

The Connotation and Construction Paths of Novice College English Teachers' Professional Identity Development

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How to cite this paper: Zhang, B. H. (2023). The Connotation and Construction Paths of Novice College English Teachers' Professional Identity Development. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 13, 692-710. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2023.135041>

Received: June 1, 2023

Accepted: October 8, 2023

Published: October 11, 2023

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Abstract

With the rapid development of economic and cultural internationalization and globalization, especially under the Belt and Road Initiative, college English for non-English majors has become one of the important aspects in quality improvement of higher education and the cultivation of well-rounded international talents in colleges and universities. College English teachers are the leading executors of college English curriculum and educational system. Therefore, the teachers' qualities determine whether the curriculum and system will be successful or not. How to promote college English teachers' sense of belonging and worth, their professional identity and the quality of their teaching practice has become a vital issue we are now confronting with. Studies on the influencing factors of teachers' professional identity development can be found. Researches about the differences and similarities of different types of teachers' professional identity development can also be found. However, few researches about the connotation or construction paths about novice college English teachers' professional identity development can be found. Teachers' professional identity is about the process of teachers' learning which is achieved through continuous discussion and communication with other members in various situations created by communities in both personal life and professional life. This research analyzes the connotation of novice college English teacher's professional identity development. Learning in the form of community and reflection on the teaching practice is vital to help novice teachers improve their professional identity development. The researcher also puts forward some suggestions on the construction paths of the development, which might enhance their professional identity development in objective, individual, practice and emotion, so as to bring some enlightenment to relevant researchers.

Keywords

Novice College English Teachers, Teachers' Professional Identity Development, Community, Identity

1. Introduction

Due to the rapid development of the society and the reform of education, traditional teaching methods and educational concepts can not satisfy the needs of the modern education. The purpose of modern education is not only to transfer knowledge from old generation to new generation and strengthen the mental powers of learners but also to develop a comprehensive understanding of effective communication in meaningful ways (Liu & Xu, 2011; Norton & De Costa, 2018). Teachers, students, foreign language and the teaching context are the four basic elements of Foreign Language Education, of which teacher is the most important part guaranteeing the reform implementation. A teacher is one of the key stakeholders of this sensitive profession in any educational system (Derakhshan et al., 2020). At present, College English Education Reformation in China is comprehensively implemented, college English teachers are the implementers of the reformation program. The effects and quality of the program largely depend on teachers' quality. Therefore, the key aspect of improving education lies in improving teacher quality. Every year there are quite a lot of novice college English teachers in China because of the college expansion plan.

Identity is one of the primary aspects of achieving the macro goals of educational systems. Teachers' professional identity serves as a lens to explore the complexities of teaching (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). According to Coldron and Smith (1999), professional identity is not something they have, but something they use so as to make sense of themselves as teachers. College English is taken as a compulsory course in universities and colleges in China; it has the characteristics of wide coverage, large span and long teaching hours, thus novice college English teachers matter a lot for the teaching quality of college English and their professional identity development also influences their future careers. In the Chinese context, college English teachers' education and future development play an important role in college English teaching, and more attention should be paid to the understanding of novice college English teachers' professional identity development.

Novice college English teachers' professional identity construction can reflect their social role and their subjective identification of the objective identity. Therefore, investigating novice college English teachers' professional identity development enables us to know more about who teachers are and how they operate and how to move through the various social, cultural, political and economic discourses that have permeated their workplace (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), meanwhile how to promote novice college English teachers' professional

identity development is a key factor in improving college English teaching quality. This research intends to understand the connotation of novice college English teachers' professional identity development. Based on the connotation, the researcher aims to further explore how to promote novice college English teachers' professional identity development and put forward some suggestions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Identity

"Identity", which means "our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are" (Danielewicz, 2001), originates from the Latin word *idem*. For a long period of time, identity has been regarded as an issue about changes that every individual constructed in the society in daily life. Some scholars regard identity as a monistic, stable and unified nature, while some contemporary scholars are more inclined to constructivism, which sees it as a dynamic, interactive and consistent process related to individual experience (Liu, 2012). Identity is a dynamic, complicated and multifaceted process of time and change.

2.2. Teachers' Professional Identity

With the same characteristics as identity, teacher identity includes its unique professional qualities. It is a complicated concept involving sociology, philosophy, psychology, etc. Varghese et al. (2005) define teacher identity as a construction process based on context, constantly changing and transforming in the wake of language and discourse, which possesses the characteristics of sustainability and negotiation. Richards (2008) points out that teacher identity refers to the identification of society and culture during their teaching, and teacher acquisition is the reconstruction of teacher identity. This research does not distinguish teacher identity from teachers' professional identity.

The concept of professional identity is used in various ways in teacher education programs (Lutovac, 2020). Marcia (2002) points out that professional identity is the measurement of personal skills and values related to active employment and exploration, followed by job commitment. He considers the skills, abilities and professional interests of individuals as important indicators in the construction of the professional identity. Once the identity is constructed, the person is going to establish a deep and mutual relationship with the environment, have a sense of belonging and unity, connect himself with his profession and achieve psychological satisfaction in the environment. Teachers create their identity through a process of ongoing negotiation, debate, and dialogue that includes both their personal and professional lives (Tsui, 2007).

Teachers' professional identity is how teachers define their professional roles and themselves to others (Lasky, 2005), reflecting teachers' conception of "what makes a good teacher" (Qoyyimah et al., 2023). It is regarded as an ongoing process during which the selves integrate with the professional roles of teachers, their existing knowledge and beliefs and also in which new experiences and the

interpretation of them play a significant role. In addition, professional identity is influenced by both personal and contextual factors, which means that teachers' professional identity is not completely unique. It is believed that the formation and development of teachers' professional identity is a dynamic and lifelong process and never stops. One factor influencing teachers' professional identity is individual's events and past experiences (Cheng, 2021), another factor which may play an important role in shaping teachers' professional identity is the teacher education program (Lutovac, 2020).

2.3. English Teachers' Professional Identity

In the Chinese education system, in most cases, foreign language refers to English, language teachers are mainly English teachers, therefore study on English teachers' identity is as significant as that of language teachers' identity. Nguyen (2016) believes that identity is not inherent to language teachers but the result of their contact and integration with the social and cultural background they are involved in. Barkhuizen (2017) defines language teacher identity as follows: Language teacher identities are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical—they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. According to Liu and Hu (2020), the identity of college English teachers is essentially established in the course of curriculum reform. This study regards English teachers' identity as the expectation of English teachers in their personal and professional development and the school environment during the process of communicating with community members, and the expectation might change with their beliefs, goals, attitudes and emotions.

The word "identity" has become widely used by English communities in language learning and teaching since the beginning of the 21st century. Channan (2020) uses qualitative research method to explore how English teachers in a primary school in Pakistan teach English under the new curriculum reform and how their teacher identity is developed. The study shows teachers prefer to use the way that they like to teach English so as to build their own identity. Babanoğlu and Yardımçı (2017) analyze the view of English teachers in private and public schools. They find that teachers have a positive cognition of professional development issues.

From the perspective of language teachers' role, teacher identity serves as a ladder to form their own professional views. Teachers' perception of their own identity manifests what others think of them. Mannes (2020) explores how EFL teachers view their professional identity through interviews with four EFL teachers. His study demonstrates all teachers agree that the occupation of teachers is to educate but not just to teach, because teaching is a kind of occupation that needs cognitive ability and emotional ability (Tosuncuoglu, 2019).

From the perspective of crisis and its solution of teachers' identity, Liu and Hu (2020) study the origin of college English teachers' identity crisis in college under the new curriculum reform and its solutions. They reveal that college English teachers' identity crisis primarily lies in the inconsistency of social role expecta-

tions, de-professionalization and the influence of the new curriculum reform on college English teachers' previous knowledge structure. Identity crisis is rooted in identity dilemma, it is the loss of self-identity because of the threat of ontological security. Vanegas et al. (2021) describe the role of social psychological factors in shaping the crisis of teachers' professional identity in a private university in Colombia. Xie and Dong (2020) study the identity evolution of three experienced Chinese English teachers in a higher vocational college and the causes of the identity crisis. It shows the relationship between teachers' identity evolution track and their identity crisis factors.

Finally, from the perspective of influencing factors of English teachers' identity, different scholars believe the factors influencing teachers' identity development are different. Kavrayıcı (2020) explores what affects the development of teacher identity. Two most obvious factors are personal characteristics and the teaching practice while social environment has very little influence. His research had given some enlightenment to other researchers, but it ignores macro and micro factors. Besides, Babanoğlu and Yardımcı (2017) state that to some degree, gender factors do affect teachers' professional development consciousness, which is beneficial to female English teachers, but age is not a decisive factor in their cognition. In addition, studies also show that teacher identity is related to such significant variables as the reasons for teachers' career choice, teachers' professional beliefs, sense of professional belonging, professional contribution, and so on (Lasky, 2005; Thomson & Palermo, 2014).

2.4. Novice College English Teachers

"Novice teacher", also known as an apprentice or a beginner, refers to a licensed professional educator whose seniority does not exceed five years of teaching (Perrone et al., 2019; Räsänen et al., 2020). McDonald (1982) defines a novice teacher as a professional teacher who has accomplished all his or her pre-service courses including teaching practices at the internship stage; someone who has been awarded the interim teacher certificate and been employed by a certain school; someone who shoulders the responsibilities with those experienced teachers and expert teachers; someone who is at the first year of his or her teaching career as an official teacher in this school. This definition clearly describes the working eligibility, working years and working responsibilities of a novice teacher, thus it is widely used in relevant studies both at home and abroad.

In this study, novice college English teachers refer to those who engage in teaching college English from one to three years in a university and who do not have much understanding of the career. As novice college English teachers, they should adjust to the teaching and learning environment quickly and build relevant relationship with students and colleagues. The most important is that they need to learn how to deal with complex teaching issues. Their cognition, personality, working motivation, professional psychology and the college context will

all influence their professional identity development.

Studies on novice teachers focus on the developing aspects of professional identity emerging in relationship in order to gauge progress and examine influence on the professional development in this new professional role (Cattley, 2007; Urzua & Vasquez, 2008). Hamman et al. (2010) investigate the formation and development of the professional identity of novice college English teachers with the possible selves theory. Liao (2010) compares the changes before and after teacher's employment. She puts forward some strategies on how to overcome difficulties of teachers' professional identity. Li and Zhang (2016) analyze the level of professional identity of a new male preschool teacher through in-depth interview. They offer some suggestions on how to improve new male preschool teachers' professional identity from both personal and social perspectives.

Research on language teachers with special cultural identity (Park, 2012) implies that ESL teachers might confront questioning from both students and society towards their identity as English teachers as they are not native English speakers. While Chen (2008) points out that Chinese EFL teachers have certain advantages in teaching than teachers taking English as a native language because they are able to anticipate students' problems and emphasize the difficulties. Clarke (2008) points out that English as a global language plays a significant role in the identity construction of language teachers, and novice English teachers tend to be student-centered and adopt new or modern teaching methods and approaches, while experienced teachers tend to be more teacher-centered and prefer traditional teaching methods in the classroom.

3. The Connotation of Novice College English Teachers' Professional Identity Development

The construction and development of teachers' professional identity asks for both individual and group achievement. Firstly, the realization of teachers' professional identity through learning, especially learning in the form of community has a significant impact on teachers' professional identity development. Secondly, teachers should give full play to the positive role of various influencing factors in teaching practice, and get help from community members, seminars, lectures, and demonstration classes to solve the problems in teaching and academic practice. Lastly, novice college English teachers also need to reflect constantly by means of participation and discussion on the specific characteristics of the course and gradually achieve the goal of promoting professional identity development so as to realize the ultimate goal of improving the quality of education and personal development.

3.1. Community

Man is the sum of all social relations. The world is considered as a system of continuous objectification of experience under the guidance of logical relations, and also a community of creativity and compassion (Guo, 2017). Community is

based on family, blood ties, geography and friendship, the core of which lies in cooperation and solidarity. Like race, faith, family and friendship, “community” is more than the sum of each individual. It is a way of talking about collective self and embodies human basic needs.

Novice teachers can benefit from communities of practice. Liu (2011) defines “communities of practice” as “a group made of individuals with common goals and interests”. The core of communities of practice is that the novice can gradually move from the edge to the center through continuous participation in the activities. For novice college English teachers, they should join the seminars, attend and learn from expert teachers’ classes, prepare for their own classes, invite expert teachers to their classes and ask for suggestions, with this continuous repetitive participation, novice college English teachers will achieve their professional growth.

Learners are the participants in the real practice in communities of practice. As a type of communities of practice, a learning community is an organization of individuals working towards a common vision (Liao, 2017). It is a place for members to reflect, explore, discuss and share so as to satisfy their desire to learn and improve. In a learning community, learning is at the center of all activities, and all community members have the opportunity and responsibility to make decisions.

Education should proceed in the form of having conversations on topics that participants are interested in. During the conversations, participants discuss and negotiate, construct meanings, update knowledge and facilitate learning through written and spoken languages. Teachers are important participants in education and socio-cultural community. Gu (2017) defines teachers’ learning community as “a collaborative learning practice group of teachers formed within schools to improve the quality of scientific research and get rid of difficulties in professional development”. It provides a platform for teachers to practice, negotiate, reflect, learn and develop. Teachers, especially novice teachers, face challenges and difficulties in teaching and academic researches. It is in urgent need of various teachers’ learning communities to help them establish common values, understanding and to provide opportunities for construction, communication and growth.

To be a self, one must be a member of a community, which is one of the crucial sources of collective identification. Only in the safe atmosphere of “trust circle” can teachers discover the real individual self (Guo, 2017). “Trust circle” is a significant element in constructing learning community. Teachers gradually improve individual self and enhance the sense of community unity through communication and negotiation so as to strengthen collective self and promote overall professional identity development. When the individual self is integrated with the others, it is time for community integration and realization of collective self. In a sense, teachers’ learning community is served as a reliable “scaffolding” for teacher’ learning. Teachers conduct meaningful negotiation through participa-

tion, combine theory with practice and build a bridge for the realization of self identity and collective identity. As the relationship between individuals and society is mutual, the transformation of learners means the transformation of the community they belong to and the activities they take part in. Therefore, the change of a teacher's self identity is bound to affect the collective identity of the community.

Based on the above analysis, the relationship between community and teacher's professional identity development can be described as what is shown in **Figure 1**.

3.2. Reflection

Reflection is a key procedure in teachers' learning and professional development. At all stages of teacher's career, teacher's reflection-renewal is the mechanism to facilitate teacher's growth, which is achieved by the cooperation of teachers, administrators, teacher educators and researchers (Steffy, 2000). All the members in the community, such as teachers, students and administrators, should take part in the "reflection-renewal-growth" process. The researcher thinks that, for teachers, reflection refers to the process of revising and improving the existing knowledge in their minds for teaching and scientific problems in the professional development, it is also a process of knowledge confrontation. As an important part of teachers' professional learning community, teachers must realize professional development and strengthen professional identity through continuous practice, reflection, re-practice and re-reflection.

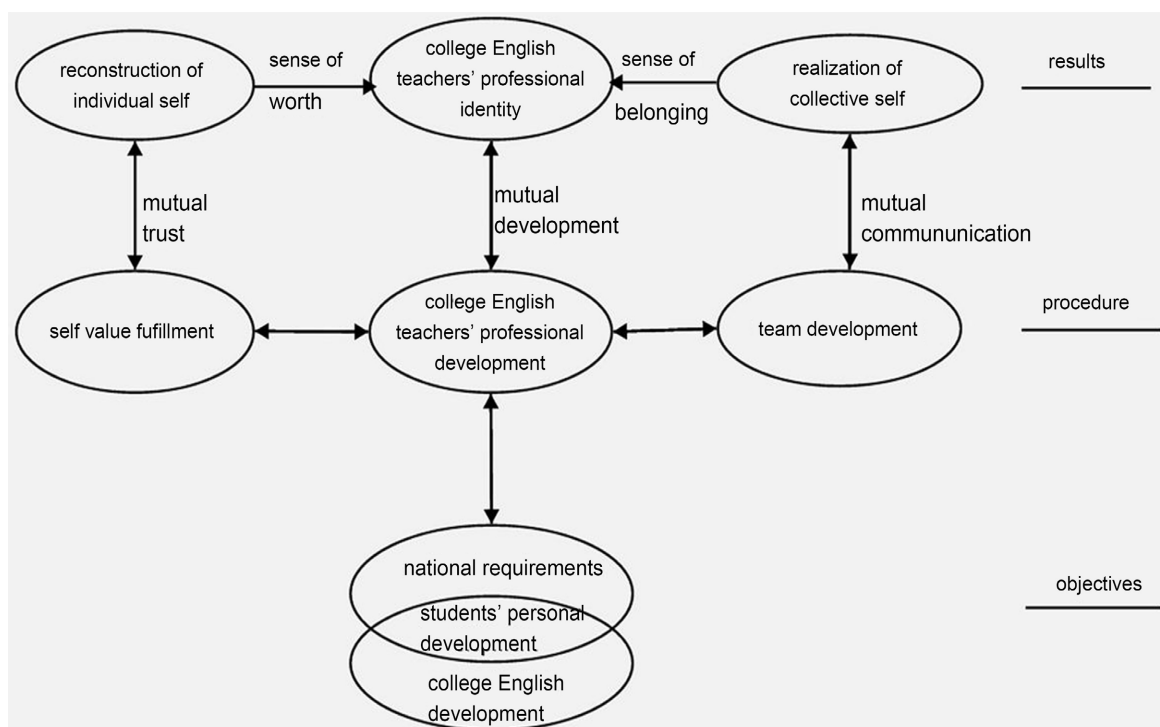


Figure 1. The relationship between community and teachers' professional identity development.

Reflection can help teachers free themselves from impulsive and conventional activities. When teachers confront with problems in teaching practice, reflection enables them to solve such problems through renewal practice. For teachers, reflection usually starts with a specific teaching or scientific research puzzle. After conceptualizing the problem, meanings are constructed and knowledge is assimilated through negotiating with community members, which in turn guides further practice. This is a circular process without clear starting and ending points. Reflection has dual nature, it can be the goal for teachers and also the means to realize other goals. Thus, for novice college English teachers, reflection is both goal and means.

The researcher believes that teachers' learning takes place under a certain context, the process of teachers' reflection is essentially the process of teachers' knowledge assimilation and professional identity development. The construction of teachers' professional identity is the result of the continuous and interactive effect of teachers' experience. Teachers must continue to learn in the atmosphere and context of professional learning community. Only in the favorable learning context can college English teachers clarify the goals and problems of learning, deepen the understanding of learning content, raise the ability of self-reflection, participate actively in learning and make objective evaluations so as to reflect on the learning objectives, develop into reflective practitioners and improve their professional identity.

For novice teachers, reflective teaching enables them to combine theory with practice. During college English teaching process, novice teachers enrich the reflective contents and reflect on both the teaching contents and the external factors influencing the effects. Novice college English teachers should also diversify reflective approaches. Reflective teaching diaries make in-depth analysis of the problems that occurred in class and offer suggestions on solving the problems, which helps novice college English teachers form the behavior of reflection and raises the level of reflection. Action researches enhance teachers' self-assessment and develop the teaching ability. Collective reflection with experienced teachers strengthens the integration of teachers' opinions and intelligence. Meanwhile, novice college English teachers should combine reflection with practice. Reflective teaching plays the role of a link between theory and practice. It can guide novice teachers to realize the problem, find the problem and solve the problem.

Based on the above analysis, the relationship between reflection and teachers' professional identity can be described as what is shown in **Figure 2**.

4. The Construction Paths of Novice College English Teachers' Professional Identity Development

Novice college English teachers have all the general characteristics of new teachers, such as the feeling of freshness in the early stage and confusion afterwards. The construction of teachers' professional identity is mainly realized through teachers' learning. Learning is not an isolated process but an organic one in which

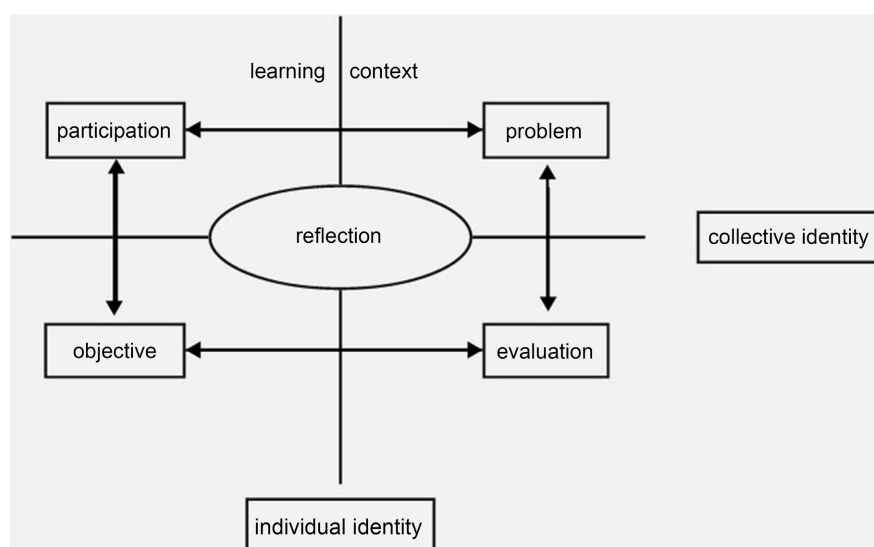


Figure 2. The relationship between reflection and teachers' professional identity development.

individual learners realize the meaning of learning in different learning activities. Teachers' effective professional learning in a community is also realized through reflection in continuous teaching practices. College English teachers participate actively in teaching practice and scientific research, make the most of their knowledge background, reflect constantly on teaching and research experience, and promote knowledge sharing and professional practice so as to improve their professional identity development. Based on the community and reflection, the construction paths of novice college English teachers' professional identity development can be explored from the following four aspects: objective identity, individual identity, practice identity and emotional identity. Novice college English teachers' professional identity development can be achieved through promoting objective identity by integrating pre-service and post-service education; enhancing individual identity by improving teachers' self-consciousness; strengthening practice identity with the help of multidimensional learning and practice communities; upgrading emotional identity by fostering the sense of happiness, belonging and worth. The specific paths can be described as what is shown in **Figure 3**.

4.1. Integrate Pre-Service and Post-Service Education of Novice College English Teachers, Promote Objective Identity

Objective identity refers to college English teachers' common understanding and knowledge on national education, policies, students' practical needs and the orientation of college English course. Novice college English teachers need to understand the common goal of the course. Thus teacher education which includes pre-job cultivation, entry education and on-the-job training is of vital importance to promote objective identity.

The pre-job cultivation focuses on education philosophy, professional identity,

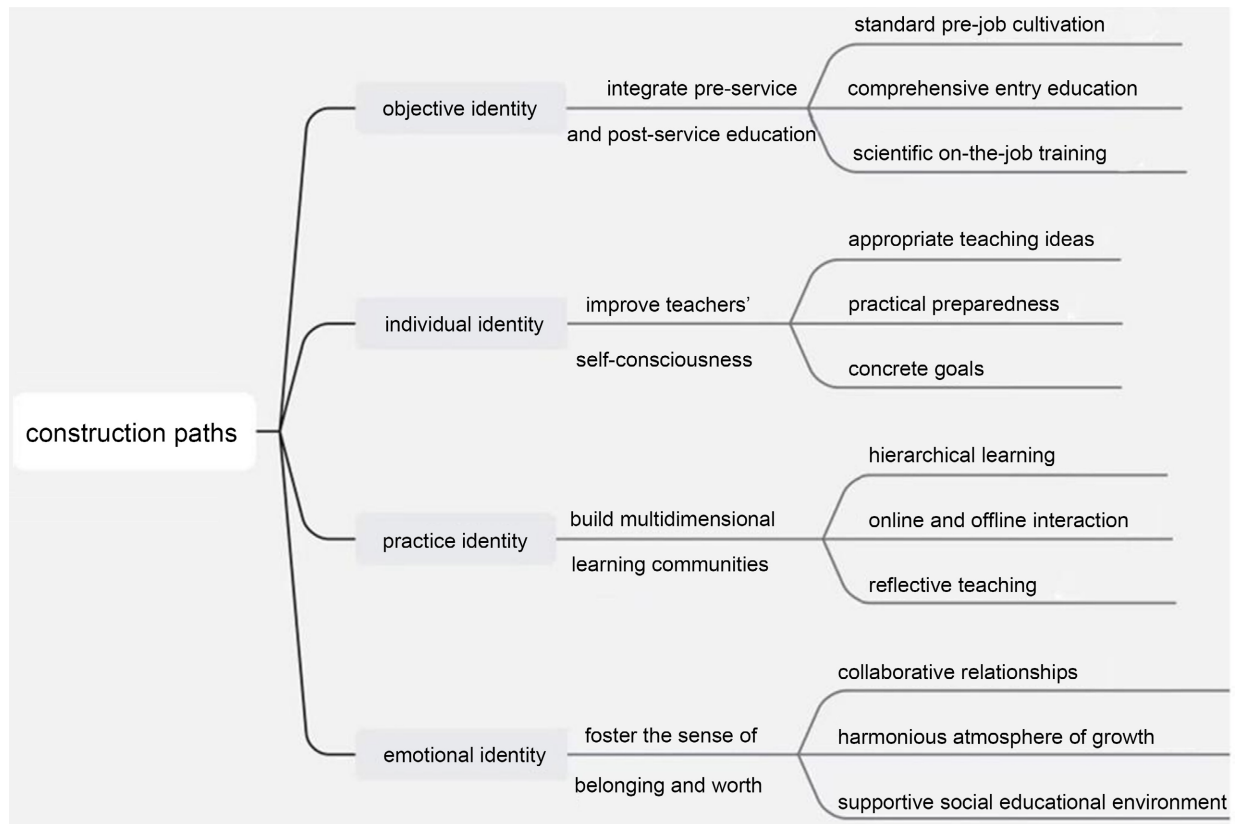


Figure 3. The construction paths of novice college English teachers' professional identity development.

practical skills, professional knowledge such as foreign language knowledge and language competence. This stage lays solid foundation for the promotion of objective identity.

Entry education includes policies of national language education and foreign language talent cultivation, national strategic development requirements at the present stage, the orientation of college English in colleges and universities, students' personal development and the development goal and the talent cultivation plan of the school. It should actively respond to the call of Ministry of Education. In the course of teachers' professional identity development, the entry education given to novice college English teachers serves as a bridge connecting the past with the future and offers a link between pre-job cultivation and on-the-job training. With the help of scientific entry training, good working atmosphere, proper guidance on teaching and research, the period for novice college English teachers' role transformation would be shortened and their development would be faster.

On-the-job training is another important aspect of promoting objective identity. After taking entry education, novice teachers start the new phase of being a college English teacher. Their role changes from being a student and a learner to a teacher. Lack of teaching experience, there is no doubt that they might feel nervous or confused. Thus on-the-job training shoulders the responsibility of eliminating novice teachers' confusion and helping them to develop. A good

on-the-job training includes preparing, teaching, discussing, doing research and so on. It needs to be implemented around classroom teaching. Novice teachers attend expert teachers' classes, understand their teaching ideas through close classroom observation and gain some teaching experience. Meanwhile, expert teachers should also go to novice teachers' class to observe and provide pertinent guidance and suggestions. In addition, their collective teamwork in preparing lessons, demonstration classes and model classes, teaching cases analysis, teachers' learning communities, professional workshops, peer discussion and other forms of mutual help and cooperation could not only reduce novice teachers' anxiety and confusion but also accelerate their professional identity development.

4.2. Improve Teachers' Self-Consciousness, Enhance Individual Identity

Teaching ideas are about teachers' understanding of teaching connotation, teaching practice, teaching mode and so on. It is the fundamental guiding ideology of their teaching activities and the basic understanding of the essence and process of the teaching practice or the basic views on their own essence and process of teaching in their teaching practice. Firstly, college English teaching in our country has followed the traditional teaching mode of overemphasizing teacher-centeredness, highlighting teachers' dominant role in teaching while neglecting students' enthusiasm and their initiative role of learning. Thus it is necessary for novice college English teachers to know how to allocate time in class and give students more time to discuss, share and participate in class. Secondly, novice college English teachers need to deal with students' cultural differences. Most Chinese students have not been in a Western country for a long time to experience the local culture. They seldom know the differences between Chinese culture and Western cultures. Helping students realize and learn the differences will improve their intercultural communication competence. Lastly, it is also important for novice college English teachers to have a clear idea of the relationship between students' ability and knowledge. They should know these two ones are of equal importance and change the teaching mode to improve students' autonomous learning and individualized learning abilities.

Practical preparedness ensures success. Educating people is one of the most complicated and difficult work. With pre-job cultivation and entry education, novice college English teachers need to make sure they are well prepared. When conducting teaching practice, if they face any difficulties, the on-the-job training will help them solve the problems. Through communication in learning communities and reflective thinking, novice college English teachers are better prepared.

Novice college English teachers' professional identity development requires a clear and comprehensive goal or a set of practical and concrete sub-goals, which can encourage them to strive. They need to diagnose their own problems and also know their advantages and disadvantages, making efforts to improve their professional qualification and individual identity. Meanwhile, as far as the schools or the administrative departments are concerned, especially experienced teach-

ers and leaders should help novice college English teachers and encourage them to set practical plans for their professional identity development as soon as possible. With external help and internal efforts, novice college English teachers will improve their teaching effectiveness.

4.3. Construct Multidimensional Learning and Practice Communities, Strengthen Practice Identity

Hierarchical learning means that colleges or universities form learning and research teaching communities of different levels according to novice college English teachers' interest, academic background, teaching subjects, and so on, helping them to integrate into the communities through peer coaching, class preparation, open class teaching and collaborative learning. Teachers' knowledge is mainly embodied in their teaching practice. Novice college English teachers can develop by watching the video tapes of other experienced teachers or professors or attending their class to closely observe their classroom teaching. They can also benefit from the communities, extend their apprenticeship of observation to the on-the-job training, perceive the teaching practice directly and strengthen their practice identity.

Learning and practice communities can hold abundant online and offline teaching and researching activities. On one hand, community members must maintain regular face-to-face communication. Colleges and universities should support the communities by allocating reasonable teaching tasks, leaving enough time and space for novice college English teachers to participate in learning and practice communities, encouraging more direct interaction and discussions. On the other hand, with the rapid development of technology, colleges and universities also need to keep pace with the times and make the most of online resources and convenience by establishing various online learning and practice communities. Through online platform, novice college English teachers can discuss and communicate with their peers in different colleges, even in different countries about their teaching and research confusion and anxiety. It can greatly improve their practice identity and promote team development.

Theory and practice are complementary. Theory serves as the premise and support of practice and practice in turn serves as the result and sublimation of theory. For novice teachers, reflective teaching is not only the bridge to connect theory with practice but also an effective way to improve their professional identity development because reflective teaching can stimulate their self-awareness and help them to integrate teaching beliefs into teaching practice. During college English teaching process, novice teachers can reflect on students' learning ability, the knowledge structure, their own classroom monitoring ability as well as their role orientation and career satisfaction. Meanwhile, novice college English teachers can adopt various reflective approaches, such as keeping reflective diary to raise the level of reflection, adopting collective reflection to integrate teachers' intelligence and conducting an action research to enhance their self-awareness and develop their teaching ability. Through reflective teaching, novice college

English teachers will have a sense of reflection and make use of reflection to create a reflective behavior which can stimulate their internal driving force, solve the teaching problems they come across and enhance their practice identity.

4.4. Foster the Sense of Happiness, Belonging and Worth, Upgrade Emotional Identity

When a person finds that he or she has the same characteristics with another person or is in the common situation, their connection and sense of identity will be strengthened. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-actualization in the spiritual level is the highest ideal for individual development. Emotional identity is the way for novice college English teachers in a learning community to achieve self-realization. Only by stimulating the inner development motivation of novice college English teachers can they be guided to seek identity through common learning and practice.

Schools should offer scientific incentive system, humanistic care to guide novice college English teachers to actively participate in the learning practice of multidimensional teaching and practice communities. It can tap the potential of collaborative learning, strengthen cohesion of college English teaching and research team, form a positive learning and research atmosphere so as to reduce social loafing and stimulate the inner development power of novice college English teachers. To be specific, when assigning teaching tasks, schools need to take novice college English teachers' professional background, knowledge structure and their expertise into consideration, provide experienced in-service guiding teachers and make sure novice teachers can get in-time help from experienced teachers. Such collaborative relationships promote novice college English teachers' career happiness and sense of belonging, meet their emotional needs and enhance their emotional identity.

A harmonious atmosphere of growth will help novice college English teachers to achieve a sense of belonging and worth. Schools establish a tutorial system for novice college English teachers to guide them in making personal development plans, implement the collective teaching accountability system to improve the evaluation system, encourage novice teachers to seek communication and cooperation with experienced teachers and promote the construction of "cooperative collegiality". Novice college English teachers insist on keeping teaching journals and research notes, to reflect on their own teaching practice. Meanwhile, experienced teachers can help novice teachers grow through mutual cooperation and teaching. In the process of personal growth, they will gain success, happiness and dignity as college English teachers, foster the sense of collective belonging and worth and gradually enhance their professional emotional identity.

Besides school environment, improving social educational environment is also necessary. The cognition of novice college English teachers is restricted by both their own knowledge system and the macro environment factors such as education system, society requirements and culture. Thus it is important to provide supportive social educational environment to develop novice college English

teachers' cognition as it is concerned with individual teacher, school, educational departments and the society. Supportive external environment will upgrade novice college English teachers' sense of belonging.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly discusses the connotation and construction paths of novice college English teachers' professional identity development. It has been found that participation in learning and practice communities, negotiation with community members, suggestions from experienced teachers and reflective teaching all can help novice college English teachers to achieve their professional identity growth.

5.1. Major Findings

Novice college English teachers discuss and negotiate with community members, update knowledge, and establish common values to help them overcome the difficulties and problems that occur in teaching by participating in learning and practice communities. Through communities, novice teachers gradually fulfill individual self-worth, enhance the sense of community unity to promote the realization of collective self and the reconstruction of individual self, which fosters a sense of happiness, belonging and worth and finally develops their professional identity.

Through reflective teaching, novice college English teachers reflect on teaching ideas, goals, contents and the process. They diversify reflective approaches by keeping reflective diaries, conducting action researches and collective reflection. They also pay attention to the combination of reflection with teaching practice to raise their awareness and ability of self-reflection and develop into reflective practitioners.

Based on teachers' learning and practice communities, their teaching practice and reflection, novice college English teachers promote their professional identity development in objective identity, individual identity, practice identity and emotional identity. Novice college English teachers can enhance objective identity through the integration of pre-job cultivation, entry education and on-the-job training. By improving their consciousness of teaching ideas, preparation and goals, they can strengthen their individual identity. With the help of the construction of multidimensional learning communities such as online learning platform, offline seminars, their practice identity would be upgraded. Novice college English teachers can also improve their emotional identity by establishing collaborative relationships, creating a harmonious atmosphere of growth and offering supportive social educational environment.

5.2. Implications

Through the analysis, the connotation and construction paths of novice college English teachers' professional identity development are put forward and the im-

plications are gained to promote faster and better growth for novice college English teachers.

With the reform of college English curriculum and the high demanding of the course and teaching, there is no doubt that the professional identity development of novice college English teachers has been popular and urgent. Firstly, novice college English teachers should realize the importance of professional identity development. Only when they themselves understand the necessity of professional identity development can they better adapt to the new environment and new role, follow the experienced teachers' suggestions more accurately, equip themselves with clearer goals and preparation and accumulate more useful resources and knowledge. Secondly, novice college English teachers need to make the most of communities. As a compulsory language course and the role it plays in learning and daily communication, college English has its specific characteristics. Novice teachers participate and negotiate with community members, and learn more about the language teaching approaches as well as the goal, orientation and requirements of college English. Thirdly, reflection is beneficial to novice college English teachers. Through watching the video clips of their own classroom teaching and reading their reflective diaries, novice teachers will know more about their teaching practice and better stimulate their internal driving force. Lastly, it is vital for novice college English teachers to cultivate their professional identity development consciousness and ability. Because their perception of development is the motive power of cognition change, with higher consciousness and stronger ability, novice college English teachers will examine their teaching practices more critically, enrich their teaching cognitive system and finally achieve their professional identity development.

Although teachers are considered as the main and internal factor influencing professional identity development, we can not ignore the significant role school plays in the developing process because school is the main place for teaching and learning and the main carrier of novice teachers' cognitive development. Firstly, it is necessary for schools to strengthen the school material culture as well as spiritual culture and cultivate a positive school culture atmosphere, which will exert influence on novice teachers' cognitive development, improve their teaching quality and further promote their professional identity development. Secondly, schools should create a supportive atmosphere and foster harmonious teaching and learning communities. Supportive atmosphere and assistance from community members will offer guidance for novice teachers who lack relevant experiences and lead them to achieve faster growth. Thirdly, schools need to offer long-term external support for novice college English teachers. As an English teacher, the best way to develop is to get immersed in the culture. Therefore, schools should create more opportunities for novice teachers to get further education and systematically learn the language and culture.

5.3. Limitations

The purpose of the paper is to help novice college English teachers understand

the connotation of their professional identity development and offer some suggestions on the construction paths. Although the paper has some new findings and makes some contributions to novice college English teachers' professional identity development, it has some limitations.

The researcher only focuses on the novice college English teachers. Whether the construction paths are suitable for novice teachers of other courses remains unknown. Meanwhile, novice stage is only one stage of teachers' professional identity development process. Studies on the professional identity development of student teachers, competent teachers, experienced teachers or even retired teachers can help researchers get a deeper and clearer understanding of teachers' professional identity development. Thirdly, due to the limited time and energy, the researcher devotes no effort to studying the factors influencing novice college English teachers' professional identity development. These limitations contribute to the inadequacy of present study; further researches could focus on how to avoid these aspects.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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