

# Research on Classification and Development of College Teachers in the Context of Value Pluralism

Pu He<sup>1</sup>, Hong Zhang<sup>2</sup>, Youbin Zhao<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Academic Affairs Office, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China

<sup>2</sup>President's Office, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China

<sup>3</sup>School of Translation Studies, Jinan University, Zhuhai, China

Email: toapple@jnu.edu.cn

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## Abstract

The number of Chinese college teachers is considerably large, and these teachers have their own focus on teaching, research, social services and other different orientations. Given that, the teacher evaluation system operated in a single way has caused widespread problem that the teachers lack developing motivation and attach importance to scientific research rather than teaching. According to the classification of human values and definition of teacher development, this article proposes five development categories of college teachers in the context of plural values. The only way to achieve the development of college teachers is to fully respect their needs of personalized development and provide guidance according to their classification.

## Keywords

Plural Values, Teachers Development, Classification Development

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## 1. Problem Introduction: Why Is It Difficult for Teachers to Develop?

Currently, research on the development of teachers is in the ascendant. In June 2016, the Education Ministry of People's Republic of China stated in the "Guidelines on Deepening the Reform of Evaluation and Assessment System of College Teachers" that "... adhere to the combination of guidance according to their classification and evaluation according to classification. Set assessment content and assessment methods in different categories, different levels and different subjects, in accordance with different college types or the job responsibilities and characteristics of different types of teachers in colleges, as well as the different stages of teachers' careers", which will add new vitality into the research.

Higher Education in China is in a period of great development. The state investment in education is increasing year by year. In 2012, the state education budget spending reached up to 4% of GDP for the first time. In 2015, the total national expenditure on education was 3.280646 trillion yuan. But it can't match the increasing national investment in education that the working enthusiasm of teachers, especially teaching enthusiasm, has not increased along with the high investment. In our opinion, it is largely because the teachers' own development goals are not clear enough, and their needs for development cannot be met, with the lack of beneficial orientation and development platform, thus the teachers devote in their work insufficiently.

Then, what are the current needs for the development of college teachers?

Superficially, job promotion is most closely related to the development of teachers, as professional ranks and titles are a comprehensive overview of teachers' professional level. On the one hand, through job promotion, teachers can obtain social recognition and reach the corresponding social status, while the teachers themselves often generate a sense of accomplishment, so as to meet the spiritual needs of teachers. On the other hand, due to the current station-graded wage system of teachers in China, access to a higher-level title means to obtain better economic benefits and economic status, thus meeting the needs of teachers materially.

The negative guide based on this value forms the single value of the pursuit of teachers. On the one hand, there is a widespread atmosphere as "focusing on scientific research rather than teaching" in colleges which should emphasize the teaching as the top priority. On the other hand, as job assessment threshold lifts up with the increasing levels of talented people, the promotion of teachers' professional ranks and titles becomes increasingly difficult.

## 2. Development-Driven Value Pursuit of Teachers

The early development of college teachers in Europe and America mainly refers to the improvement of the fields in which teachers major in, and later the improvement of teaching ability. After 1970s and 1980s, with the development of social situation and higher education, the content of career development, organizational development and individual development is introduced. Chinese contemporary higher education society with Professor Pan Maoyuan as the representative believes that the connotation of development for college teachers mainly includes the improvement of academic standards, development of teachers' professional knowledge and skills and the elevation of the ethics of teachers.

Marx (2007) once said that "People are fighting for everything to do with their interests". And as for the motivation of the development of teachers, meeting the demand of teachers' own interests comes the first. If the society guided in one single way "exists a value system worthy of our pursuit" (Sun, 2007). Then in the value system guided by one single value, job promotion is the single value to promote the development of teachers. But in today's pluralistic values and a variety of evaluation systems based on multiple values, the development of teachers more likely presents as the pluralistic val-

ue pursuit.

Throughout the discussion on human values, the views can roughly be divided into six categories: the first view is that human values are equivalent as the effect of the human as objects to the human as subjects; the second view is that human values are equivalent as the satisfaction of one person to their own needs; the third view is that human values are equivalent as the usefulness of man for anything; the fourth view is that all values are human values; the fifth view is that human values lie in creation; the sixth view is that human values includes the value of utility value of human, humanitarian values and social norms value of human.

The human values corresponding to teaching and education can also be drawn into the following categories: firstly, the value that teachers teach students knowledge to meet the needs of students learning; secondly, the value that teachers create knowledge and promote scientific and cultural progress; thirdly, the value that teachers communicate civilization and inherit cultural heritage in the history; fourthly, the value that teachers devote their most advanced intelligence in the decision of government and other organizations. All these values are the driving power of teacher development.

### **3. Development of Teachers Classification in the Context of Value Pluralism**

In the context of pluralistic values, people pursue a variety of value or even all of the values. Neither man can reach “comprehensive development”, nor are they recommended to be measured in a same value. In societies of pluralistic values, everyone has the rights to choose their own commitment of values inside according to external conditions, development prospects, hobbies and other factors. Such value choice will promote the development of teachers in different areas.

In 1991, the National Education Association (NEA) proposed that, the four purposes of the development of teachers are individual development, professional development, teaching development and organizational development. Combined with of the connotation of the development of college teachers, we will classify the development of teachers into five categories.

#### **3.1. Vocational Skills-Based Educators**

Teaching is a joint activity that teachers organize and guide students to understand and to achieve teaching objectives. In this activity, teachers’ teaching behavior plays a key role. The result of teaching depends on the teacher’s teaching behavior which is reasonable or not. Teachers can improve their skills in teaching design, teaching content arrangement, teaching organization, teaching state language and teaching specialties to optimize their teaching behavior, improve classroom teaching, and to become a professional skilled educator.

#### **3.2. Scientific-Research-Based Educators**

From the early 19th century, Humboldt, Fichte, etc. set about establishing new colleges

with scientific research as the main function. Since then, colleges and college teachers have been given the mission of scientific research. Especially in the current teacher evaluation and job classification standards, the results obtained in scientific research can be easier to be brought into quantified consideration, and teachers belong to this category can more easily access to resources, job promotion and so on. However, influenced by personal expertise and interests, characteristics of subjects themselves, hard and soft conditions of colleges and other factors, this development direction is not suitable for all teachers, ignoring the individual conditions and blindly choosing scientific research as the main direction of development is not a wise choice.

### **3.3. Educational-Achievements-Based Educators**

Existing literature on the functions of modern colleges is similar in statement, basically including: personnel training, scientific research, and social services. Even Humboldt and Fichte who regarded scientific research as the main function of colleges also agreed that scientific research is only an important method and basic tool for personnel training, and colleges should carry out personnel training aimed at all-round development through scientific research for the country. In the teaching of today's University of Oxford and University of Cambridge also inherited the idea of the famous German philosopher Kant that "human being is the aim". It is consistent with the fundamental educational purposes of colleges to guide student as the main work and to reflect the values of teachers in student-learning outcomes achieved.

### **3.4. Expertise-Based Educators**

If regarded as an industry, the education industry will output a range of products. Some people think that students are education products, and some people think that students are educational products' "customers", and teachers' curriculum, textbooks and compiled lectures and teaching practice are teaching products. However, it is one way to help with educators' future to work for one teaching expertise, to create a class of "educational products" or one of those, and to become an expert in one specialized field.

### **3.5. Social-Service-Based Educators**

As the most advanced owners of knowledge and technology, college teachers are on the one hand increasingly being needed for governments, businesses and organizations; on the other hand, with the spread of open online courses (MOOCs) and other open teaching resources, college teachers are rapidly influencing the whole society. As social-service-based educators, college teachers are shouldering the important mission to promote social integration and social services.

## **4. Problems and Solutions**

In this case, from the perspective of individual teachers, choosing a more suitable specialized direction for themselves rather than blindly pursuing a single value is clearly more favorable. However, as the function of the modern colleges has expanded from

personnel training to scientific research, social services, cultural lead and other aspects, it forms a certain contradiction between the diversity of college personnel training, scientific research, social services and other functions, and the single orientation of teacher evaluation criteria (Zhou, 2009).

It is the responsibility of all categories of colleges to focus on the development of teachers, which first requires a clear orientation of colleges, and resource allocation based on this. In the development of different categories of teachers, there were both focused and relatively balanced investment in education and teaching resources; there should be resource investment that has focus and balance. As for the category in line with the college position, resources can be more available for them. At the same time, schools should develop a multiple evaluation method and encouragement system to encourage the development of teachers in different categories, making it possible for teachers with different jobs to enjoy the same value in return.

As previously Marx said, the development of teachers must also be driven by an interest. However, different development categories of teachers have their own value, while it is often difficult to quantify as a driving force for teachers. For colleges, they should guide teachers to develop according to the classification, help young teachers grow rapidly, develop the potential of middle-aged teachers, keep the achievements of old teachers, and let teachers of different expertise and interests achieve their values, so as to gather a core group of education teaching force, focusing on improving personnel training, the overall education and competitiveness. It is exactly the resolution for the development of college teachers.

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