

The High-Quality Development Path of English Education Teachers

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Abstract: The "double reduction" policy aims to further alleviate the excessive workload of homework and extra-curricular training in primary and secondary schools. The reform of the new college entrance examination aims to reshape the traditional education and teaching methods and enhance the rationality and scientificity of teaching and learning assessment. The implementation of these policies and the reform of the education system have provided new opportunities for the professional development of teachers. This study analyzes the importance and path of teacher development under policy guidance. This paper argues that in the context of relevant policies, promoting teachers' professional development can help expand teachers' professional knowledge and skills, and strengthen their professional beliefs. At the same time, they have created new challenges and problems for teachers' professional development, including teachers' lack of professional ambition, the need to strengthen school and related sector policies, and the lack of research on teachers' professional growth. Therefore, teachers must cultivate internal motivation and autonomy to enhance their capabilities, while relevant authorities should intensify theoretical research on teachers' professional development and foster guidance for the teaching profession's developmental pathway.

Keywords: Teacher professional development, New College Entrance Examination policy, Double Reduction policy

1. Introduction

Starting in July 2021, China has issued the "Double Reduction" policy, which pertains to the Dual Alleviation approach of "lessening the workload of assignments" and "lessening the load of extracurricular coaching" for students in compulsory education [1]. The convergence of this policy, alongside the recently enacted college entrance examination policy, already in effect in several regions, has sparked significant attention and impassioned discourse in the community. The "Double Reduction" policy is geared toward establishing a conducive educational environment, alleviating parental apprehension, and fostering the comprehensive development and wholesome maturation of students [1]. On this exploratory journey, the "Double Reduction" policy has brought forth fresh prospects for classroom professional development, albeit accompanied by novel challenges [2].

As societies and times progress at an ever-accelerating pace, the significance of knowledge and talent becomes increasingly prominent. This is particularly evident in international education, where the essence of education and the stature of teachers have come to the forefront. The caliber of teachers

holds a pivotal role in shaping the quality of education, exerting a profound influence not only on the current academic performance and future career prospects of students but also on the overall quality of educational institutions and the entire educational system. Therefore, it can be affirmed that emphasizing the development of competent teachers bears weight not only for individual students but also for the school, society, and the entire educational system.

Under the "Double Reduction" policy, schools have managed to preserve and reinforce their educational role [3]. However, the effective execution of this educational role has largely shifted towards teachers and their proficient delivery of teaching and learning activities. In the reform of the new college entrance examination, the revised English standards have placed an increased emphasis on the reading and subsequent writing components. The introduction of novel question formats undeniably necessitates that teachers not only enhance their grasp of these fresh question types but also guarantee that students receive a high-quality education, whether in school or through other avenues of high-caliber learning. In the context of the new College Entrance Examination reform, the enhanced English standards have amplified the emphasis on reading and subsequent writing. The integration of these new question types undeniably highlights the need for teachers to not only deepen their understanding of these novel formats but also ensure that students partake in high-quality learning experiences in the school setting.

Therefore, for the effective realization of the "Double Reduction" policy and the advancement of the new college entrance examination reform, the professional development of teachers in the field of English education assumes particular significance.

This paper will outline the prospects and obstacles encountered in the professional development of English teachers with dual backgrounds and provide tailored recommendations.

2. Opportunities for Teachers' Professional Development under the Dual Background

2.1. Enrich Teachers' Professional Knowledge

Teachers, in their capacity as professionals in education, must possess a reservoir of expertise including essential subjects, education and teaching, and cultural knowledge pertinent to their vocation. The dual background context, marked by advancements in English language teaching, enhanced classroom quality, optimized homework design, and adept post-class answers, imposes higher demands on the professional knowledge that teachers bring to the table. On one hand, the dual background necessitates that teachers continually broaden the scope of their professional knowledge. Beyond their subject matter proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and cultural insights mentioned earlier, English teachers must proactively explore various domains, including mental health education, to underpin educational efforts related to students' psychological well-being under the "Double Reduction" policy. On the other hand, the dual-background environment also encourages teachers to delve deeper into their professional knowledge. Against the backdrop of the growing internationalization of education, English teachers should not be content with their current level of expertise but should build upon their existing knowledge base, engaging in reflective teaching practices and research.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has enhanced and introduced the "National Wisdom Education Platform for Primary and Secondary Schools" as an evolution of the former "National Primary and Secondary Schools Network Cloud Platform". This platform is dedicated to teacher training, serving as an effective platform for enriching teachers' professional knowledge [4]. Therefore, the dual background ushers in fresh opportunities for the continual enrichment of teachers' professional knowledge.

2.2. Enhance Teachers' Professional Competence

To ensure the attainment of high-quality education and effective teaching, it is necessary to employ highly skilled teachers. These teachers must be closely associated with their elevated levels of professional expertise [5]. As an English teacher, the expertise of teachers, including fundamental teaching aptitude, proficiency, competence, personal growth capacity, and educational ingenuity, signifies the demonstration of teachers' capability to adhere to the principles of teaching, to guide their education, and to foster the comprehensive growth of students. The introduction of new reading and writing question formats poses a challenge to the professional competence of English teachers. The combination of reading and writing necessitates teachers to effectively guide their students and provide them with a clearer understanding of the writing process. This, in turn, demands that teachers possess a robust capacity to embrace the updated curriculum and assimilate it thoroughly before imparting it to their students. Simultaneously, the fresh questions also elevate societal overall anticipations concerning the caliber of education and the expertise of teachers. To guarantee teaching excellence, teachers of the English language must employ approaches for enhancing their proficiency in teaching planning, contextualization, questioning, and introspective assessment. In addition, influenced by the "Double Reduction" Policy, there has been an extension of after-school Q&A sessions and students' school hours [6]. This extension has created more opportunities for teachers and students to interact, necessitating teachers to possess enhanced organizational and managerial skills, as well as proficient communication and coordination abilities. This need is especially pronounced in the domain of homework assignments. Here, teachers are expected not only to enhance the quality of both classroom and homework design, but also to fully utilize homework's functions in diagnosing, reinforcing, and analyzing learning conditions. This should reflect the essence of quality education. In the context of English education, driven by the globalization of education, English is gradually assuming a pivotal role in the educational process. Therefore, parents are increasingly recognizing the significance of English education. In English education, teachers should adopt a flexible and tiered approach when assigning after-school homework. Instead of relying solely on rote memorization and recitation, they should personalize the format of homework assignments and minimize redundancy.

Simultaneously, the "Double Reduction" Policy and the New College Entrance Examination Reform have presented new demands for teachers' professional competencies, serving as catalysts for their professional growth.

2.3. Enhance Teachers' Professional Sentiments

In addition to possessing the requisite professional knowledge and skills, being a proficient English teacher also involves having a strong professional commitment. Professional commitment is an emotional inclination that arises and develops in the educational and teaching context. It comprises a teacher's awareness of the value and significance of their profession, as well as their self-identification and acceptance.

The introduction of the "Double Reduction" policy and the reforms in the new college entrance examination are corrective measures aimed at rectifying the erroneous utilitarian approach to education that prevailed in the past. This shift aims to re-establish the core values of education, emphasizing moral and character development [3]. Schools and educational institutions should function as places for holistic development, consisting of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and vocational growth. This shift will foster a stronger connection between teachers and the meaningful professional values inherent in education and teaching, thereby reaping a greater sense of belonging, value, and accomplishment, while allowing teachers to establish their professional identities.

3. Challenges for Teachers' Professional Development under the Dual Background

The "Double Reduction" policy and the new college entrance examination reforms have rebalanced the roles and educational functions of schools, families, and educational institutions. Schools have now assumed a central role in students' learning and development. While this policy has effectively lightened the students' academic load, it has concurrently placed higher demands on teachers' professional competencies, representing a disguised form of "addition" of burden on teachers. Therefore, the dual background presents both opportunities and challenges for teachers [5].

3.1. Strengthen Teachers' Professional Ideals and Beliefs

The promotion of dual educational background necessitates that teachers possess a positive professional identity, a strong commitment to their profession, and the backing of a fundamental professional ethos and conviction. However, in the current landscape, obvious differences in teachers' professional ideals and beliefs already exist. For instance, some teachers perceive teaching merely as a means of earning a livelihood, devoid of a sense of duty and purpose. In addition, the policy's implementation has significantly impacted teachers' instructional responsibilities. Front-line teachers have faced extended working hours and increased workloads under the "Double Reduction" policy, resulting in excessive work pressure. To illustrate, the "Double Reduction" policy mandates schools to ensure the availability of after-school service hours to meet students' developmental needs [6]. In this context, after-school services have introduced a novel pedagogical paradigm into teachers' daily routines, presenting fresh missions, and pedagogical duties, and exacerbating the issue of teachers' workload.

Teachers' educational duties have intensified in this multifaceted educational landscape. Particularly in the framework of internationalization, English education requires broader dissemination, and English performance is gradually drawing parents' attention [7]. Coupled with the reform of the new college entrance examination and changes in English question formats, English teachers' teaching responsibilities have become more demanding and complex. They must allocate time to focus on their students, while concurrently delving into novel question formats and exploring innovative teaching methods and classroom models, which is undoubtedly "adding insult to injury" [2]. The promotion of a diverse educational background has rendered some teachers incapable of nurturing their professional development. It may even erode their professional ideals and beliefs to some extent, leading to negative reactions toward their teaching and learning responsibilities.

3.2. Lack of Science Exploration in Teacher Professional Development

The systematic exploration of issues relating to teacher professional development has been marginalized, potentially relegating teacher professional development to a precarious position in both theoretical and practical domains [5]. Under the impetus of a diverse educational background, teacher professional development has garnered significant attention. To ensure the effective execution of policies and reforms, schools have initiated research on teacher professional development. However, this research primarily concentrates on enhancing teachers' pedagogical competencies such as subject knowledge and teaching skills, often overlooking the emotional, ethical, and social support dimensions of teacher professional development. Simultaneously, some school-based research on teacher professional development is formal, neglecting empirical studies, and lacks applicability and guidance for advancing teacher professional development.

In the context of a diverse educational background, English teachers in primary and secondary schools confront the challenge of reducing the quantity of homework while enhancing its quality. Similarly, teachers in senior secondary schools cope with the new pedagogical complexities of the revised schedule and novel question formats. While teacher-student interactions have become more

frequent due to increased contact opportunities, English teachers must concurrently address the changes in the teaching mode brought about by the new college entrance examination reform. They must tackle issues about classroom instruction, homework allocation, and teacher-student communication. In addition, they need to chart new directions and approaches for their professional development [8].

4. Response Strategies to Teacher Professional Development in Dual Background

The introduction of the "Double Reduction" policy and the reform of the new College Entrance Examination has presented both opportunities and challenges for teacher professional development. Teachers, as the cornerstone of the education system, occupy a pivotal role, emphasizing the critical importance of their professional growth. How teachers can attain robust professional development will be analyzed from the vantage points of teachers themselves, schools, and pertinent governmental policies.

4.1. Self-Improvement and Internal Motivation

Teacher expert growth, as a procedure wherein teachers actively pursue self-improvement, should be guided by their inherent independence. Concepts of human incentive and character expansion highlight that individuals possess an inclination to prosper, are forward-thinking and self-driven, and thus, in an educational context, the enhancement of autonomy adds to superior learning and personal development [9].

The "Double Reduction" policy and the recent reforms in the college entrance examination system have significantly impacted English education. English teachers might find themselves "overwhelmed" by the novel educational approaches and teaching methods, potentially leading to doubts concerning their professional competence in adapting to these new teaching modalities. In such circumstances, teacher professional development serves as a valuable compass, motivating English teachers to proactively leverage their creativity in the evolving English teaching paradigm [5]. Confronted with new question formats and teaching methodologies, this process aids teachers in delving into pertinent literature, understanding the fresh educational goals, and understanding the requirements brought about by curriculum and examination reforms. This, in turn, equips English teachers to earnestly navigate the shifting educational terrain. Simultaneously, English teachers must bolster their autonomy, continuously enhancing and innovating their teaching techniques and strategies in alignment with the explicit objectives of professional development. Additionally, introspection emerges as a vital self-motivational avenue [5]. Considering the dual context, teaching practice is bound to encounter novel scenarios and challenges. For instance, when instructing "reading and writing", students may grapple with questions or struggle to complete tasks with the desired proficiency [8]. Faced with the complexities and deficiencies of these new themes, English teachers must not only explore effective teaching methodologies but also engage in critical self-analysis.

4.2. Strengthen Theoretical Research and Emphasizing the Status of Teachers

In addition to the necessity for teachers to exercise autonomy in their professional growth, educational institutions and pertinent policies must assume a guiding and protective role.

Currently, in this dual context, relevant authorities have recognized the significant role of teacher professional development in shaping new policies and reforms. However, research into teacher professional development remains in its early stages. Theory paves the way for practice, emphasizing the paramount importance of strengthening research in education and teacher development theory to guide action effectively [10].

Simultaneously, educational institutions and policies must assume a leadership role in elevating the societal status of teachers. While the "Double Reduction" policy and associated measures have reinforced school education and the status of teachers, relevant authorities must also engage with public opinion to enhance societal understanding and recognition of the teaching profession, thereby bolstering teachers' self-esteem.

In addition, the professional competence of teachers requires vigilant oversight. Schools should maintain stringent criteria for selecting individuals for the teaching profession, while relevant authorities must intensify teacher training and rigorously assess teacher qualifications.

5. Conclusion

The introduction of the "Double Reduction" policy and the reform of the new college entrance examination align with contemporary educational objectives. The study of teacher professional development has now assumed a pivotal role in guiding teachers in English language education, an arena profoundly affected by this dual context. Amid the global trend of educational internationalization, educational institutions, and pertinent departments should leverage teacher professional development as a catalyst for advancing educational reform. English teachers should explore high-quality pathways that are compatible with the prevailing educational landscape, guided by the principles of teacher professional development.

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