

An Exploration of Higher Vocational English Teachers' Professional Development on Students' Learning Ability in the Context of New Liberal Arts

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Abstract: The concept of New Liberal Arts, a multidisciplinary combined integrator with Chinese values at its core, has brought new challenges to the teaching methods and professional development of higher-level English teachers. Based on the evolving professional development process of higher vocational English teachers in the context of the New Liberal Arts, this article analyzes how English teachers can integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and adopt advanced educational technology in the teaching process. On this basis, it discusses the role of teachers' professional development in enhancing students' learning ability, such as through deepening disciplinary understanding, adopting innovative teaching strategies, and implementing personalized teaching. At the end of the article, based on a variety of pedagogical theories, we put forward suggestions, including continuous professional training, interdisciplinary cooperation, and the application of innovative teaching techniques, which are mainly aimed at helping higher vocational English teachers get rid of the dilemma of the new situation, adapt to the needs of the new liberal arts education as soon as possible, and then effectively improve students' abilities.

Keywords: New liberal arts; Higher vocational education; Professional development of English teachers; Interdisciplinary teaching; Personalized teaching

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1. Introduction

With the rise of the concept of new liberal arts in the field of global education, especially in our country, this concept has received a positive response from experts, scholars, and teachers of many undergraduate colleges and universities in China. New Liberal Arts is a disciplinary integrator centered on our country's values, emphasizing the breaking down of the boundaries between traditional liberal arts and sciences, promoting the mutual integration of the contents of literature, history, philosophy, and other disciplines, and promoting interdisciplinary and comprehensive learning with the help of new technologies^[1,2]. This form of education aims to respond to the development needs of the times while maintaining an educational direction with Chinese

characteristics. New liberal arts not only focuses on the transmission of knowledge but also emphasizes the application of information technology in education, focusing on cultivating students' personalized development and comprehensive literacy^[3]. In higher vocational colleges and universities, although the humanities and social sciences majors occupy an important position, there is still much room for improvement in the research and application of the construction of new liberal arts^[4]. Facing the requirements of the new era, the professional development of higher vocational English teachers in the context of new liberal arts has become the key to improving the quality of education.

2. Theoretical framework of professional development of higher vocational English teachers

As the guide of students, the professional development of teachers is crucial to improving the quality of talent training^[5]. As a dynamic development concept, teachers' professionalization is not only a fixed state but a process of continuous progress. This process requires teachers to improve and deepen their ideology and value orientation, acquire richer professional knowledge and new skills to meet the needs of different educational goals at various stages of development, and demonstrate behaviors appropriate to a particular stage of professional development in a long-term exchange in the field of education. Teachers' professional development refers to the close integration of teachers' development with the current trend of education. This point, for higher vocational English teachers, means that they need to make a deep plunge into the English subject, continuously improve their teaching level, strengthen their practical skills in their positions, and follow only the current development context and reform of vocational education.

New liberal arts education mainly explores the union of multidisciplinary knowledge and the practice of teaching techniques^[6]. For higher vocational English teachers, this means that English teachers not only need to work deeply in their own English teaching but also have a multi-level and extensive understanding of the relevant content of other disciplines and refer to the English teaching. In daily English teaching, when teachers take a sharp turn to cover other areas such as history, politics, economics, and other fields of knowledge, this unusual operation will often change the current boring English learning environment, which can not only attract students' attention, but in the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge, the quality of teaching, especially English teaching will also become more attractive to students. To achieve this purpose, it is necessary to integrate with the knowledge of other disciplines and be reasonable and logical, especially in the discipline of English. As a language discipline, English teaching exhibits the characteristics of comprehensiveness so that it can interact with any discipline^[7], and there is no limitation in itself. The new liberal arts education not only requires teachers to expand their academic knowledge but also requires their professional development to focus on the use of technology in education. The rapid development of computer networks has not only changed the direction of the current development of many fields, but they are also widely used in the field of education, and teachers efficiently master and utilize these network resources, multimedia tools, or other innovative technologies for the daily teaching of students, enriching the teaching content and improving the teaching effectiveness^[8]. This shift not only enhances students' interest in learning English language teaching but also promotes the development of their critical thinking and creative abilities.

3. The connection between teachers' professional development and students' learning ability

Under the educational background of new liberal arts, the professional development of higher vocational

English teachers need to establish a close connection with students' learning abilities. As the core of the educational process, teachers' professional growth is not only related to the improvement of their own teaching skills but also the optimization of students' learning effects ^[9]. Teachers' continuous growth promotes the improvement of students' abilities in many aspects, which include an in-depth understanding of subject knowledge, application of innovative teaching methods, and attention to students' individual needs.

Teachers act as the first source for students to acquire knowledge, and for students to build a solid and broad knowledge base, teachers need to have an in-depth understanding and mastery of the subject matter. In the context of the new liberal arts, this understanding cannot stop at a single subject or knowledge but requires an effective integration of English teaching with history, politics, economics, and other multidisciplinary content. By utilizing this multi-disciplinary approach, teachers bring students a broader learning experience and promote the development of their learning abilities in the current multicultural context.

At the same time, teachers' innovations in teaching methods have a significant impact on students' learning outcomes. The use of modern educational technology, such as multimedia tools and Internet resources, can not only enhance the interactivity and interest of the classroom but also stimulate students' interest in learning and the spirit of active exploration ^[10]. Such innovative teaching methods help to develop students' critical thinking and creative abilities so that they can adapt and flourish in the ever-changing social environment.

The emphasis on individualized instruction in teacher professional development also plays a key role in the student learning process. By focusing on students' individual differences, teachers can provide more responsive instructional programs that maximize each student's potential. In addition, by encouraging cooperative learning and interaction among students, teachers not only improve students' social skills but also strengthen their sense of teamwork.

Overall, the professional development of higher vocational English teachers in the context of the new liberal arts has a profound impact on students' learning ability. By constantly updating their teaching concepts and mastering advanced teaching techniques and methods, teachers not only improve their own teaching level, but also open up a new world of learning for their students, and train them to become well-rounded talents adapted to the future society.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Under the educational concept of new liberal arts, teachers' professional growth not only affects their own teaching level but also largely determines the improvement of students' learning ability and personalized development. Teachers play an important role in stimulating students' interest in learning and critical thinking through the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge, the application of innovative teaching methods, and the skillful use of educational technology.

To better meet the needs of professional development in the context of the new liberal arts and to effectively enhance student learning, the following strategies should be planned and implemented in the field of education:

- (1) Regular training in subject specialization: The times are constantly progressing, "my life has its limits, and knowledge has no limits." Although teachers play the role of educators, if teachers want to keep up with the progress of the times, their professional development should always be in the process of progress and learning, which is in line with the theory of lifelong learning ^[11]. As an educational platform, the improvement of teachers' teaching level is the requirement and expectation of higher vocational colleges, which have the reason and ability to provide teachers with professional training

in various aspects. Such continuously updated training helps teachers to continuously adjust their teaching style and improve their teaching quality to adapt and face the changing education and increasing student demands.

- (2) Interdisciplinary integration and cooperation: Interdisciplinary integration and cooperation means that teachers are not limited to the subjects they teach, but also draw new knowledge and content from other subject areas and reasonably incorporate this knowledge, which is relatively new to their own subject, into their teaching process. Based on the theory of knowledge construction, students are allowed to learn the current subject while acquiring some other fragmented knowledge and use this fragmented knowledge to solidify the knowledge of the basic subject^[12,13]. By utilizing this innovative interdisciplinary approach, teachers bring students a different and novel learning experience and further broaden their knowledge. Therefore, senior English teachers are encouraged to participate in more interdisciplinary projects and cooperation, which is not only a practice based on the theory of knowledge construction but also an effective way to improve the quality of teaching.
- (3) Innovative teaching and technology application: With the progress of time and technology, a variety of teaching tools have been integrated into the field of education. These educational technology tools can effectively improve the effectiveness and attractiveness of teaching in the classroom, which brings a certain degree of convenience to the teaching of higher vocational English teachers. This practice is also consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Blended Learning theory^[14,15]. Through the use of such educational technologies, teachers provide diversified learning paths in the face of different learning styles of students, which meets the increasing teaching needs of students well. Moreover, these innovative teaching and technologies have aroused students' curiosity to a certain extent. In the face of novel teaching techniques, students have increased their interest in learning, and this approach helps to improve students' engagement and motivation.

In summary, the professional development of senior English teachers plays a crucial role in the context of the new liberal arts. By strengthening professional training, promoting interdisciplinary integration, applying innovative technologies, and implementing personalized teaching, teachers can not only improve their own teaching level but also effectively promote the overall development of students. Therefore, higher vocational institutions, educational management departments, and individual teachers should cooperate to promote the continuous improvement of educational quality and realize the comprehensive achievement of educational goals.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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