

# Professional Development of Chinese University Teachers-take Hetao College as An Example

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## Abstract

A questionnaire survey and analysis was conducted on 356 full-time teachers in Hetao College, and the professional development status of teachers was determined through teachers' professional development activities, professional development opportunities and professional development support. This study adopted descriptive research method. The questionnaire was compiled based on the "2016 EDC/NMEF Student Centered Learning (SCL) Questionnaire". Findings indicate that teachers gave higher ratings for professional development activities and development opportunities, as well as higher ratings for professional support.

## Keywords

Professional development, University teachers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professional development runs through the entire process of teachers' careers. As teachers themselves, we should strive to continuously learn, develop and mature in terms of internal qualities such as professional affection and attitude, professional knowledge, and professional abilities. Colleges and universities need to continue to provide teachers with various education and development opportunities to help teachers continue to improve. Understanding these can provide teachers with professional development directions and help colleges and universities improve teacher training and development plans(Zhang & Kuang,2018).

Teachers are the foundation of the university

Teacher quality affects the quality of education and teaching. Chinese universities urgently need to improve the quality of education through reform. A high-quality and professional teaching team is fundamental, and excellent teacher development policies are the key. It is necessary to fully understand the development needs and characteristics of teachers' career growth stages and build an incentive mechanism for teachers' career development. This is the core of teachers' professional development.

## 2. RESEARCH PURPOSE

This study determined the professional development of teachers in Hetao College.

Mainly answered the following questions:

Profile of full-time teachers: gender, age, years of service, highest level of education.

Identify professional development in terms of professional development activities, opportunities and support.

Propose a teacher training and development plan.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive research method. The interviewees of this study were full-time teachers at Hetao College. Full-time teachers are distributed in 13 departments, including science, engineering, agriculture, medicine, art, and management. A total of 370 questionnaires were collected, 356 valid questionnaires were collected, and the valid questionnaire rate was 96.2%.

The questionnaire was used as a tool for the study. This questionnaire is based on Education Development Center, Inc.'s "The EDC/NMEF Student-Centered Learning (SCL) Questionnaire for Teachers 2016" Compiled. The questionnaire was validated by the EDC team, experts who were not respondents to this study (Education Development Center, 2016).

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Teacher Profile

**Table 1.** Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	97	27.2
Female	259	72.8
Age		
Below 30 years old	46	12.9
31-35 years old	77	21.6
36-40 years old	72	20.2
41-44 years old	67	18.8
45-59 years old	94	26.4
Years in service		
0-1years	38	10.7
2-5years	80	22.5
6-10years	49	13.8
11-20years	96	27.0
more than 20years	93	26.1
Highest Educational Attainment		
Junior college	1	0.3
Undergraduate	107	30.1
Postgraduate	198	55.6
Doctoral candidate	50	14.0

Table 1 mainly surveys various data of the respondents. The 356 interviewees were all from full-time teachers from Hetao College in China. Statistics show that among the 356 respondents, 259 or 72.8 percent are females while 97 or 27.2 are males. This shows that female teachers occupy a dominant position in number. This result is consistent with the survey results of China's educational statistics (Guangming Net, 2020).

In terms of age, 26.4% of the respondents are 45 and older. followed by 31-35 years old, accounting for 21.60%; 72 respondents were from the age group of 36-40, Accounting for 20.2%; there were 67 people aged 41-44, accounting for 18.8%; The remaining 46 individuals accounted for 12.9% of the population and were under 30 years old. The results showed that all full-time teachers were young and middle-aged, and compared with other teachers, they were considered active and energetic (Wang, 2023).

In terms of Years in service. the table shows that 11-20 years, 96 people, accounting for 27.0%; more than 20 years, 93 people, accounting for 26.1%; 2-5 years, 80 people, accounting for 22.5%; 6-10 years, 49 people, accounting for 13.8%; the remaining 38 people are less than one year, accounting for 10.7%. The result implies that the majority of interviewees have served for more than three years and are well qualified for the profession of teachers. Berliner's five-stage theory of teacher development supports this idea (Zhang, 2018).

From the perspective of educational background, there are 198 people with postgraduate degrees, accounting for 55.6% of the total; 107 people with undergraduate degrees, accounting for 30.1% of the total; 50 people with doctoral degrees, accounting for 14.0% of the total; There is 1 person, accounting for 0.3%. The results showed that most of the respondents were graduate and undergraduate students. This result reflects the real situation of the school's teachers' academic qualifications.

#### 4.2. Teacher' Professional Development Activities

**Table 2.** Teachers' Professional Development in terms of Professional Development Activities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I often lead a class of students doing an investigation or activity that demands complex reasoning or problem solving.	3.06	Agree	8
2. I facilitate a whole-class discussion where students present ideas or give/receive feedback.	3.25	Agree	6
3. I organize and facilitate a student-led activity.	3.24	Agree	7
4. I provide students with in-depth guidance on the content or organization of their work, help students stay on task.	3.29	Agree	4
5. I give written feedback or oral feedback on student work.	3.29	Agree	5
6. I modify or adjust instruction based on informal classroom assessments.	3.30	Agree	2
7. I model for students how to approach a problem or task.	3.33	Agree	1
8. I differentiate activities or instruction to meet individual student's needs.	3.29	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.26	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 presents respondents' evaluations of teacher professional development activities. The composite average is 3.26 points, indicating that they agree. In the item cited, students are modeled on how to solve problems (3.33), instruction is modified or adapted based on informal classroom assessments (3.30), and activities or instruction are differentiated to meet individual student needs (3.29), insist on giving written or oral feedback to students on their work (3.29), provide students with in-depth guidance on the content or organization of assignments, and help students stay focused on the task (3.29). These five scores are high. This fully demonstrates that most teachers already have a strong sense of professional self-development and can carry out educational and teaching activities centered on students. A keen professional self-awareness is a prerequisite for promoting teachers' professional self-development.

Generally speaking, teachers' professional self-development is closely related to teachers' enthusiasm and initiative. In the process of professional self-development, teachers must not only have the self-development awareness of acquiring professional knowledge, but also have the self-development ability to improve teaching practice skills. Consciousness (Zhang & Dang, 2017).

In the project cited, frequently leading a class of students on an investigation or activity that required complex reasoning or problem-solving (3.06), consistently organizing and facilitating student-led activities (3.24), consistently facilitating whole-class discussions, Having students suggest ideas or give/receive feedback (3.25). These three scored the lowest. The reasons are analyzed. On the one hand, it is due to the lack of motivation for professional development of some teachers in local universities. Secondly, the professional development and training system for teachers in local colleges and universities is also imperfect. Especially for most young teachers, an important factor hindering their professional development is that the school's teacher professional development mechanism is not sound. Some teachers have a strong willingness to improve their professional capabilities, but their intentions are frustrated due to the lack of financial support, incentive policies and guarantee mechanisms (Zhu, Wang & Yang, 2022).

### 4.3. Teacher' Professional Opportunities

**Table 3.** Teachers' Professional Development in terms of Professional Opportunities

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I feel that I have many professional development opportunities focused on student-centered learning.	3.27	Agree	7
2. I am interested in pursuing professional development opportunities focused on student-centered learning.	3.29	Agree	2
3. I receive support and encouraged as I try to implement what I have learned.	3.28	Agree	3
4. I am satisfied with the opportunities I have for professional Development.	3.22	Agree	8
5. I am involved in planning my professional development, I am encouraged to develop an individual professional development plan.	3.27	Agree	6
6. I am given time to work with other teachers as part of my professional development.	3.30	Agree	1
7. I am given time to reflect on what I have learned and how to apply it to my classroom.	3.28	Agree	5
8. I am receiving the professional development I need to implement student-centered learning practices in my classroom.	3.28	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.27	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 3 lists respondents' evaluations of professional opportunities for teachers. The combined average of 3.27. shows that they agree. In the cited project, I had time to work with other teachers as part of my professional development (3.30), and I was interested in pursuing student-centered professional development opportunities (3.29). I have had time to reflect on what I have learned and how to apply it in the classroom (3.28), I am receiving the professional development I need to implement student-centered learning practices in the classroom (3.28),

and when I try to incorporate all I received support and encouragement as I put my learning into practice (3.28). These five items scored the highest. This shows that teachers already possess the educational concept of professional development, have a sense of independent development, are gradually achieving development goals through specific actions, and have also received support from colleagues and schools. This also proves that the school has made various attempts to support teachers' professional development.

In the projects cited, I felt that I had many opportunities for student-centered professional development (3.27), that I actively planned my career development, and that I was encouraged to develop a personal professional development plan (3.27). I felt positive about what I had and was satisfied with professional development opportunities (3.22), the lowest score among these three items. Although teachers already have an awareness of professional development, during the specific implementation process, some teachers may still have fewer opportunities to obtain professional development. This may be related to personal factors such as teachers' age, professional titles, professional development concepts, etc., or it may be due to school, college, etc. The department provides teachers with few professional development opportunities.

#### 4.4. Professional support

**Table 4.** Teachers Professional Development in terms of Professional support

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. My school supports alternative pathways to graduation.	3.03	Agree	8
2. My school supports efforts to personalize instruction to meet student needs.	3.14	Agree	7
3. My school supports student participation in extended learning opportunities. (ELOs) for credit	3.15	Agree	5.5
4. My school supports the expectation that all students can reach high standards.	3.15	Agree	4
5. My school supports students in regulating their own learning and setting their own pace.	3.15	Agree	5.5
6. My school supports the use of multiple measures of student performance to assess mastery and to determine whether/when students advance to more challenging content.	3.18	Agree	2
7. My school supports students in setting and meeting long term goals.	3.24	Agree	1
8. My school supports student voice and leadership.	3.17	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.15	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 4 presents respondents' evaluations of teachers' professional support. A combined average of 3.15. suggests they agree. Among the items cited, schools support students in setting and achieving long-term goals (3.24), schools support the use of multiple methods to assess student mastery and decide if/when students move on to more challenging content (3.18), The school supports pupils' voice and leadership (3.17). These three scored the highest. This shows that teachers recognize the school's support in all aspects of professional development.

Among the items referenced, School supports alternative pathways to graduation (3.03), School supports personalizing instruction to meet student needs (3.14), and School supports student participation in Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) for credit (3.15), School supports the expectation that all students will meet high standards (3.15). School supports students to regulate their learning and set their own pace (3.15). These four received the lowest ratings. But still say "agree". The reason is related to the current situation of teachers' professional development in local universities. For example, teachers have a weak awareness of independent development and are not familiar with the development and system of the college. At the same time, it is also related to the lack of support from the college.

The research shows that there is still a relative shortage of targeted policies and systems for teachers' professional development in local universities, which need to be improved.

This is mainly due to, first, the relevant research theories on teachers' professional development are not in-depth, and many policies are still in the process of brewing; second, from the perspective of managers, the importance of teachers' professional development may not be fully realized Related (Gao & Chi, 2023).

#### 4.5. Teachers' Professional Development When Grouped According to Profile

**Table 5.** Difference Responses Between the Teachers' Professional Development When Grouped According to Profile

Sex	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Professional development activities	0.002	0.964	Not Significant
Professional opportunities	0.005	0.944	Not Significant
Professional support	0.240	0.624	Not Significant
Age			
Professional development activities	1.412	0.229	Not Significant
Professional opportunities	1.225	0.300	Not Significant
Professional support	1.711	0.147	Not Significant
Years in Service			
Professional development activities	2.545	0.039	Significant
Professional opportunities	1.377	0.242	Not Significant
Professional support	2.226	0.066	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment			
Professional development activities	0.977	0.403	Not Significant
Professional opportunities	2.331	0.074	Not Significant
Professional support	1.222	0.302	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 5 shows the survey results of the three dimensions of teacher professional development. When grouped by years of service, there were significant differences in teacher professional development activities. This fully shows that the teacher's answer is true and credible. Teachers who have served for one year or less are newly recruited teachers. From the perspective of time, the entry time is very short. Except for induction training, they have not been exposed to any other training, so their professional development activities are limited.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

1.The respondents are all full-time teachers at Hetao College. Mainly women; young and middle-aged teachers account for the majority; most teachers have more than ten years of teaching experience; teachers with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees dominate.

2. Teachers agree with the professional development support and professional development opportunities provided by the school, and agree with the school's professional development work for teachers; however, the school still needs to strengthen in terms of "professional support".

3. The Relationship between length of service and career development activities significant. This implies that, Fewer years of service, fewer professional development activities.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

1. Schools can formulate and improve teacher professional development plans. When formulating professional training plans, focus on the characteristics of teachers' career development stages;

2. Departments may strengthen teachers to formulate personal professional development plans and promote teachers to form concepts and awareness of lifelong learning and independent development.

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