. In the institutionalized collective teaching and research activities, teachers are used to participating in collective learning activities, discussing common teaching problems and teaching progress. The other is the influence of collective culture. Under the influence of the culture, even in the areas of relatively lack of resources in China, there are frequent cooperation and ex-changes among teachers, and teachers work together to improve students' learning. Long-term institutionalization and cultural reasons, make it a consensus for teachers to devote themselves to students' learning.

2.3 The Link Between an Effective Professional Learning Community and the Professional Development of Teachers

In order to promote the cultivation of English teachers, it is necessary to take the professional development road of learning community [5]. The development of Professional

Learning Community can reduce teachers' indoctrination education mode and improve students' interest in learning, which is helpful for universities to carry out teaching work. Fred, Pierre, Ellen and Marjan did a research in 2020, they also confirmed this point, they believed that 'developing a Professional Learning Community and participating in a Professional Learning Community may lead to improving teaching practice and students' achievements' [6].

The value of teacher learning community in promoting English teachers' professional development is mainly reflected in: first, it can provide a good cooperative learning environment for teachers' professional development. English teachers' community creates a cooperative learning atmosphere for the development of English teachers, which can promote teachers to share experience and methods. Therefore, their overall participation in the community will have a profound impact on work and learning. English teachers can share teaching resources and educational experience in the community, build close cooperation and promote mutual development. Second, it can provide intangible resources for teachers' professional learning. The learning process of teacher learning community is also a dialogue process. The interaction between English teachers can let them get new knowledge and new ideas, so the dialogue between teachers has become an invisible resource. In this way, teachers can improve their professional level in the process of absorbing these intangible resources.

3 Discussion

3.1 The Current Situation of Professional Development of English Teachers in Chinese Universities

The level of teachers' professional knowledge leads to the quality of teaching, and also affects the learning outcomes of students [7]. In China, English teaching is a very important part of higher education. In many Chinese universities, students need to learn English no matter what their major is. In addition, some schools require students to pass the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4), otherwise they cannot get their diplomas.

The professional quality of English teachers will directly affect the effect of classroom teaching and the employment competitiveness of graduates. Many educators in China have conducted relevant investigations and researches on the professional development of English teachers in Chinese universities. Dai [8] pointed out that the content of university English teachers' professional development involves teachers' consciousness, lifelong commitment to development, teaching reflection, development arrangement, etc. at the same time, it has the characteristics of collaboration, lifelong, reflective, autonomy and self-consciousness. Professor Liu [9] expressed the same view as Dai. In his opinion, in addition to mastering English knowledge, teachers should conduct classroom action research, constantly reflect on themselves, and be able to make reasonable self-adjustment [9]. Although the researchers are not the same in terms of words, they have reached a basic consensus on the content.

3.2 The Influence of Professional Learning Community on English Teachers' Professional Development in Chinese Universities

There is no doubt that an effective Professional Learning Community can promote the professional development of universities English teachers in China [2]. According to the research, the Professional Learning Community needs to have a common vision, the establishment of this common vision is often the result of all English teachers' negotiation and discussion, and this harmonious common vision can better become the goal of everyone's common struggle [2].

Furthermore, in the community building activities, the primary factor to promote teachers' professional development is the activity mode of communication and cooperation. Relevant studies show that teachers get learning opportunities in communication and promote professional development through dialogue and cooperation [10].

Besides, in the course construction, the main body construction of teachers' personal practical knowledge should be let teachers' personal practical knowledge collide in the collective lesson preparation and lecture activities, so that teachers' practical knowledge is constantly constructed and developed, so as to realize teachers' lifelong development.

3.3 Limitations in the Professional Development of English Teachers in Chinese Universities

In the process of developing the Professional Learning Community model, the Chinese University Association should build a sharing and exchange platform according to the actual teaching situation and the growth system of English teachers, so as to promote teachers' efficient cooperation and improve teachers' teaching ability and scientific research level, and enhance team cohesion. However, there are still some limitations in the professional development of English teachers in Chinese universities.

Teachers' Awareness of Professional Development is not Strong, and the Structure of Professional Knowledge is not Perfect. Some teachers are busy with daily teaching tasks, and they don't have systematic personal growth time. Faced with the development of teaching frontier, the structure of teachers' professional knowledge is difficult to be effectively updated. This may reduce the efficiency and quality of the classroom, which is not conducive to the development of teachers' professional ability.

Teachers' Scientific Research Level is Low. Due to the heavy teaching task of universities English teachers. They always spend a lot of time on daily teaching and less time on scientific research, which makes it difficult for English teachers to absorb cutting-edge scientific research materials, which is not conducive to their scientific research and will affect their career development.

The Teaching Method of Teachers is Single. In China, English teachers in universities have high education background, solid theoretical foundation. However, due to various subjective and objective factors such as imperfect school infrastructure, English teachers' teaching methods are single and outdated.

3.4 Strategies to Promote the Professional Development of English Teachers in Chinese Universities

For Teachers.

Enhancing the Sense of Cooperation. For the professional development of university English teachers in China, in the daily process of education and teaching, English teachers need to maintain close cooperation with colleagues, students, academics and school management personnel, and constantly enhance the sense of cooperation among members of reinforcement learning community, maximize the advantages of each member, and improve the professional development level of English teachers in Chinese universities.

Developing Good Study Habits. From the perspective of Professional Learning Community, English teachers in application-oriented universities need to increase their knowledge and experience through continuous learning, so as to achieve all-round development in all aspects.

For Universities.

Establishing a Good Teaching Environment. School leaders need to spend time and energy to explore and establish Professional Learning Community, and fully delegate all kinds of decision-making and management authority, allow English teachers to freely express their academic views, and promote English teachers' research and exploration and academic argumentation, so as to promote English teachers' Professional development.

Increasing Resource Support. In the process of concrete operation, universities should give more resources to the Professional Learning Community, formulate and improve relevant systems, ensure the reasonable allocation of resources, and fully mobilize the enthusiasm of English teachers to participate in teaching and academic research.

4 Conclusion

To sum up, creating a scientific Professional Learning Community is always an effective way to promote the professional development of modern teachers. Education authorities, universities and university English teachers should face up to the influencing factors in professional development and team building, actively seek effective ways for university English teachers' professional development and team building, and gradually realize the goal of building a high-level university English team. Firstly, teachers have to go through different stages from novice teachers to expert teachers. How to improve their professional quality and how to deal with the problems in the process of professional development should be studied according to the different stages of professional development, and different corresponding methods should be given. Secondly, in the process of teachers' professional development, positive emotional situation and sunny psychological state will promote the improvement of students' knowledge and personality. Finally, with the depth of the integration of modern information technology and education, the way of teachers' professional development changes from the traditional mode to the mode based on education informatization.

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