

Original Article

A Survey on the Professional Development of English Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools in Sichuan and Chongqing

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Received: 20 January 2023

Revised: 23 February 2023

Accepted: 04 March 2023

Published: 16 March 2023

Abstract - English in primary and secondary schools is an important part of national education in China. Likewise, there are a large number of teachers who undertake English in primary and secondary schools, playing an increasingly important role in national education, and their professional development is of great significance. Sichuan-Chongqing is an important district in southwest China, which is representative of the whole country. A survey of the current situation of English teachers' professional development in this area is helpful in finding out the existing problems in time, putting forward solutions and promoting teachers' professional development. Based on questionnaires and interviews, this paper analyzes the current professional groups, professional development level and professional development awareness. It puts forward some suggestions on pre-service education, on-the-job training and constructing a teachers' learning community to improve and promote the professional development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing. This study can also have some enlightenment for the professional development of English teachers or other subjects in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing as well as other parts of the country.

Keywords - English teachers, Primary and secondary schools, Professional development, Current situation, Research.

1. Introduction

Both Sichuan and Chongqing are planning the blueprint for the future development of science, technology and economy to promote their comprehensive strength vigorously. To realize these beautiful blueprints, education is assuredly a powerful propeller. At present, English teachers in primary and secondary schools, who improve the overall quality of the people throughout the country and cultivate talents with international vision, are playing an increasingly important role in promoting the development of science, technology and economy. Sichuan-Chongqing Region has an important position, which is representative of the whole country. A survey on the current situation of English teachers' professional development in primary and secondary schools in the Sichuan-Chongqing Region is in need to find out the existing problems and put forward accordingly solutions, which is conducive to promoting the professional development of English teachers in primary as well as secondary schools, improving the construction of teachers, and improving the English education level, and also has certain reference significance for other subjects and other provinces of the country.

2. Research Basis

2.1. National Teacher Education Policy

2.1.1. *Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Deepening the Construction and Reform*

of Teachers in the New Era

Under the background of the new era, the reform of teachers' team construction needs clear objectives, corresponding measures and specific implementation methods, which are explained in the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teachers' Team Construction in the New Era (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions). In addition, it is clear that rejuvenating the country and strengthening teachers, vigorously revitalizing teacher education and constantly improving teachers' professional quality and ability is of great significance to the prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation and the happiness of the people (Zhao, 2018). One year after the promulgation of the Opinions, the Ministry of Education summarized the implementation situation in all parts of the country and put forward the ideas for the next step of teaching staff construction reform. At the press conference, leaders in charge of the education departments of various provinces and municipalities reported on the implementation results in the past year. Among them, Guangdong Province has achieved remarkable results promoting teachers' professional development. Guangdong Province attaches great importance to teachers' professional development, establishing 10 primary and secondary school teachers' development centers based on universities, building 480 famous teacher's, principal's and director's studios as practice bases for teachers' training,



and promoting the construction of teacher development centers at city and county levels.

2.1.2. Action Plan for Revitalizing Teacher Education (2018-2022)

The quality of teachers determines the quality of education, and teacher education is related to the country's future. Therefore, the national level attaches great importance to teacher education. Five departments, including the Ministry of Education, formulated the *Action Plan for Revitalizing Teacher Education (2018-2022)* in 2018, requiring all provinces and cities to implement it seriously. *The Action Plan* calls for improving the quality of teacher education as the core, strengthening the construction of the teacher education system as the support, and promoting the innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development of teacher education with the structural reform on the supply side as the driving force, strengthening the construction of teachers from the source, and striving to cultivate teachers with noble morality, exquisite business, reasonable structure and full of vitality that satisfy the party and the people (Tian, 2019).

2.2. The Needs of Local Construction and Development

2.2.1. The Important Position of the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone

Sichuan-Chongqing Region plays an important role in the whole country, especially in the west. As far as population is concerned, there are more than 80 million people in Sichuan Province and more than 30 million people in Chongqing. The population in Sichuan and Chongqing accounts for about 28% of the total population of 12 provinces and cities in the west. As far as the total economic output is concerned, the total economic output of Sichuan Province in 2019 was 4.66 trillion yuan, ranking first in western China; Chongqing's total economic output being 2.36 trillion yuan, ranking third in the west. The total economic output of Sichuan and Chongqing accounted for more than one-third of the total economic output of 12 western provinces and cities in 2019, which was 20.51 trillion yuan.

Regarding urban competitiveness, Chengdu and Chongqing are western China's first and second cities. As far as industry and urban development are concerned, the Sichuan-Chongqing region has the most concentrated industries and the largest urban density in west China. In terms of economy and trade, Sichuan and Chongqing naturally occupy the forefront of western provinces and cities in China (Long, et al., 2019). All these developments are inseparable from the strong support of talent, and education is the way to cultivate talent at all levels.

2.2.2. Inevitable Requirements for Education Development in Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone

The development of the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone is significant in western development. The National Development and Reform Commission issued *the*

Key Tasks of New Urbanization Construction and Urban-Rural Integration Development in 2020, which indicates that the construction of the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone has been incorporated into the national strategy. The zone has a wide coverage and great influence, covering most of the Sichuan-Chongqing region, which can basically represent the whole Sichuan-Chongqing region (National Development and Reform Commission, 2020). The promotion and implementation of the zone will promote the concerted efforts of Chongqing and Sichuan Province, strengthen the overall development of the Chengdu-Chongqing region, give play to the leading role of central cities, strengthen the docking of transportation, industry, environmental protection and people's livelihood policies, jointly build a scientific and technological innovation center with national influence, and accelerate the cultivation and formation of new power sources. After *Key Tasks of New Urbanization Construction and Urban-rural Integration Development in 2020* were issued, Sichuan and Chongqing began implementing it. The planning of China West (Chongqing) Science City began to be planned. Other measures have been implemented, such as Sichuan and Chongqing jointly building a manufacturing highland in China and Chengdu High-tech Zone and Chongqing High-tech Zone jointly building an intelligent terminal industry cluster. Implementing these policies and measures is also inseparable from intellectual support such as education and talent training. It is an inevitable requirement for teachers' professional development to promote the implementation of a talent training strategy.

2.3. The Inevitable Requirement of English Teaching Reform

2.3.1. Requirements for English Teachers' Professional Development by *The China's Standards of English Language Ability*

The China's Standards of English Language Ability (hereinafter referred to as *China's Standards*) was officially released by the Ministry of Education and State Language Commission after being approved by the Examination and Approval Committee of the Language Standards of the State Language Committee. According to *China's Standards*, English learners in China can judge their English level. This was officially implemented on June 1, 2018, and is the first English proficiency assessment standard for English learners in China. *China's Standards* can comprehensively and accurately describe the English learners' expressive, structural, and application abilities in each learning period (Pan, 2022). The orientation of the scale has shifted the learning of language knowledge to the cultivation of comprehensive language application ability, which has great challenges for English teachers. They need to update and change their knowledge structure, teaching concepts, teachers' roles and the development and utilization of teaching resources.

2.3.2 Core Competencies of English Subject

The Core Competencies of English Subject is based on the concept of "core competency" put forward in *Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform and Implementing the Fundamental Task of Cultivating People with Virtue* issued by the Ministry of Education, which serves as a guide for English teachers in primary and secondary schools in terms of educational approaches, teaching methods and evaluation. *The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School (2017)* classifies the core competency of English subjects into four aspects: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability (Yang, 2018). The core competency of English subject is the basic requirement of English education for the country to achieve the goal of great national rejuvenation. Its implementation conforms to the trend of global education reform, which is stated from a strategic perspective in the new era (Wang & Jiang, 2023). Developing and cultivating students' core competency requires English teachers to implement it in their English teaching, which puts higher demands on English teachers and inevitably affects their professional development (Wang & Chuu, 2021).

3. Research Design

In recent years, the economy has been developing at high speed, and the process of technological innovation is also accelerating. Higher education requirements are put forward in this context, and teachers face greater challenges, especially after suffering from major public health events such as COVID-19. This is especially true for the Sichuan-Chongqing region, which is highly valued by the central government and has an important strategic position in the west. The new era of all-around economic and social development has accelerated the pace of educational reform. Among them, new requirements are put forward for English teachers in primary and secondary schools in terms of academic level, knowledge structure and professional quality. Therefore, conducting relevant research on English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing is necessary to discover their professional development problems and explore corresponding solutions.

3.1. Research Questions

This study attempts to investigate the professional development status of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing, to provide a reference for postgraduate students in colleges and universities, talent training for undergraduate students, design and implementation of continuing education training for in-service teachers and educational decision-making by government agencies. The research mainly raises the following two questions.

(1) What is the current situation of English teachers' professional development in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing?

(2) What are the problems in the professional

development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing?

3.2. Research Object

The subjects of this study are 554 English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing, including Chengdu-Chongqing urban areas, prefectures, counties and towns. Among them are 93 male teachers and 461 female teachers, ranging from 21 to 60 years old.

3.3. Research Instruments

3.3.1. Questionnaire

In order to understand the confusion of English teachers' professional development in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing, a questionnaire was designed according to the relevant research literature at home and abroad. The questionnaire included 57 questions in three parts: personal basic situation, professional development status and professional development awareness.

3.3.2. Interview

In order to more clearly reflect the current development status of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing, in addition to the questionnaire survey, interviews were conducted with new teachers, expert teachers, and teaching and research personnel. The interview mainly covers three questions: (1) As a new teacher, what puzzles or challenges do you face? (2) What qualities should you have to be an excellent English teacher? How to grow into an expert teacher? (3) What are the common problems in the professional development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools? How to deal with them?

4. Research Findings and Discussions

4.1. Professional Development Status of English Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools in Sichuan and Chongqing

4.1.1 Status of Professional Groups

In terms of age, 21-30 years old accounted for 27.8%, 31-40 years old accounted for 36.1%, 41-50 years old accounted for 29.06%, and 51-60 years old accounted for 7.04%. These data show that English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing tend to be all younger, and more than 60% are under 40. At the same time, the proportion of teachers close to retirement age should not be underestimated, which also shows that new teachers are needed in the near future, and some school teachers' reserves should be put on the agenda.

In terms of teaching experience, 23.29% are under 5 years, 15.88% are in 6-10 years, 15.16% are in 11-15 years, 15.16% are in 16-20 years, 15.88% are in 21-25 years, 10.29% are in 26-30 years, and 4.33% are over 30 years. The data shows that the proportion of teachers with less than five years of teaching experience is close to a quarter.

This means it is urgent and necessary to guide, train and help new teachers. Secondly, this group, who have been teaching for 10 to 25 years, accounts for about 60% and has become the main force of English teaching in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing. They are responsible for cultivating new teachers and understanding and reducing burdens for old teachers who will retire in recent years. In addition, teachers with more than 26 years of teaching experience account for about 15%, which implies that this group of teachers close to retirement age needs attention. On the one hand, their physical and mental health should be cared for; on the other hand, adverse effects of their aging energy and knowledge structure on teaching should be considered.

Judging from the final education diploma, teachers who graduated from junior colleges account for 3.97%, teachers with bachelor degrees account for 82.85%, teachers with master's degree account for 12.45%, teachers with doctorate degrees account for 0.36%, and those who are unwilling to disclose information account for 0.36%. Although the proportion has increased compared with previous years, there is still great room for improvement. This indicates that when recruiting new teachers, primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing need to increase further the recruitment of graduates with master's degrees or above and constantly expand the recruitment ratio of graduates with master's degrees or above so that a group of graduates with high academic qualifications and high quality can enrich the ranks of English teachers in primary and secondary schools, and improve the basic quality of English teachers in Sichuan and Chongqing as a whole.

From the perspective of graduate institutions, 73.47% of teachers graduated from normal colleges, 15.7% from comprehensive colleges, 6.14% from specialized foreign language colleges, 2.17% from science, engineering, agriculture and medicine colleges, and 2.53% from other colleges. The data shows that teachers are mainly trained by normal colleges and others with diversified backgrounds. Comprehensive colleges and specialized foreign language colleges have become an important part of English teacher training institutions, accounting for more than 20%, and other institutions have become useful supplements. Therefore, it is necessary to stabilize further the task of training English teachers in normal colleges, strengthen the guidance and supervision of training teachers in other colleges, enrich the channels of English teacher education and training, attract outstanding graduates from different universities to join the ranks of English teachers in primary and secondary schools, and continuously improve the overall teaching quality in Sichuan and Chongqing.

According to the types of teachers' final diploma, 985 Project universities accounted for 2.17%, 211 Project universities accounted for 7.58%, other "double first-class"

universities accounted for 8.12%, provincial key universities accounted for 21.48%, provincial public colleges or universities accounted for 51.44%, independent colleges accounted for 6.86%, private colleges or universities accounted for 1.81%, and those who did not want to disclose information accounted for 0.54%. According to the survey data, the cultivation of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing mainly comes from provincial public undergraduate colleges, accounting for more than 50%. Provincial key universities, former 985 and 211 Project universities and now "double first-class" universities have become an important force in cultivating English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing, accounting for nearly one-third.

However, the proportion of teachers who are engaged in basic education in Sichuan and Chongqing is relatively small, less than 10%. This suggests that more favorable policies should be formulated to accelerate the introduction of graduates from such colleges or universities and attract more outstanding graduates to join the ranks of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing.

In terms of majors with the final degree, English language and literature accounted for 14.62%, foreign linguistics and applied linguistics accounted for 1.81%, translation accounted for 2.53%, business English accounted for 2.17%, English education accounted for 67.15%, and others accounted for 11.73%. The data show that English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing are mainly from English majors, and the professional direction presents a diversified trend, but English education has become mainstream, approaching 70%. At the same time, more than 10% of teachers are non-English majors, so it is necessary to strengthen the monitoring and supervision of these teachers to ensure the overall quality of English teaching in the basic education stage in Sichuan and Chongqing.

Judging from the current professional titles, 1.44% of the teachers interviewed have senior titles, 22.2% have senior deputy titles, 38.99% have intermediate titles, 27.44% have junior titles, 9.75% have no titles at the moment, and 0.18% are unwilling to disclose information. It can be seen that nearly 40% of the teachers surveyed at random have lower professional titles. This shows that most teachers have a large room for promotion and need to make further efforts to improve their teaching and research levels continuously. At the same time, the education authorities should provide guidance and training for these teachers and encourage and guide their professional development.

4.1.2. Professional Development Level

As far as the basic knowledge of the English language, including pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax,

semantics and pragmatics, is concerned, 63.9% of the respondents said that they had learned and mastered it systematically, and 27.44% said that they had learned and understood it. The rest said that they had learned it sporadically. In terms of linguistic theory, second language acquisition theory and language testing theory, 15.34% of the subjects said they had studied hard, 57.94% said they knew something, and 20.22% said they knew little. These data show that most English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing have a certain command of language knowledge, basic theories of language teaching and basic language teaching methods. This is basically consistent with the survey statistics of the courses offered by their last academic qualifications; that is, 74.19% of the subjects said that they had studied English Teaching Method, 56.86% said that they had studied English Teaching Design, and 51.08% said that they had been trained in English Classroom Teaching Practice.

However, statistics also prove that some English teachers still have little knowledge of the language, basic theories and language teaching methods. This hinders improving the overall quality of English teaching, so arranging these teachers' further training in a targeted way is necessary to force them to strengthen their studies and improve continuously.

4.1.3. Professional Development Awareness

Regarding the attitude towards the current English teacher job, 73.47% of the teachers said that they like this job and regard it as their lifelong career pursuit. 14.08% said they are only suitable for this job and incompetent or unwilling to do other jobs. 10.29% said they want this job to survive or support their families or other things. Regarding their professional planning, 17.51% said they were very clear, 59.93% said they were clear, 18.59% said they were a little clear, and the rest said they were not clear. As for the motivation of professional development, 87.18% said it was to improve their quality, 80.51% said it was to promote students' development, 71.48% said it was to meet the new requirements of education reform, 55.23% said it was to improve their self-status, 56.86% said it was to realize their life value better, and 40.61% said it was to increase their income.

In terms of professional development expectations, 22.38% said they would become expert teachers, 69.13% said they would become excellent English teachers, and less than 10% said they would be ordinary teachers. The above statistics show that most teachers have a strong sense of professional development, have a clear plan, and are willing to set excellent English teachers as their career pursuit and goal, constantly improve their literacy, promote students' growth and realize their life value. At the same time, their professional development consciousness is not only driven by their internal factors but also influenced by external factors such as educational

reform. This shows that it is necessary to give full play to teachers' internal driving force, and meanwhile, to guarantee them with policy support, to encourage and guide teachers who are not strong in professional development awareness so that they can gradually have professional development awareness and promote teachers' professional development (Qian & Sun, 2018).

4.2. Problems in the Professional Development of English Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools in Sichuan and Chongqing

4.2.1. To Further Improve the Level of Professional Development

The basic qualities of English teachers include the mastery and application of language knowledge, basic theories and methods of language teaching. At the same time, in the information age, especially when public health emergencies like the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020 occur, information literacy should be valued, such as educational technology and information technology literacy for obtaining information through network retrieval, computer-assisted teaching, online teaching, and the development and utilization of online teaching resources.

In terms of professional knowledge structure, according to an interview with Teacher L, an English teaching researcher at Z Education Institute, she said that about 47.5% of the English teachers in primary schools graduated from non-English majors, and some of them even had some basic English knowledge problems in the teaching process. The qualifications of English teachers in junior and senior high schools can meet undergraduate education requirements. However, many English majors in non-normal colleges lack some basic knowledge of pedagogy, psychology and English teaching, and their ability to control the classroom and implement effective English teaching is limited. The data of this random survey of English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing also show that only 6.32% of the teachers said that they could teach in English, and nearly 40% of the teachers said that their knowledge of the English language was slightly or quite lacking in the teaching process. 30.14% and 38.81% of teachers indicated that English language and cross-cultural communication knowledge urgently need improvement. In comparison, 21.48% and 7.58%, respectively, indicated that English and American literature and translation-related knowledge should be improved.

In terms of language teaching theory, more than 20% of teachers said that they knew little or nothing about second language acquisition and language teaching. For example, about 40% of teachers have little or no knowledge of language and learning views, which directly affect their understanding of language teaching, their choice and use of teaching methods and the design, organization and implementation of classroom teaching

activities. These problems directly influence English teaching and ultimately have a negative role in cultivating students' core competency and long-term development in the future.

In terms of language teaching methods, about 25% have never studied English teaching methods. Due to their pre-service education background, their understanding and mastery of language teaching methods are not systematic, so 32.13% of English teachers say they need to learn teaching theories and methods. In terms of information technology and educational technology, nearly 95% of teachers think it is very important, but more than 70% of teachers hope to improve this respect. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between universities and primary and secondary schools (Xue, 2022), assigning experts with English teaching methods, information technology and educational technology to train them systematically to improve their professional qualifications and promote their professional development.

The level of professional development, in addition to the language mentioned above knowledge, language teaching theory and language teaching skills, is also reflected in language teachers' research ability, innovative consciousness and the construction of teachers' community. Regarding the attitude toward publishing papers or applying for research programs, 38.63% of teachers said they participated in them passively, while 10.47% said they never participated. Judging from the number of participants in the research project in the recent three years, 41.52% of the teachers indicated that they did not participate in any project. Judging from the number of papers published in the past three years, 35.74% of the teachers said no paper had been published. 79.6% of teachers said they would modify or add their own ideas after downloading the materials before using them directly. In terms of peer-to-peer communication, there are still about 35% of teachers who communicate with others occasionally or never. English teachers in the information age need to constantly adapt to the needs of the times and social development, constantly update and optimize their knowledge structure, enhance their innovative consciousness and research ability, and improve the level of teachers' community construction (Wei & Ren, 2021).

However, at present, their language knowledge, teaching theory, teaching methods, information technology, innovation consciousness and research ability need to be further optimized and improved.

4.2.2. To Further Enhance Professional Development Awareness

Teachers' professional development consciousness affects their professional enthusiasm and dedication, thus influencing their own professional growth (Deng, 2014). Proactive professional development consciousness is more conducive to the long-term development of teachers and

students. The survey shows that more than 10% of teachers regard English teaching as a means to survive or support their families. About 20% of teachers are unclear about their professional development plan, meaning their professional development awareness is not strong or lacking. About 40% of teachers have participated in professional training several times or even once in the past three years. This shows that a relatively large group of teachers lack the initiative to improve their professional development awareness.

4.2.3. To Further Strengthen the Guidance of Young Teachers' Professional Development

Among the teachers in this survey, nearly 30% of English teachers are under 30 years old, which is a relatively large population. Correct guidance for young teachers is helpful to their professional development. In order to understand the professional development status of young teachers, especially new teachers, Ms. M from B Middle School in C City was interviewed. After getting a master's, she became an English teacher in a junior high school affiliated with a foreign language college, with a teaching experience of more than one and a half years. She has encountered many difficulties and setbacks since she taught and needs guidance and help in many aspects. (1) the confusion of identity change. First of all, she lacks knowledge and experience in English teaching. Secondly, this new identity needs to adapt to the new changes. Since she first entered school, she has been basically in a state of confusion, feeling hurried every day. She felt she was preparing lessons, attending classes, changing her homework and writing reflections from morning to night. This fatigue and confusion led to a low sense of self-efficacy and a lack of sense of accomplishment. In this case, if experienced senior teachers came to guide and help, her transformation and adaptation would speed up. (2) The confusion of psychological transformation. The new teachers graduated from different types of universities in her teaching school. By comparing each other, some new teachers have a sense of superiority, while others have a sense of inferiority, which leads to psychological confusion.

In fact, no matter what kind of university one graduated from and how many honors and awards one won when learning in colleges or universities, he or she should keep a low profile in his or her post after work and learn from their predecessors or peers with an open mind. The summary of teaching experience and the improvement of ability are gradually formed on the basis of self-reflection, which is the understanding of educational laws and the exploration and understanding of educational phenomena. In this case, their psychological adjustment and professional growth will greatly benefit if they have the correct guidance and help from their predecessors. This kind of assistance can not only be confined to English subjects, and interdisciplinary thoughts also work, such as improving the ability to control words through Chinese

teachers, cultivating their internal logical thinking through math teachers, and learning psychological control skills through psychology teachers. To this end, schools can set up special teacher development centers to guide and help young teachers and help their professional development. (3) The imbalance between work and self-development. After graduation, students with master's degrees become English teachers in junior high schools, having a sense of psychological gap. In order to avoid this phenomenon, it is necessary to have a clear career development plan and professional growth consciousness, that is, by establishing short-term and medium- and long-term goals.

In this case, with the guidance of expert teachers, they will know what to do and how to do it at different stages and then combine their expertise to achieve it to balance their work and self-professional development. On behalf of the new teachers, she put forward some suggestions for improvement. Colleges and universities that undertake the training of teachers' education can provide more internship opportunities for students, and the internship must be a long-term internship rather than a "cursory tour". Besides, primary and secondary schools can provide novice teachers with rich opportunities for classroom observation, teaching and research discussion and exchange with senior teachers. At the same time, the "mentoring" mechanism should be implemented; that is, excellent teachers with rich experience become the masters of new teachers so as to help them enhance their understanding of teaching theories, teaching methods, teaching skills, teaching psychology and teaching objects. In addition, education authorities should organize multi-school and interdisciplinary teaching and research activities and expert lectures to improve teachers' learning awareness and establish a learning community. Finally, it is very important for new teachers to establish personal goals. Only when they have goals can they know which direction to work hard and how to work hard to achieve it.

4.2.4. To Improve the Quality of Training Required for Professional Development

Teacher L, an English teacher and researcher in a teaching research institute in Z City, was also interviewed. The interview focused on the common problems and solutions in the professional development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools. There are still some problems in the quality of training required for professional development, including training methods, training contents and training opportunities. In terms of training methods, the backbone teachers in the city participate in the municipal training organized by the education authorities, while other teachers, especially rural school teachers, participate in the training organized by the district. The training is mainly based on lectures, teaching and research activities, and the way is relatively simple. In terms of training content, the contents are a bit general, which highlight little on English subjects. Regarding training opportunities, backbone teachers have a few more

opportunities to participate in domestic training and few opportunities to study abroad. There are few opportunities for other ordinary teachers, especially rural teachers, to participate in training at or above the district level.

As a researcher at the municipal education institute, she has given some valuable suggestions. First, the education authorities should strengthen the training of English teachers and provide sufficient training funds to ensure opportunities and time for English teachers to participate in the training. Furthermore, a good job should be done in the top-level design of teachers participating in the training. English teachers can be divided into five-year training: regular classroom teaching training for new teachers, innovative classroom training for backbone teachers, teachers' subject teaching art training, and research training to be expert teachers. Additionally, training methods have to be improved. Targeted training related to English subjects should be highlighted. Last but not least, training can also be sent to the countryside to increase the opportunities for rural school teachers.

5. Research Recommendations

5.1. Pre-service Training

5.1.1. Undergraduate Education

Pre-service training is an important foundation and prerequisite for teachers' professional development (Guo & Li, 2022). The academic education of pre-service training determines the speed and quality of teachers' professional development to a great extent. At present, higher education has entered the stage of popularization, and there are many types and levels of colleges that train teachers, including public colleges, independent colleges and private colleges. There are also differences in the history, level, conditions and ideas of running schools in various universities, and there is bound to be a gap in their training quality. No matter what type or level of colleges and universities, there should be common training standards and requirements for undergraduate education training English teachers.

Regarding language ability, TEM4 and TEM8 should be the basic requirements. courses such as educational psychology, linguistics, English teaching methods, English teaching design and English teaching practice should be involved to pass the National Test for Teacher's Certificate, which is set goal-oriented. In practice, it is necessary to provide long-term opportunities for teaching practice in primary and secondary schools (Zheng, 2022), especially for on-the-job practice. In terms of career planning and guidance, students should be encouraged and guided to have a strong desire to teach, taking teaching as their lifelong career pursuit. In addition, in order to improve the quality of teaching, it is necessary to upgrade the level of training specifications and consolidate the foundation of national education security. According to the local conditions, more teachers with bachelor's degrees who have received high-quality teacher education should be

encouraged to teach in rural areas. The number of "double-qualified" professional teachers with exquisite practical skills for secondary vocational schools (including technical schools) should be increased. Moreover, many preschool teachers with bachelor's degrees or above should be trained to ensure national education and cultivate innovative talents.

5.1.2. Graduate Education

According to this random survey, only about 13% of primary and secondary school English teachers in Sichuan and Chongqing have master's degrees, which is far from the developed eastern regions. At present, there are only six universities in Sichuan and Chongqing that specialize in training English teachers with master's degrees for primary and secondary schools, namely Sichuan Normal University, China West Normal University, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, Southwest University, Chongqing Normal University and Chongqing Three Gorges University. The total enrollment is about 300 students each year, which is far from meeting the actual demand. As a supplement, some graduates with a master's degree in linguistics, literature and translation also enter primary and secondary schools as English teachers.

However, when cultivating postgraduates, these universities rarely offer courses related to teacher education, and they also lack practical experience and corresponding requirements in teaching. In view of this, colleges and universities in Sichuan and Chongqing that do not have the qualification to train master of education can cooperate with those which have the master of education programs to cultivate masters jointly. For example, China West Normal University and Mianyang Normal University can jointly cultivate talents with master's degrees in the field of subject teaching (English), and Chongqing Normal University and Yangtze Normal University can also jointly cultivate talents with master's degrees in the field of subject teaching (English). At the same time, those majoring in English literature and translation should learn some elective courses related to teacher education and then participate in teaching internships to strive for better literacy before taking up their posts and laying the foundation for their professional development. At the same time, the main role of normal colleges or universities and the construction of a teacher education system should be strengthened. Likewise, the layout of teacher education should be constantly optimized, forming an open, collaborative and linked modern teacher education system, taking teachers' colleges as the main body, high-level comprehensive universities as the participant, teacher development institutions as the link, and high-quality primary and secondary schools as the practice base.

5.2. In-service Training

5.2.1. School-based Training

The school where teachers work is the base for their growth and shoulders the important mission of teachers' professional development. According to the survey data, 17.69% of the teachers argue that school-based training is very helpful to them, and 60.11% of the teachers maintain that it is helpful to them. In view of this, schools need to establish specialized institutions such as teacher development centers in conjunction with local universities to carry out targeted school-based training to encourage and guide teachers' professional development. School-based training should be combined with the actual situation of their school, and regular training should be carried out to improve the English teachers' language proficiency, teaching ability and research capacity.

On the one hand, the school should give full play to the role of excellent teachers in the school, take them as leading experts, and hold lectures regularly to guide the teachers' professional development. On the other hand, schools can invite famous teachers from neighborhood schools as keynote speakers to improve teachers' education, teaching and research capabilities through lectures or training. According to the survey data, 92.78% of the teachers interviewed hope that famous primary and secondary school teachers can be invited as keynote teachers in English teacher training for primary and secondary schools. When training, special attention should be paid to English teachers with non-English majors and non-normal college backgrounds to promote their professional development. Secondly, English teaching and research groups should be organized to establish a teacher-learning community, discussing the problems encountered in English teaching.

According to this survey, 57.94% of teachers said the current way to improve English-related teaching skills is to observe and study in teaching and research groups. This shows that the teaching and research group plays an important role in the teachers' professional development. Through regular study and discussion on the frontier trends of English teaching and related theories, collaborative lesson preparation, classroom teaching observation, on-site evaluation of lessons, teaching case analysis and other activities, the English teachers will have a better understanding of curriculum standards, organically integrating them into classroom teaching practice and action research, which will eventually cultivate the students' core competencies. At the same time, all the English teachers can be organized to carry out research on related topics in combination with English teaching practice to improve English teachers' teaching and research ability. Through the above effective teacher education, including workshops, school-based seminars, problem-oriented assistance and external professional support, the teachers' beliefs can be changed, and their motivation for professional development can be motivated, which will promote their professional development (Li, 2017).

5.2.2. Training Organized by Specialized Institutions

At present, the specialized institutions for in-service teacher training mainly include teachers' further education schools, teaching institutes and educational research institutes. These institutions regularly hold training for in-service teachers to enrich teaching theories, update teachers' knowledge structure, enhance their teaching practice and research ability, improve their quality and promote their professional development. The relevant data of this survey also confirms that the training organized by the education authorities has played a role in teachers' professional development, with 20.04% of teachers saying it has a great role and 62.27% saying it has a certain role. Teachers and their schools support the training organized by the education authorities, and 68.77% of the respondents said that their schools support continuing education and professional development policies.

Nevertheless, there are still some problems to be solved. For example, 43.86% of the teachers said that there were few opportunities to participate in the training (33.94% of them only had one or two opportunities to participate in the training in the past three years; 25.27% of teachers have only had 3-4 training opportunities in recent three years), and 30.87% of teachers think that training conflicts with their working hours. In view of this, the training organized by specialized institutions needs to consider the training time to minimize the conflict with teachers' working hours. On the other hand, teachers' schools should help teachers coordinate and create suitable training opportunities for them. At the same time, these specialized training institutions can also take the initiative to provide training opportunities, for instance, going abroad to help teachers' professional development (Wei, et al., 2019).

In addition, other forms of flexible training can be added and strictly assessed, such as online learning. Through the network platform, English teachers in primary and secondary schools can freely choose the time to participate in the training. Some regulatory measures can be taken to ensure the effectiveness assessment after their training (Zhang, 2019).

5.2.3. Training in Cooperation with Universities

Universities undertake the functions of teaching, scientific research and serving society. Colleges and universities are the frontiers of academic research, leading the research of frontier development and influencing the education and teaching reform trend. The national education level has been emphasizing the importance and necessity of connecting different stages of education and strengthening the connection between different stages of education (Yang & Lin, 2021).

According to the survey, 82.49% of English teachers said that training English teachers in primary and

secondary schools needs college English education experts as the keynote teachers. The professional development of English teachers can not be separated from the continuous improvement of basic language theory, teaching theory and educational technology, which are exactly the fields that university teachers are adroit at. Meanwhile, colleges and universities have long-term foreign teachers' resources, foreign periodicals and electronic resources, and related key research platforms, a useful supplement for primary and secondary school English teachers. This survey shows that 57.94% of teachers have a certain understanding of linguistics theory, second language acquisition theory and language testing theory, while 20.22% have little understanding. Concerning the basic theory of education, 19.49% of teachers think that it is most necessary to study educational psychology at present, 32.13% think that it is necessary to study teaching materials and methods, 30.87% need to master educational research methods, and 16.79% need to improve educational management literacy. It can be seen that English teachers in primary and secondary schools urgently need college teachers to train in related fields to help them improve. Their professional development is inseparable from the participation of colleges and universities.

Most cities in Sichuan and Chongqing have a good layout of colleges and universities. For the professional development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools, it is necessary to establish a "university-primary and secondary schools" collaborative training mechanism and implement a training model of "academic tutor plus practice tutor", that is, a group of teachers with excellent professional skills in primary and secondary schools and teachers with good theoretical literacy in colleges and universities can be selected to participate in the on-the-job training of English teachers, forming pairs to promote teacher development.

5.3. The Establishment of Teacher Learning Community

5.3.1. Network Platform Construction

The development of educational informatization makes interpersonal communication convenient and fast, and tools such as online platforms, social media and online office APP are widely used in study and work. When a major public health crisis like the COVID-19 epidemic broke out, these tools became particularly important, and their value was generally recognized. English teachers in primary and secondary schools can set up a teacher learning community through a QQ group, WeChat group, WeChat official account, website and other media tools to share and exchange with peers, learn from each other, solve problems in English teaching together, and finally achieve common progress (Jiao & Xu, 2015).

5.3.2. Master Studio Construction

All primary and secondary schools rely on their own schools or neighbourhood schools to set up famous teacher studios and carry out training activities. At the same time,

with the guidance and help of the studio, teachers of all ages are mobilized to actively participate, constantly improve and form a reasonable circle (Wang, et al., 2020). Schools actively organize teachers to study in famous teachers' studios regularly, adopt mentoring mode, improve teachers' teaching and research abilities according to the suggestions and requirements of famous teachers, promoting teachers' professional development. This is also basically consistent with the interview consensus of Ms. Z, an English teacher in a first-class school in Sichuan Province. To be an excellent English teacher, especially an expert teacher, one should love education, be good at learning and often reflect on his/her teaching. It is necessary to have a deep academic foundation in English, a broad academic vision of English, grasp the frontier consciousness and ability of English subjects, be familiar with the laws of English teaching, and have good teachers' professional ethics and lifelong learning ability. The construction of famous teachers' studios establishes a teachers' learning community, promoting teachers' professional development.

To summarise, pre-service training, on-the-job training and constructing teachers' learning communities are interdependent. Discussions on the education of pre-service teachers are inseparable from in-service teachers and teacher educators who are responsible for training foreign language teachers because these language teachers in different positions are an inseparable whole. In this collective, foreign language teachers in different positions must support each other in order to seek effective common development (Han, 2008).

5. Conclusion

Teachers' professional development is a continuous development process of teachers from immaturity to maturity and even excellence (Yang, 2020). English

teacher professional development needs professionalism, including professional concept, professional attitude, professional emotion and professional will. Professional quality is also needed, including English language knowledge, educational psychology knowledge, cultural knowledge, information technology, etc. Professional skills are demanded, including English teaching material analysis, teaching design, teaching implementation, teaching regulation, teaching evaluation, teaching reflection and teaching research.

Therefore, in the professional development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools, it is necessary to awaken the consciousness of self-development, form the habit of conscious learning, carry out in-depth teaching practice and carry out effective teaching research (Gong, 2018). English teachers' professional development is a systematic project which needs the participation of teachers themselves, schools, education authorities and institutions of higher education. The professional development of English teachers in primary and secondary schools needs continuous improvement in language and culture, education and psychology, information literacy and so on, especially in professional knowledge. The effective way to improve teachers' quality lies in teachers' professional development, and the key to teachers' professional development lies in developing teachers' professional knowledge (Zhang, 2019). In terms of professional development, English teachers in primary and secondary schools in Sichuan and Chongqing should adhere to lifelong learning, cultivate students' core competencies such as language ability, learning ability, thinking quality and culture awareness, and breed high-quality talents with patriotism and international vision in the new era.

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