

# An Analysis of Faculty Role Change and Professional Development in Higher Education Innovations

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**Abstract:** In the wave of innovation in higher education, the change of teachers' roles and professional development are key issues. Teachers need to change from the traditional knowledge transmitter to the master planner and implementer of teaching activities, the leader of students' practical activities and the questioner of teaching activities. At the same time, teachers' professional development requires high professional ideals, innovative views on education, diversified knowledge structures and competencies, as well as high teaching monitoring and management skills. However, teachers are confronted with a lack of professional fulfillment, a weakened sense of identity, a lack of commitment and a lack of motivation in this process. By strengthening the sense of professional achievement, cultivating the sense of identity, enhancing the level of commitment and stimulating professional motivation, the developmental problems can be solved, helping teachers to play a greater role in educational innovation and contributing to the cultivation of innovative talents.

**Keywords:** Innovation in higher education; teacher role change; professional development; teaching activities; professional identity.

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## 1. Introduction

In this knowledge-based economy of the 21st century, the importance of higher education as the foundation for cultivating the future pillars of the country is obvious in today's knowledge-based economy. However, as society and science and technology rapidly evolve, colleges are facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. This necessitates innovation, which means teachers must change their roles and professional development must be embraced. In the traditional model, teachers transmit knowledge, while students receive it. But this approach doesn't meet society's demand for innovative talents in the knowledge economy (Han & Duan, 2024). Therefore, the innovation of college education demands a shift in teachers' roles from mere knowledge transmitters to facilitators of students' learning. This evolution necessitates not only extensive expertise but also innovative educational concepts, methods, and tools. Teacher professional development is crucial for colleges and universities to embrace educational innovation. Teachers must continually enhance their professionalism and teaching abilities to align with the needs of educational innovation and nurture high-calibre talent with an innovative spirit and practical skills. Consequently, examining teachers' evolving roles and professional development in higher education innovation is paramount to foster educational innovation and enhance educational quality.

## 2. Faculty Role Changes in Higher Education Innovations

### 2.1. Teachers Need to be the Overall Planner of Teaching Activities

Before starting a course, teachers should comprehensively consider the actual teaching conditions of the school, the learning needs of students and the direction of professional development, so as to formulate teaching objectives that are in line with the cognitive level of the students and have a forward-looking (Dong, 2023). When choosing teaching

methods, it is necessary to closely integrate the characteristics of the course to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the methods. At the same time, practical teaching links, such as case studies and group discussions, are set up to stimulate students' interest in learning and provide a solid guarantee for the realization of teaching objectives.

### 2.2. Teachers are the Implementers of Teaching Activities

During the implementation of teaching activities, teachers need to carefully arrange and carefully manage every detail (Dong, 2023). Compared with traditional teaching methods, modern teaching requires teachers not only to impart knowledge in the classroom, but also to make sufficient preparation before class and provide timely counseling and feedback after class. Before class, teachers should prepare sufficient teaching materials and cases; during class, they should flexibly use a variety of teaching tools to ensure students' active participation; after class, they should pay attention to students' learning progress and provide personalized tutoring and support.

### 2.3. Teachers are the Leaders of Students' Practical Activities

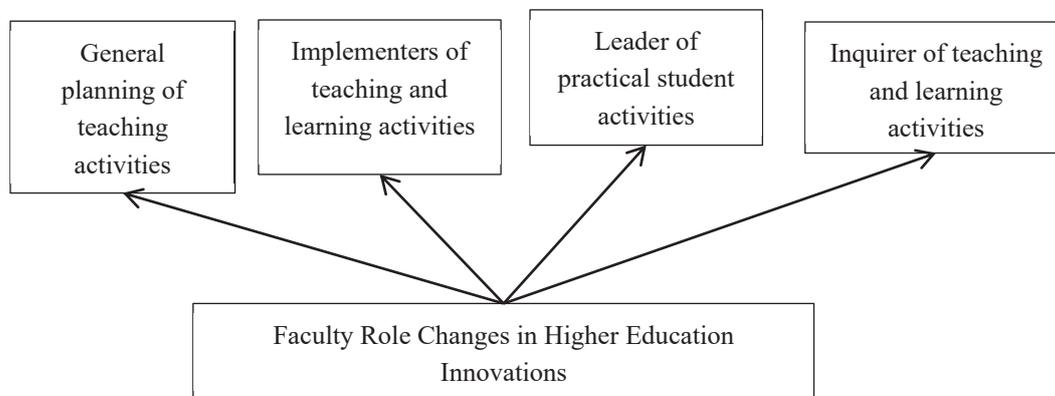
In practical activities, teachers should give full play to their leading role in guiding students to combine theoretical knowledge with practice (Dong, 2023). By designing challenging practical tasks, students' learning interest and creativity are stimulated. At the same time, teachers also need to pay attention to the problems and difficulties encountered by students in the process of practicing, and give timely guidance and help, so that students can become the master of the classroom, masters of knowledge and practitioners of ability.

### 2.4. Teachers are the Beneficiaries of Teaching Activities

After the role change, teachers are not only the implementers of teaching activities, but also the evaluators

and improvers of teaching effectiveness (Dong, 2023). The curriculum needs to build a multi-dimensional evaluation system that continuously asks for results. In this evaluation system, teachers are the most important questioners. Teachers evaluate students through three aspects: diagnostic evaluation, formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Diagnostic evaluation, also known as pedagogical evaluation and

preparatory evaluation, generally refers to the prediction of students' knowledge, skills and emotions before the start of a teaching activity. This kind of prediction can understand the knowledge base and readiness of the students to judge whether they have the conditions required to achieve the current teaching objectives, and provide a basis for the realization of tailor-made teaching.



**Figure 1.** Faculty Role Changes in Higher Education Innovations

### 3. Requirements for Teacher Professional Development in Higher Education Innovations

Educational innovation is to a large extent driven by teachers, and in order to be able to cultivate innovative talents to meet the needs of the knowledge economy era, educational innovation has put forward new requirements for the professional growth of teachers:

#### 3.1. Teachers should have high professional ideals

Educational innovation requires that teachers should have high professional ideals. The special nature of the teaching profession requires that teachers should have a high standard of professional ethics, which is the fundamental motivation for teachers to devote themselves to the cause of education (Xia, 2023). As teachers, they should respect students' individuality, and should influence students with their own healthy and perfect personality; they should fully explore and exert their creative potential, conduct creative teaching, and be good at discovering and stimulating students' creativity.

#### 3.2. Teachers should have innovative educational views

Creative teaching, good at discovering and stimulating students' creativity. For a long time, our teachers only focus on the transmission of knowledge and inculcation, but do not pay attention to the cultivation of students' abilities and qualities, and most of the teachers' educational concepts have not been updated in a timely manner, and they always stick to the old traditional teaching mode. In the classroom teaching reform, teachers should first change the traditional view of education and cultivate students' self-learning ability. Countless facts have proved that only high-quality teachers can cultivate high-quality students, and only innovative teachers can cultivate innovative talents. Teachers should change the students' learning viewpoints and methods of blind acceptance and passive memorization in the past, and

advocate the inquiry-based learning mode of students' active exploration and active discovery, so as to fully cultivate students' innovative qualities and creative abilities.

#### 3.3. Teachers should have diversified and scientific knowledge structure and competence

In order to engage in innovative education, structure teachers must first have broad and solid basic knowledge and basic skills. Teachers should not only master and be proficient in the basic knowledge of subject specialties and the latest developments in the profession, but also have a broad cultural and scientific literacy, and master comprehensive and cross-cutting multidisciplinary knowledge, especially in related subject areas. It is necessary to have knowledge of modern education and teaching theories, but also to accumulate a wealth of experience and lessons learned in the classroom, as a means of adaptation, to stimulate, train and improve the creativity of students. Teachers need to "psychologize" subject-specific knowledge, convey it in a way that is easy for students to understand and accept, and help students to "internalize" the knowledge in order to achieve educational goals.

#### 3.4. Teachers have high instructional monitoring skills and strong management skills

Teaching monitoring runs through the whole process of teaching implementation, which not only requires teachers to make thorough and perfect pre-course plans and preparations, but also strives for teachers to organize and manage classroom teaching flexibly, pay attention to the development of students' abilities and make scientific assessment of students. That is to say, teachers should master diversified educational methods, modern teaching methods and scientific teaching evaluation. Teachers should not only be satisfied with disseminating knowledge to students and seeking answers, but also encourage students' different ideas and behaviors instead of stopping them blindly. In the classroom to focus on

heuristic teaching, to give students to play the imagination and exercise the space of thinking. Students should be

allowed to follow their teachers, but not blindly, and their creative thinking should be promoted and encouraged.

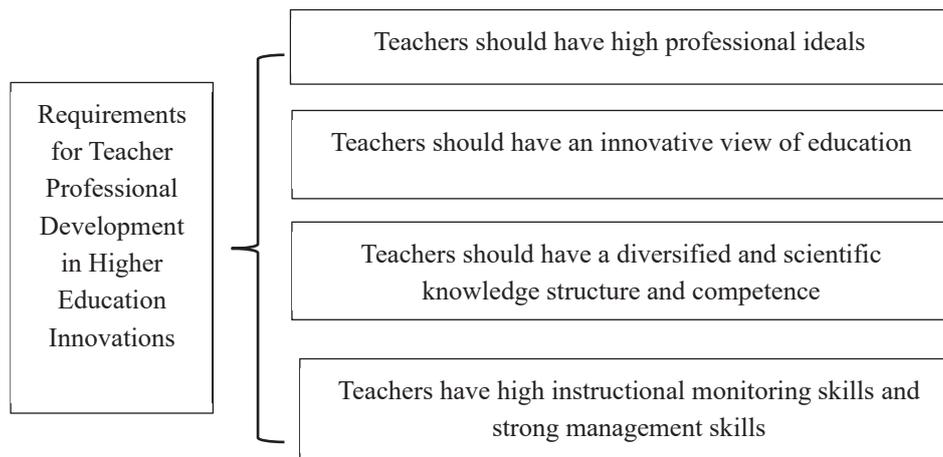


Figure 2. Requirements for Teacher Professional Development in Higher Education Innovations

## 4. The Confusion of Faculty Role Changes and Professional Development in Higher Educational Innovation

### 4.1. Lack of Professional Fulfillment

Teachers are often left feeling unfulfilled in their roles, especially when it comes to teaching innovation. The current evaluation system is overly focused on scientific research outcomes and does not adequately reflect the effort and achievements of teachers in this area (Svetlana et al., 2021). This can lead to a sense of unfulfilledness in teachers.

Teaching innovation is inherently risky, and teachers may encounter failures when trying new methods. The lack of effective support mechanisms further exacerbates this issue. In addition, the rapid development of educational technology requires teachers to continuously learn and master new skills, a process that can be time-consuming. The difficulty in seeing significant immediate results can negatively impact teachers' professional fulfillment. Furthermore, the success of some teachers in educational innovation can easily be copied by others, and they are not adequately rewarded or respected, further undermining their sense of professional fulfillment.

### 4.2. Weakening of Professional Identity

The deepening of educational innovation in colleges and universities is gradually weakening teachers' professional identity and affecting their role change and professional development. This change demands higher professionalism and comprehensive abilities from teachers (Hendriks, 2020). However, many teachers feel insufficient to adapt to the new role orientation, casting doubt on their competence and professional identity. The process of educational innovation encounters obstacles, such as new technology application difficulties, resistance to teaching reforms and students adapting to new teaching modes, causing teachers to suffer setbacks in professional practice and reducing professional identification. Society also increases expectations on college teachers, who face teaching, research, student mental health, career development and other pressures. These pressures lead to professional role confusion and a weakened sense of

professional identity.

### 4.3. Deficiencies in Professional Commitment

The lack of professional commitment has become a prominent issue facing teachers in the innovation of higher education, which is not unrelated to the requirements of teachers' role change and professional development. Career commitment involves teachers' loyalty and dedication to their profession as well as their willingness to develop in the long term (Ma, 2022). In the context of educational innovation, as teachers face many challenges and pressures, some teachers may lower their expectations and commitment to their profession and lack the determination to pursue a long-term career in education. When teachers experience setbacks in teaching innovation and do not receive effective support and encouragement, they may gradually reduce their enthusiasm and commitment to their teaching work, or even have thoughts of changing careers. At the same time, the lack of attention to teaching work in universities in terms of resource allocation and policy formulation may also affect teachers' career commitment. For example, in terms of title evaluation and salary treatment, scientific research results tend to dominate, while the recognition of teaching results is relatively low, which makes teachers more inclined to focus their energy on scientific research and neglect the importance of teaching work, thus reducing their commitment to the teaching profession. In addition, some teachers may feel burnout and become tired of their teaching work in a long period of time, and lack the motivation and determination to continue to work deeply in the field of education, which is also an important factor contributing to the lack of career commitment.

### 4.4. Lack of Professional Motivation

In the complex environment of educational innovation in colleges and universities, teachers generally feel a lack of professional motivation, which likewise affects the advancement of teachers' role change and professional development. First of all, teachers need to invest a lot of time and energy to learn new knowledge and master new skills in educational innovation, however, due to the heavy teaching tasks and high pressure of scientific research of college

teachers, it is often difficult for them to spare enough time and energy for self-improvement, which leads to the lack of professional motivation (Ma,2022). Secondly, the imperfection of external incentive mechanism is also an important reason for the lack of teachers' career motivation. Some colleges and universities do not pay enough attention to teaching innovation in terms of resource allocation and reward mechanism, and teachers' efforts in educational innovation are not proportional to their rewards. In addition, the lack of clear career development paths and promotion opportunities may also make teachers feel a lack of career motivation. Some teachers have made certain achievements in the field of educational innovation, but due to the lack of a specialized evaluation system and promotion paths for teaching innovation achievements within universities, it is difficult for them to see their own prospects for career development, thus reducing their motivation to continue their efforts.

## **5. The Cracking Path of Faculty Role Changes and Professional Development in Higher Education Innovation**

### **5.1. Strengthening the Construction of Sense of Professional Fulfillment**

Colleges and universities should build a set of comprehensive, objective and scientific evaluation system for teachers, change the previous evaluation method which is oriented solely on scientific research results, and incorporate various aspects such as teaching quality, student evaluation and social service into the evaluation indexes, so that the diversified labor of teachers can be fully reflected and recognized (Lin,2020). For example, teaching achievement awards can be set up to select and reward teachers based on their performance in curriculum design, teaching method innovation, and improvement of students' learning effect, so that teachers can also get a corresponding sense of achievement in their teaching work. At the same time, diversified professional development paths are provided for teachers, such as organizing teaching skills training, academic seminars, and interdisciplinary exchange activities, etc., to help teachers continuously improve their professionalism and teaching ability, so that they can better cope with the challenges brought about by educational innovations, and thus enhance the sense of professional achievement in the process of professional growth. For example, renowned education experts from home and abroad are regularly invited to the university to conduct lectures and workshops to teach teachers the latest education and teaching concepts and methods; teachers are encouraged to participate in academic exchange programs at home and abroad to broaden their academic horizons and enhance their influence in their professional fields.

### **5.2. Enhancing the Development of Professional Identity**

Universities and colleges should actively carry out awareness-raising activities and training courses on the modern concept of education and the significance of educational innovations, so that teachers can deeply understand the importance of the value of educational innovations for the growth of students, the development of

society, as well as for their own professional development, so that they can change their mindsets and identify from the inside with the new positioning and requirements of the role of teachers in the process of educational innovations (Kavilova, Isanova & Ravshanova, 2020). For example, a series of lectures on "Educational Innovation and Teachers' Mission" is organized, in which experts and scholars in the field of education are invited to share the cutting-edge dynamics and successful cases of educational innovation, so as to guide teachers to think about their own responsibilities and duties in educational innovation. Colleges and universities should build a campus culture that encourages innovation and tolerates failure, so that teachers can feel respect and support in such an environment, and enhance their emotional identification with the teaching profession. The excellent deeds and achievements of teachers in educational innovation can be widely publicized through campus media, bulletin boards and other channels to set up role models and stimulate teachers' professional pride and sense of identity. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to participate in the school governance and decision-making process, so that they can feel that they are an important part of the school's development, and enhance their sense of belonging to the school and their identification with the profession.

### **5.3. Raising the Level of Professional Commitment**

In addition to material incentives, focus on the combination of spiritual incentives and career development incentives (Ovesni, Hebib,& Radović, 2019). Setting up various honorary titles, such as "Pioneer of Teaching Innovation" "Model of Educational Parenting", etc., to recognize and reward teachers who have outstanding performance in educational innovation, and to enhance their sense of honor and responsibility; providing promotion opportunities and more resources for potential teachers. Provide potential teachers with promotion opportunities and more resources to encourage them to explore in depth in the field of educational innovation and enhance their long-term commitment to the teaching profession. Encourage teamwork among teachers to participate in educational innovation projects and teaching reform practices. Through teamwork, teachers can learn from and support each other, forming a favorable atmosphere of professional community and enhancing their collective commitment to the teaching profession. For example, the formation of interdisciplinary teaching teams, the joint development of comprehensive curricula or the conduct of teaching research projects will enable teachers to feel the cohesion and centripetal force of the profession in teamwork and enhance the overall level of commitment to the profession.

### **5.4. Sources of Professional Motivation**

Higher education administrators should have an in-depth understanding of teachers' personal needs, career interests and career development goals, provide teachers with personalized guidance and support, and help them formulate reasonable career development plans so that they can maintain sufficient motivation in the process of achieving their personal career goals (Wang, 2023). For example, each teacher is equipped with a career mentor to assist teachers in analyzing their own strengths and weaknesses, clarifying the direction of career development, and providing necessary resources and suggestions to help them move forward on their career path. In addition, colleges and universities should provide teachers

with sufficient teaching resources, research equipment and office conditions to alleviate their worries in the process of work, so that they can devote themselves to educational innovation and professional development. At the same time, to create a harmonious working atmosphere, promote good interpersonal relations among teachers, enhance teachers' pleasure and satisfaction in their work, so as to stimulate their intrinsic professional motivation. For example, strengthening campus informatization construction, providing teachers with convenient teaching platforms and research tools; organizing various teachers' group building activities, enhancing communication and cooperation among teachers, and improving their work happiness and motivation level.

## 6. Conclusion

In order to innovate in education, teachers must adopt a new role as master planners and implementors, as well as leaders and evaluators of teaching activities, and possess high professional standards, an innovative outlook, and the ability to monitor teaching and manage it successfully. They must also demonstrate commitment and motivation, but often lack these. To support them, measures should be taken to strengthen professional achievement, cultivate a professional identity, boost commitment and motivation. This includes recognising achievements, supporting development, teaching seminars, revising evaluations, offering career opportunities, and improving the teaching environment. University teachers must adapt to educational innovation by focusing on self-improvement and seeking support, to enable them to cultivate talent for the benefit of society. Colleges and universities must support them by offering a suitable environment that encourages innovation, promotes development and enhances teaching quality and competitiveness, and fosters high-calibre talent for the country.

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