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# Learner's Dialect Use by EFL Instructors: A Study of Junior High School Teachers in a Minority Area of China

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## ABSTRACT

The use of learners' L1 (first language) in the EFL classroom has been widely discussed in the literature. However, the use of local dialects has received less attention. Thus, this study investigates the use of Enshi dialect in EFL classroom in junior high schools in order to explore how teachers deploy the learners' own dialect in EFL classroom and its effect. The Enshi dialect which is a variant of Mandarin is frequently used in daily life in Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with 15 teachers who adopt Enshi dialect in EFL classroom teaching in junior high schools in 8 minority villages in Enshi. The results indicate that occasional dialect use does exist in EFL classroom teaching for junior high school students in ethnic minority areas. In addition, four main benefits are revealed when learners use dialects in EFL classes. Teaching English by using dialect helps students to improve the mastery of English grammar, distinguish pronunciation, understand the meaning of English words, phrases and sentences, and enliven the classroom atmosphere. The research also shows that the effective use of learners' dialects in the EFL classroom plays positive roles in English learning.

## 1. Introduction

Mandarin is a standardized language that is popular throughout China. It is formulated according to certain standards and is a language form for people from various regions to communicate. There are also many dialects in China for the development of languages. Dialects usually refer to language variants formed in a particular geographic area. An important feature of dialect is that it has not yet been standardized<sup>[1]</sup>. Dialects are frequently used in daily life so that to some extent they may have positive or negative influences on learning of another language.

Xie<sup>[2]</sup> and Yang<sup>[3]</sup> research the negative transfer of dialect phonetics to the English phonetics and intonation and

put forward some strategies to cope with this phenomenon. On the other hand, some researches demonstrate the benefits of using dialect. For example, Abi-Hashem<sup>[4]</sup> proposes that local dialect use in EFL can provide students with language practice resources that can sharpen their culture awareness, expand their cultural knowledge and maximize their language exposure with the local culture in English.

In view of the different opinions towards dialect in English language teaching, the author conducted a series of research projects in this area and was awarded provincial research funding to investigate the influence of dialects in EFL classroom teaching. The current study is

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a part of this funding project. This paper reports from the teachers' perspective on the design and implementation of dialect use in EFL and explores its performances. The semi-structured interviews will be adopted to investigate this phenomenon. The research aims to investigate how teachers teach English with dialects and its effects. The significance of this study is to help English teaching in ethnic minority areas.

## 2. Literature Review

More recently, there has been considerable interest in the roles of learners' mother tongue in foreign language learning and teaching<sup>[5]</sup>. Hall and Cook<sup>[6]</sup> reviewed the research on this topic, and conducted a global survey of attitudes and practices in English instruction. The findings of the Hall and Cook's<sup>[7]</sup> project reveals that many teachers employ their students' mother tongue to explain vocabulary and grammar, to manage classroom events, and to develop rapport with students, and this seems to have become a kind of trend whose value is taken for granted. Ellis<sup>[8]</sup> claims that in the sociocultural framework, the L1 can serve as a valuable source of background knowledge and information to prepare the students for L2 input. Anton and DiCamilla<sup>[9]</sup> further explain the sociocultural framework, claiming that L1 use turns the students' native language into a powerful tool that can be used in student-student interaction in order for the students to better relate with one another, understand the directions of a task and complete the task. In other words, it is the L1 that taps into the cognitive processes of the students and helps them to more effectively complete the L2 task, while at the same time validating their social identities. Al-Dera<sup>[10]</sup> suggests that L1 may play an effective role in the language classrooms at all these levels. L1 is useful for explaining the meaning of difficult words and use of grammar. In this study, the influence of the first language will also be discussed. The dialect is the teacher and learner's first language.

Teaching English by using dialect is equivalent to a process of transfer language. García and Wei<sup>[11]</sup> traces the origin of translanguaging which is defined as "a pedagogical practice where students are asked to alternate languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use" (p. 20). They also elaborate on their own interpretation of translanguaging as "the fluid language practices of bi- or multilinguals who move between and beyond the systems in their linguistic repertoire, drawing upon multiple semiotic resources appropriate to given contexts to language and make meaning of both themselves and their surrounding environments." Otheguy et al.<sup>[12]</sup> claims the translanguaging as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful

adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages". According to the definitions of translanguaging, translanguaging is a procedure to alternate language in order to make sense of the use language and make a connection between different languages.

Otheguy, García & Reid<sup>[12]</sup> compare a unitary view which thinks that there is no correspondence in a dual or multiple linguistic and a dual correspondence theory which claims that bilinguals possess two separate linguistic systems whose boundaries coincide with those of the two named languages. In light of comparison, they state that, "a much healthier educational climate is created by teachers who adopt the unitary view sponsored by translanguaging system." Kaufhold<sup>[13]</sup> investigates how students develop their academic writing across language codes and registers in the multilingual contexts of a Swedish university. The findings also suggest that the metaphor of translanguaging space which is a space for the act of translanguaging as well as a space created through translanguaging can be fruitfully applied as a pedagogic tool.

Zavala<sup>[14]</sup> shows that through translanguaging strategies or the movement and fluidity between Quechua and Spanish-Silvia constructs a community of legitimate Quechua speakers and empowers students, both the ones with high proficiency in Quechua and the ones with less proficiency. Rosiers, Van Lancker & Delarue<sup>[15]</sup> investigates the interactional behavior and the socio-pedagogical valorization of translanguaging practices of teachers and pupils in a multilingual and a monolingual classroom. Their analysis demonstrates differences in the nature of translanguaging practices: norm-breaking in the multilingual classroom versus turning back to the norm in the monolingual classroom. Translanguaging practices occur in the margin or in the center of the classroom activity, with socio-emotional purposes in both classroom settings. Pedagogical goals, however, are only observed in the multilingual classroom.

However, there are some scholars who do not support the translanguaging strategies. For example, Jaspers, J.<sup>[16]</sup> argues that translanguaging is likely to be less transformative and socially critical than is suggested, because translanguaging research has more in common with the monolingual authorities it criticizes than it may seem, because it is on causality effects that cannot be taken for granted, and because translanguaging, in some of its representations, is becoming a dominating rather than a liberating force. Nguyen<sup>[17]</sup> examines Vietnamese ethnic minority students' translanguaging beliefs and practices, and their identity construction through translanguaging. Findings suggest that the students reveal or perform different fea-

tures of their trans-identity and their translanguaging between their ethnic language and Vietnamese mostly reflect their ongoing shift from the L1 to Vietnamese rather than in the opposite direction. Translanguaging seems to be a threat for endangered minority languages in monolingual ideology politics.

Above all, there are both advantages and disadvantages of translanguaging. So, the effects of using dialects in EFL classroom should be investigated and the appropriate way to display translanguaging should be discussed.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

The survey was conducted in Enshi, a minority prefecture in the southwest corner of Hubei province, adjacent to Chongqing and Hunan province. Enshi is a minority area with Tujia and Miao people assembling and other ethnic minorities living scattered. The ethnic population occupies 54%. Enshi has 8 counties and cities, namely Enshi, Lichun, Hefeng, Xuanen, Xianfeng and Jianshi. Although the dialects of the eight counties have similarities, their dialects exist differences. This paper focuses on the Enshi dialects which were spoken in Enshi county. Owing to the ethnic languages having been Chinesized, the Enshi dialect is frequently used by people from different nations in daily life. The Enshi dialect is a branch of the southwest mandarin dialect and its initial consonant system is different from Mandarin<sup>[18]</sup>. Zhang<sup>[19]</sup> suggests that there are 21 consonants in Mandarin and only 19 in the Enshi dialect which do not have l and f. The people in Enshi cannot actually distinguish “n” and “l”, “h” and “f” and level-lingual and cacuminal.

The selection of the survey schools was based on a preliminary study. Before the survey, we learned that there were occurrences of dialect use in English teaching in rural high schools in Enshi county. The investigation didn't involve any English teachers in city high schools, as the official school language in the city high school is Mandarin. With mandarin even being integrated into English classrooms, the English teachers in the city are required to speak Mandarin in class. In each case, the principals in junior high school were approached by the researcher, informed about the survey being conducted, and asked for permission to conduct interviews with teachers. By initially asking all English teachers briefly, those teachers who had integrated dialect into class were selected as interview candidates for our study. Altogether, 15 junior high school teachers participate in this study. All of them worked in the rural junior high schools of 8 village-central junior

high schools in Enshi county.

#### 3.2 Methods

The tool used to collect data was a semi-structured interview with teachers. This interview is aimed at obtaining information about teachers' use of dialects and its effects. Drever<sup>[20]</sup> claims that semi-structured interviewing is a very flexible technique for small-scale research. It is not appropriate for studies involving many people, but is most helpful in mini-studies and case studies. The research method of sitting in on and recording classes is not adopted in the study, due to the fact that the teachers tend to prepare and teach their whole class in English if they are informed the class will be audited or recorded.

The interviews were conducted in 8 villages in Enshi county and normally lasted about one hour. There were 15 teachers interviewed in total. The concrete procedures are demonstrated in detail.

Step 1: The author pacified the teachers who participated in this research in order to make them not feel nervous and continue to integrate dialects into EFL classroom.

Step 2: During the interview, the interviewees and the researcher communicated in mandarin or dialect depending on the interviewee's choice, which helped the interviewees feel relaxed and free. The interview used to elicit responses involved the following questions:

- When have you used dialect in your instruction in class?
- Can you demonstrate some examples that you use dialect in EFL classroom?
- Do you think dialect is helpful for your English teaching?

Step 3: The data of interview were recorded and then transcribed by the first author. The accuracy of the transcripts was checked back against the recordings by the second author. The examples would be extracted from the transcripts which were used in the Results and Discussion and were translated into English by the second author.

Step 4: The second author collated and analyzed the data. During the analysis procedure, the initial reading of the transcripts for general meaning was followed by coding and classifying benefits of dialect use and the second reading was used to count the number of instances of each category.

### 4. Results and Discussion

In this survey, only instructors' language is investigated. In class the instructor applies the dialect and English. From the survey, over two thirds of the teachers present the dialect spontaneously, and only fewer teachers prepare the relevant materials about dialects for teaching. However, their teaching almost demonstrates good results.

The reports below demonstrate the four main benefits for teachers' instruction with dialect in EFL class.

#### 4.1 Improving the Mastery of English Grammar

Because there are no verb tenses in Chinese, many teachers believe that teaching tense is difficult in junior high school. While this situation can become easier when students use dialects in teaching.

My students always expect that they will be able to express what they think and what they see in daily life in English, after they learn English. For example, I teach "would have done", which is "wo an zhi zuo de" in dialect. Likewise, "could have done" is "wo na men bu xing nuo" in dialect. "should have done" is in dialect "zhe jiu gao she da, wo na men mei zuo luo", and "must have done something" means "wo ying shi gao a de ya" in dialect (Teacher 1).

The teachers stated that they used local dialect in English class for grammatical comparisons. It is a good way for students to understand the English grammar.

#### 4.2 Distinguishing Pronunciation

Pronunciation comparisons between dialect and English were also used in class instruction. Here teachers work to ensure that the students focused on differences between English pronunciation and dialect pronunciation. Almost all teachers stated that they used English and dialect sound differences effectively to teach English:

Many students do not notice the "r" sound. I tell my students "r" sound is not quite the same as our dialect "r" sound with not flat lip. (Teacher 14)

The students pronounce English the same as dialect sound. There is no "n" sound in Enshi dialect and this sound is pronounced through nose and the students always drop "n and l" in the words "film, kind, wall, find". (Teacher 2)

I simply distinguish each English sound from dialect sounds. For example, the "e" sound in the dialect is exactly the same as in English [e], such as "te se" in dialect is pronounced as [te][se], so local students learn the vowel sound of [set] with dialect pronunciation on the same line. (Teacher 7)

In the survey, the teachers made clear that the students emphasized the similarities and differences between English sounds and dialect sounds. This awareness assisted the students to learn easily and master accurately.

#### 4.3 Understanding the Meaning of English Phrases and Sentences

The key points evidenced in the interviewees' state-

ments about dialect use were about teaching language. The teachers stressed that their goals were to maximize target language use in class but they also stated that dialect resources were necessary:

We use dialect when vocabulary is challenging for the students. For example, when we introduce words like "extremely" and "terribly"... we can use dialect, which is easier for students to remember, such as "lei hen la", "xi huan can le", "hao wan le". (Teacher 9)

I use the dialect to explain some words, for example, I teach modal verbs "can, need, can't, may, must" like this: "This baby has just turned a year old and can go. Zhe ge xiao hai gang man yi sui jiu zou de da", "ni hen zang, ni zai de zhao xi da", "wo mei de fa zuo da", "yao de hao (may)", "ni guo ren ying shi yao zhen men gao sha (must)" (Teacher 11)

It often happens that students immediately grasp some kinds of phrases, if I find a familiar dialect phrase with the same meaning as an English phrase like "have a look, have a swim..." ("kan yi ha ha er, you yi ha ha er" in dialect). (Teacher 13)

We use dialect to translate some sentences when the students feel it is more appropriate and to help them remember them better. For example, "It's none of your business" is "guan ni mo zi shi sha", "She paid no attention to what he said" is "guan ta shuo mo zi, ta yi dian er dou bu shuai shi ta", and "close to" is "ai dao qi". (Teacher 8)

Dialect was used by teachers to convey the meaning of English language in three cases. First, the teachers used dialect to introduce the English language, so that the students could understand. Second, to avoid misunderstandings, the teachers elicited the relevant dialect items. Overall, dialect use in English teaching could help students learn language, express their thoughts better, and cultivate intercultural understanding.

#### 4.4 Enlivening the Classroom Atmosphere

The fourth function evidenced in the survey about dialect use was to motivate the class. Teachers and students worked to ensure that the students focused on classroom activities, as shown in the quotes below:

When I speak dialect, I rarely find the students losing focus. For example, "I want you to memorize this passage, can "you ha shu ma" (have big chance to success). I remember the students laughing at once, feeling relaxed. (Teacher 10)

Dialect use can add some color to our dull learning. I remember, once, "... But It's very noble of you to look after my pets when I was out." "or if you gao liang da (have a cold), you'll fear sniffing and sneezing..." (Teacher 8)

I can't help using some linking words in dialect. For



example, “Today I’ll tell you a story. Now look at the picture, please. This is a jungle ... And (jie dao qi) the rabbit is quicker than the panda, (wow, cool ha ge za) the elephant is stronger than the tiger”. (Teacher 14)

Many times, I haven’t prepared dialect contents before class, and, all of sudden, I blurt out some dialect. For example, “we have some difficulties. But how can we solve them? (oh, dear, gao she da). Can you (shen qi) hold?” (Teacher 4)

Without establishing any rules, the teachers adopted a rather relaxed approach in two cases. First, there were teachers who exploited dialect links between dialect and English. Second, some teachers reported making general remarks in dialect when a new topic was going to be discussed and students’ performance is to be praised.

## 5. Conclusions

In this survey, the data are collected only from interviews with teachers, and there are no classroom observation records. Despite this limitation, the data, the product of the natural classroom, with no experimental intervention conducted, do provide several interesting findings and implications for teaching English while using dialects in EFL classroom. The research shows that the effective use of learners’ dialects in the EFL classroom plays an active role in English learning. From the results of teachers’ interviews, (1) dialect use does exist in EFL classroom teaching of junior high school students in minority areas; (2) dialect use in English classes provides four benefits: improving the mastery of English grammar, distinguishing pronunciation, understanding the meaning of English words, phrases and sentences, and enlivening the classroom atmosphere.

Although the dialects play a positive role in EFL classroom, there are also some aspects that should be noticed during the process of teaching. a) The teacher needs raise awareness about adopting dialects on account of the benefits of integrating dialects into EFL classroom. b) The teacher need control the quantity of dialects that will be integrated into class. c) The teacher need make her students reflect about dialects and issues of power and ideology underlying language use. It helps them to apply language in reality and the culture that exists in dialects. d) When discussing dialects with students, the teachers should encourage students to think critically about language, and in this sense students’ critical language awareness will be formed <sup>[14]</sup>.

The general picture that emerges from the analysis of the data is that the learners’ dialect is used in response to the linguistic forms. The teachers clearly see their learners’ learning needs and achieve their teaching goals more

effectively. The study focuses on teachers’ classroom language. Although the learners’ first language can affect and interfere with the learning of a foreign language, what is called “language transfer” <sup>[21]</sup>, in the interviews, English teachers emphasize the positive transfer effect of dialects on English learning and the effectiveness of English teaching.

Teachers, of course, also have a professional obligation to convey foreign language meanings accurately. In this study, the teachers use dialect in classroom teaching to the extent, which promotes English learning. Use of dialects in class can create a realistic context, so as to expand the opportunities for students to learn and use English. In the interviews, the teachers express their views that they do their best to engage with students’ interests, find a way of translanguaging. At the same time, students are influenced by teacher’s instruction, which cultivates their sense of local responsibility, establishes local self-confidence and realize the charm of dialect.

This is a fairly modest piece of research derived specifically from interviews with teachers or in junior schools in one minority area in China. Its insights need to be explored further in different sorts of areas using questionnaire surveys with different groups of students, in which a broader qualitative and quantitative analysis can be done. The appropriate time and quantity of dialect used in EFL classroom should also be discussed.

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# Simulating the Formation of Protective Colors: Improvement of Experiments in Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

Students are very interested in the Inquiry experiment of Simulating the formation of protective colors. However, it is often influenced by the subjective factors of students in practice, so the simulation experiment is improved twice in teaching. After the second improvement, the experiment achieves good results.

## 1. Introduction

The experiment of simulating the formation process of protective color enables students to understand the process and causes of biological evolution from a perceptual perspective, so as to pave the way for a better understanding of Darwin's natural selection theory. The simulated activity is to simulate a certain environment and various organisms in the environment, and to simulate predators to prey on prey and count the number of surviving prey. Its purpose is to find out the most suitable living organisms in a certain environment through the statistics of the number of various organisms in the environment, so that students can understand that protective color is gradually formed in the process of biological evolution<sup>[1]</sup>.

In practice, there are mainly the following difficulties

and problems: (1) The colored cloth is used as a living background, the material is soft, and is easy to be grabbed together with small pieces of paper in the process of predation, so that the distribution of the small pieces of paper is affected; (2) In the simulated investigation, the progress of investigation was regulated by controlling the number of small pieces of paper left on the colored cloth, namely the number of prey, which deviated greatly from the real predation situation; (3) Although the predator is required not to deliberately look for a small piece of paper of a certain color, it is difficult to exclude the influence of factors such as the predator's preference for color and the distance between the predator and various prey in the actual predation process, which ultimately affects the accuracy of the research results<sup>[2]</sup>.

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## 2. Initial Improvement

Based on these problems, we have made the first improvement to this simulation inquiry in our teaching<sup>[3]</sup>, and the method steps are as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Steps of “Simulating the Formation Process of Protective Color”

Step 1	Large colored paper (0.5 * 0.5 m) of three colors and a plurality of small pieces of paper of corresponding colors are prepared, wherein the small pieces of paper are used as “certain organisms”, and the large colored paper is used as the “living environment” of the organisms.
Step 2	Four students form a group, one person is the group leader, and the predation time is controlled; Man-made predator; One person is a recorder. Small pieces of paper are prey.
Step 3	Predator in advance back to the table, the team leader chose a large piece of colored paper spread on the table, and evenly sprinkled on the top of three colors of small pieces of paper each 20, write down the color of the paper.
Step 4	At the beginning of the timer, the Predator quickly turned around to grab the paper, each time turning to the table, and grabbed a small piece of paper (using only eyes to determine its position). After 20 seconds, each group counted the number of various colors of paper in the Survivor.
Step 5	Assume that each survivor produces three offspring of the same color as his own. Place 3 small pieces of paper of the same color under each survivor. Mix the survivors and their descendants thoroughly. Repeat the two steps in 2. The number of small pieces of paper of various colors is recorded in each round.

However, in practice, some students will still deliberately look for small pieces of paper of a certain color, which will affect the accuracy of the results of the inquiry. If the predator is no longer a student simulation with strong subjective consciousness, but a real predator, the results will be closer to the real natural environment conditions and more convincing. Therefore, the simulation experiment is improved for the second time.

## 3. Secondary Improvements

Protective coloring is usually used to describe the body color of animals that is very similar to the color of the surrounding environment. Plants generally do not have protective colors, but they may also be eaten in different quantities due to differences in color. Black rice, red rice and white rice are natural variations without human interference. Quails are omnivorous animals, and have no deliberate choice of rice grains of various colors, but in different color backgrounds, hungry quails will actively choose food with relatively obvious colors, which also shows that under natural conditions, organisms with similar colors to the environment are easier to retain.

## 3.1 Materials

Each group took a quail, black rice, red rice, white rice, white paper, black paper. A shoe box (to prevent the quail from moving around and affecting the results of the experiment).

## 3.2 Simulation

Experiment 1: Explore the protective color effect of different color backgrounds. 30 rice grains of each color are taken, evenly mixed and scattered on white paper in a shoe box. Put the hungry quail on the white paper and let it peck at the rice grains. After one minute, the quails are removed, and the number of the remaining rice grains is counted; Repeat 3 times and record.



**Figure 1.** Quail pecking rice on a white background

**Table 2.** Records the remaining of rice grains of different colors on a white background

	Black	Yellow	White
1	3	6	16
2	2	5	20
3	1	3	18
Average	2	4.7	18

Replace the white paper with black paper, and then repeat the steps of the above experiment, you can further compare the number of predators under different color backgrounds.



**Figure 2.** Quail pecking rice on a black background



Experiment 2: Explore changes in the number of individuals of different colors after many generations of evolution. Repeat the first three steps of the Experiment 1, assuming that each survivor produces three offspring and the color is the same as before, and then add the corresponding number of grains of rice according to this law. Record the number of colored rice grains of each round.

**Table 3.** Simulates changes in the number of individuals of different colors after three generations of white backgrounds

The color of the rice grain	The first generation		Second generation		The third generation	
	The number of starts	Number of survivors	The number of starts	Number of survivors	The number of starts	Number of survivors
Black	30	2	8	0	0	0
Yellow	30	4	16	2	8	2
White	30	15	60	43	172	150

### 3.3 The Results of the Experiment

(1) Under the white background, in the rice grains which the quail eats in the unit time, the black is most, the brown and the yellow are next, and the white is least; (2) after several generations, the white grains left on the white paper are the most, and the other colors are very few.

## 4. Conclusions

Individuals with protective colors similar to ambient colors were selected to remain as few individuals who were ceded during evolution.

With the second improved exploration, there are the following advantages:

(1) Easy to pick. Quail and rice of different colors are easy to buy in the market, and shoe boxes are easy to col-

lect in life.

(2) Reducing subjective impact. Students simulating a “predator” can have a negative impact on the outcome of the study because of their different preferences for color. The dragonfly is the real predator in nature, and the experimental conclusions closer to the real natural condition.

(3) Table design facilitates conclusion analysis. By filling out the form, it is convenient to compare the relationship between “survivor” body color and background color, and to explore the conclusion. Based on the actual exploration to obtain data, this inquiry design three generations of organisms can meet the needs of exploration.

(4) Improve the reliability of the experimental results. Different color backgrounds can be selected to explore in groups, so that the experimental results are more reliable, the experimental conclusions are more scientific, and students can easily understand that the formation of different protective colors is the result of biological evolution, and the adaptability in nature is also universal.

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# Exploring the Influence of Family Education on Children in *Red Finger*

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, cases of juvenile delinquency have gradually increased, mainly due to indulging in games to kill people; blindly pursuing grades, and committing suicide by jumping off buildings when the rates are unsatisfactory; some divorced families do not care for their children and thus commit crimes, or some parents dote on their children. The child becomes a pervert and embarks on the road of crime. This article selects the novel *Red Finger* by the Japanese writer Keigo Higashino because the mother's excessive doting has made the child lawless and embarked on the road of murder. Faced with such a result, the means adopted by the parents turned out to be throwing the corpse, helping the son to cover up the crime, and even forcing the son's criminal behavior on the mother who has Alzheimer's disease. The juvenile delinquency family is fundamental, and the parents want to raise a child with a good personality; it is necessary to create a harmonious family atmosphere. The social background of *Red Finger* is Japan in the 1990s. The economic crisis broke out in Japan. Fathers have to work very hard. However, the lack of communication between fathers and children at work for a long time has affected the children's family happiness. The role of fathers is even just a figure in the mouth of mothers, and the company of parents to children. The education of children and the way of dealing with problems are subtly affecting children's life values. This paper uses Satya's family education theory to study the characters' personalities and the influence of family education on children's growth in the novel *Red Finger*.

## 1. Introduction

After his father's death, the Maehara family of three chose to live together with their mother. On the one hand, it was the family's choice, and on the other hand, it was also the impact of the Japanese bubble economy. People's income has increased on the surface, but it cannot support household expenditures well. In particular, the rise in real

estate prices<sup>[1]</sup> led to Zhong Qianyan living with his mother.

After that, the Maehara family was a three-generation family consisting of three and Akio Maehara's mother living together. A study shows that in 1997, 58.9% of elderly over 60 in Japan would choose to live with their married or unmarried children. The rate is higher than in Germany (12.9%) and in the United States (16.1%) in Western

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countries<sup>[2]</sup>. Tax credits for three-generation households and care allowances for family members to take care of elderly relatives were all policies introduced by the government, which had a great relationship with the high co-occupancy rate<sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, the family structure described in the book is one of the typical Japanese family structures. Taking this family's tragedy as a lesson, many people can think about getting along with their families.

This article explains the *Red Finger* by Keigo Higashino, a Japanese mystery novel writer, based on Satya's iceberg theory in family education. The story of the work takes place in an ordinary Japanese family. In his early fifties, Akio Maehara found a girl dead in his backyard after getting off work. The murderer was his fifteen-year-old son Naomi. Under the obstruction of his wife Yaeko, Akio. To "protect" his son and family, he gave up the idea of turning himself in to the police station and instead blamed his mother, Masaie Maehara. She had Alzheimer's disease. In the end, Akio's so-called protection and love for children finally got the results it deserved. According to Satya's theory, taking the failed family education in the book as a lesson explores the typical three-generation Japanese family in the 1990s. The influence of parents, mother-in-law, and daughter-in-law relationship on children's growth, and the role children should play in the whole family system.

## 2. The Influence of Father's Role on Children in Family Education

The only thing that father Akio Maehara did not give up in the book was work, especially in the era of domestic economic explosion and when social materials were scarce. It was also one of the reasons for the lack of communication between many contemporary fathers and sons. Some fathers spent most of their time. They put their energy into work, neglect their responsibilities in family education, and affect the integrity of children in family education. The father is only a vague image in the mother's mouth, and memory for children, and Akio Maehara is a familiar figure.

"When Akio went out, his son Naomi was still in the bed, and when he came back from the company, Naomi had already hidden in the room." "Only Saturday and Sunday can be together for dinner. At this time, Naomi also tries to avoid looking at his father. When he has to speak, he will say the shortest."<sup>[4]</sup> Under Akio Maehara's long-term ignorance of Naomi's psychological state, Naomi has grown into a tepid response to his father, and even in other social circles, an unpopular person with character flaws.

In the critical period of the formation of world outlook, outlook on life, and values, family education plays a vital

role in Zhisi's growth and family happiness<sup>[5]</sup>. In everyday life, in response to Yaeko's suggestion of the child's growth, Akio Maehara did not pay enough attention and gave necessary guidance and correction. Even deliberately reduced the opportunity to contact his son, pretending not to notice any inconsistencies. Akio Maehara has a low family status. When his rebellious son committed the crime of murdering a young daughter, out of doting on his son and cowardice towards his wife Yaeko, he did not dare to take his son to the police station to confess but chose to let the older man at home mother blame.

His attitude of escaping things was reflected in his children, playing games calmly after murdering the young girl.

Akio Maehara has always maintained an evasive attitude towards family problems. Especially in the relationship between Yaeko and Zhenghui's mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, they did not play a perfect role in lubricant but chose to escape, but instead magnified the problem. First, they ate separately, quarreled, did not want to go home, played with women outside, and showed indifference to the family. In the husband and wife relationship with Yaeko, the mobile phone was peeked by Yaeko. On the one hand, Akio Maehara did not let his wife establish a sense of trust and security in him.

On the other hand, he would no longer feel respected and trusted without privacy. For Akio Maehara, home is not a place to get warm comfort. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the family was formed at the beginning only because both parties were of marriageable age, and there was no big inappropriate reason. It reflected the weak awareness of the family between the two parents. From beginning to end, he has an irresponsible attitude. Naomi has also grown into an unreliable person in his words and deeds.

In the usual family communication, the family has been in no effective contact for a long time. So that Akio Maehara did not perceive his mother's reminder. At the last moment, mother Zhenghui did not give up on saving the whole family. Maternal love infiltrated the heart of Akio Maehara as an adult through a small piece of wood engraved with "Maehara Zhenghui" and finally woke up.

## 3. The Influence of Mother's Role in Family Education on Children

In the novel *Red Finger*, Yaeko's love for her son Naomi as a mother is doting and morbid dependent. One of the reasons that led Naomi to embark on juvenile delinquency was her mother's doting. Indulgent family education will put the child at the center of the family and become the master of the family. Coddling has the following

distinct characteristics: excessive attention, connivance, overprotection, and substitution <sup>[6]</sup>.

Since the child was born, Yaeko put all her energy and attention into her son, losing her love for herself. When her husband Akio Maehara suggested that the house was not as clean as before, Yaeko, the wife, still ignored the housework. Yaeko regarded the education and training of her son Naomi as her achievement and transferred her inner needs to her son. He did not recognize his son as an independent person, so he gave him proper guidance. When Yaeko found out that her son Naomi had a hobby of young girls, after her husband Akio Maehara chose not to take action, Yaeko also decided to ignore the matter. The way Yaeko communicates with her son is a good communication gesture. Satya believes that people with a low sense of self-worth prefer to use good communication gestures to interact with others. As a mother, Yaeko did not stop and educate her son Naomi's lousy behavior in time. Instead of letting Naomi realize the seriousness of the problem, she chose to ignore her behavior. This concession to the child's bad behavior reinforces the frequency of the child's bad behavior and becomes a solid lousy habit. Yaeko over-indulges Naomi and even helps children attribute their mistakes to other aspects. Therefore, the raised son Naomi tends to be self-centered, completely ignoring the feelings of others, and it isn't easy to think from the perspective of others <sup>[7]</sup>.

When the little girl couldn't make concessions and tolerance like her mother Yaeko or was even satisfied with her rude demands, Naomi often used various means to achieve his goals and finally brutally killed the little girl. Under the excessive protection of her mother, Yaeko, Naomi lacked a sense of social morality and responsibility and became cowardly, indifferent, and cruel. After His classmates bullied Naomi at school, he didn't want to go to school and chose to escape from school. After brutally killing the little girl, the question she thought about was how to avoid soiling the floor but the little girl's body in the yard and then return to her room to play games without any reflection or regret. Naomi is strongly dependent on her mother and believes that she is underage and does not need to be responsible for what she has done, and her parents take all the responsibilities. Children with low self-efficacy often have many things done by their parents, and they will habitually think that their parents can help them accomplish anything. Still, they have no responsibility or ability to do it.

#### **4. The Influence of Husband and Wife Relationship on Children in Family Education**

The traditional family model is that of parents and

children; without one, they can not constitute a family, but as the divorce rate increases, the number of children growing up in single-parent families is also growing. Still, for teenagers under the age of 18, both parents must bear the responsibility of the children after divorce. Due to the separation of parents, the children will inevitably lack the care and education of the other party.

This article's father Akio and mother Yaeko met on a blind date, and they got married when they reached marriageable age. After they got married, they gave birth to a son, indicating that their emotional foundation was not that deep, and they formed a family. It is also their husband and wife relationship. One of the reasons for the discord is that Yaeko is working full-time to take care of children at home; Akio is busy in the company and often does not go home. The relationship between husband and wife is like a divorced husband and wife.

Yaeko was indifferent to other things except for her son. Even when her father-in-law died, she didn't feel any sadness at all. The family atmosphere was very indifferent. After her mother-in-law Zhaohui's wife passed away, she lived with her son. It seemed that they lived together. Very harmonious, but, to prevent his son from maintaining the relationship between himself and Yaeko, he pretended that he had Alzheimer's. Zhaohui also regarded Yaeko as a stranger, and the family lived in their world. It is precisely because of this that the family relationship is not harmonious. Facing such a family, Zhaofu has no idea of improvement. As long as something happens at home, he wants to escape. Therefore, his son grew up in a family atmosphere, which subtly affected his son's life. Values, in the face of his son's murder, he did not want to solve the problem together to overcome difficulties, but concealed the facts and shied the responsibility from each other.

As we all know, a harmonious family environment can give children emotional exchanges and feelings of love. If the whole family lacks ignorance and indifference, it would significantly impact children's growth.

Like the protagonist in this article, such a lack of family ties can lead to a lack of resilience and communication skills in adolescents, often alone at school, without any friends, or sometimes feeling unappreciated. If you want to attract the attention of others, you will form an anti-social personality through some extreme methods and often do things that are not in line with social values <sup>[9]</sup>. There is no trace of remorse when the crime is exposed, but he blames his parents. He regards this murder as a trivial matter, and he has no guilt or shame.

#### **5. Children's Role in the Whole Family System**

In Akio Maehara's original family, his mother adopted



a pampering and indulgent education method for Akio Maehara when he was young. Because he did not absorb the good things and transform the bad stuff from the original family, his personality was weak and incompetent, hesitant, and escaping from reality, afraid of his wife. In his newly constructed family system, he failed to play the role of father, husband, and son. A vicious circle with family as the unit formed.

Before the case, Naomi's family education was full of holes. If Naomi did not wake up as soon as possible to change the atmosphere of the whole family, it would be very likely to be influenced and lead astray. For the father, Naomi is one of the objects of his escape; for the mother, Naomi is her only hope in life; for the schoolmates, Naomi is the object of exclusion. Naomi is in such a learning and living environment and cannot grow up healthily, and it isn't easy to wake up.

Awakening is not easy for teenagers because family and school occupy a large part of their growth environment. Drawing various resources from their environment is the most normal development mode. According to Satya's family education theory, the role that a son needs to assume is not just to accept his parents, but to understand his parents by understanding their expectations for him, and to play the link of family communication through his strength, to improve the relationship between parents. The relationship between children enhances the sense of responsibility for life. Satya believes that a higher expectation value in line with the actual situation can usually be a protective factor to prevent crime. In the process of acting as a survival communication posture, the son can think in his own heart. Questions like "What happened when no one was paying attention to you?" "Would you forgive your parents if they didn't understand you the way you needed?" "How can you take care of and help yourself?"<sup>[8]</sup> When children are no longer troubled by negative emotions from family or school, they may develop a mode of consistent communication, gaining a new understanding and acceptance of life. (Not only themselves' life but also the lives of others). They seem to respond correctly and meaningfully, becoming more responsible rather than avoiding responsibility and blaming others.

Naomi's study life did not actively find the right way to solve interpersonal relationships. When everyone is unwilling to be friends with him, instead of thinking about his shortcomings and how to get along with others, he still treats people with a selfish and cold-blooded personality. When Yucai is willing to make friends with him, he treats her as his only hope, paranoid that being a friend should be her own. After the case, he was calm and did not have a clear view of right and wrong. "I showed her the doll, but

she said she wanted to go home." "It's all my parents."

## 6. Conclusions

In *Red Finger*, Akio Maehara didn't take his due responsibilities and always took an evasive attitude towards problems; Yaeko didn't take on the responsibilities of being a mother and wife, and the relationship with her mother-in-law also became very tense. The son is very doting, even morbidly dependent, and is a mother with low self-efficacy; the couple shields the child and makes the mother a scapegoat. Naomi is one of the victims of such a family. He failed to find an opportunity to change himself and his family in such a family and school life and became the murderer of the young girl. Mother-in-law Zhenghui is one of the awakened characters who bring hope to people in this book. She uses her power to save the last conscience of the whole family. The intervention of Satya's family education can provide hope for such families.

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# After Forty Years of Reform and Opening up: A Multi-perspective Analysis of the Innovation and Development of Ideological and Political Education

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## ABSTRACT

In the past 40 years of reform and opening up, the political, economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and other countries have been increasing. In particular, with the opening of the doors to the outside world, the intermingling and collision of various cultures and trends from the East and the West have affected the practice and development process of ideological and political education to a certain extent. With the continuous penetration of network technology, the ideological and political theoretical system under the leadership of the Party has been constantly innovated and improved. Although it has gone through the course of cancellation, restoration, development and then integration and deepening, it has also pointed out a series of new diversified development paths for ideological and political education. Therefore, against such a background, it is important to deeply understand the distinctive features of ideological and political education in the context of pluralism. Adhering to the principle of keeping pace with the times and the people-oriented education policy and exploring new paths, methods and means of ideological and political education in the context of pluralism are not only in line with the trend of development of the times, but also continue to promote the reform and development of ideological and political theory in the new era.

## 1. Introduction

Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Party, China's ideological and political education has gradually stepped into the right track and developed in an orderly manner along with the influence of the ups and downs of the tide, and in the practical exploration of reform and opening up, it has embarked a unique path of development. This article mainly analyzes the innovation and development of ideological and political education from multiple perspectives. From the period during reform and opening up to the new era, culture aris-

es and develops from practice. Moreover, it is the power source of national reform and development, and a good recipe for educating people to enhance the construction of cultural confidence in ideological and political education. The concept of shared development is the starting and ending point for the Party and state leaders in the new era to adhere to the people-oriented approach, and it is also the characteristic of the times given to ideological and political educators. The current ideological and political education should find the right fit and promote its innovation and integration under shared development. As a new teaching mode in the Internet era, MOOC (massive

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open online course) breaks the traditional thinking pattern and the boundaries of time and space to meet the needs of different types of people for information and networked educational resources. It makes ideological and political education more influential in the process of dissemination, promotes ideological and political education to enhance the diversity of art forms and continue to push the new things and keep pace with the times.

## **2. Adhering to Cultural Confidence, and Continuing to Develop and Innovate are New Ways to Enhance Ideological and Political Education**

Culture is the foundation of a country and the spiritual pillar of its prosperity; a prosperous culture brings a prosperous country, and a strong culture brings a strong country. Establishing cultural confidence is connected with cultural inheritance and value cultivation, which is the mission and responsibility undertaken by universities. In the new era, the ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities should promote the excellent Chinese traditional culture. In other words, cultivating cultural confidence is not only important contents of the teaching of ideological and political theory courses, but also a significant purpose and new path of ideological and political education.

### **(1) Adhering to Cultural Confidence, and Improving Cultural Confidence and Identity**

China has a history of five thousand years. Its outstanding culture still has great charm to modern society. Adhering to cultural confidence and cultivating the new generation to assume the great responsibility of the nation must enhance the cultural soft power and enhance the sense of national cultural identity, so as to establish a sense of responsibility to actively inherit and promote the excellent national cultural traditions. Deng Xiaoping, as the chief architect of reform and opening up, pointed out at the closing session of the Working Conference of the Communist Party of China that “only by emancipating our minds, insisting on seeking truth from facts, starting everything from reality, and linking theory with practice can our socialist modernization be carried out smoothly and our Party’s theory of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought be developed smoothly”<sup>[1]</sup>. This has clearly expounded that ideology and culture are the soul of social development and the inexhaustible source of socialist construction, which has laid the theoretical foundation for the proposal and construction of reform and opening up. Since entering the new era, the new generation of Party leadership with Xi Jinping as the core, attaches great importance to cultural construction. “We must firmly

adhere to cultural confidence to promote the prosperity of socialist culture. Without a high degree of cultural confidence and without cultural prosperity, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. We must adhere to the road of socialist cultural development with Chinese characteristics, stimulate the whole nation’s cultural innovation and creativity, and build a socialist country with powerful culture”<sup>[2]</sup>.

On the one hand, the theoretical composition of ideological and political education contains the generative elements of cultural confidence, leading and helping the educated by worldview, outlook on life and values. On the other hand, in the new era, it is necessary to draw not only from historical and socialist culture, but also from traditional culture and place it on top of the strategic decisions and deployments of priority development to improve the sense of identity and cultural confidence.

### **(2) Continuing to Develop and Innovate to Inject New Vitality into the Development of Cultural Innovation**

The inheritance and development of culture has always been the core of education, and ideological and political education, as the top priority in cultivating political talents, plays an indispensable role in cultural confidence. Cultivating the innovation and thinking ability of the educated can awaken the sense of identity and self-confidence in traditions and new culture. To establish cultural confidence, it should be nurtured in the process of ideological and political education. In turn, ideological and political education should be carried out in cultural confidence cultivation. Whether it is inheriting or innovating traditional Chinese culture, we must take practice as the main body, cultivate people with scientific methods, and absorb the essence of culture with an open mind, so that its essence and highlights can be known and used by us<sup>[3]</sup>. As the saying goes, if you want to educate people, you must educate yourself first; if you want to cultivate talent, you must cultivate morality first. As communicators and educators of ideological and political thoughts, it is necessary to focus on key links and persistently cultivate persons with cultural confidence in all-round development of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development. The cultivation of cultural confidence must always be included into the education of talents, and we must constantly develop and innovate to enhance the ideological and political education and strive for fast and new development, so as to inject new vitality into the development of cultural innovation.

## **3. Integrating the Concept of Shared Development into Ideological and Political Education to Promote the Innovation and Integration of Ideological and Political Education**

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new



era, the philosophy that development must be innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared is of great significance to ideological and political education. Integrating the concept of shared development into the whole process of ideological and political education can not only provide new research perspectives but also plan new strategies, form educational synergy, strengthen connotation and enhance professionalism. The concept of shared development should be firmly established, scientifically grasped and accurately understood when carrying out daily ideological and political education. We should take shared development as an important theory of development throughout the entire education system, and as a guide for action and a goal for development.

### **(1) Promoting Shared Development and Guiding Youth to Establish a People-oriented Life Goal**

Over the past forty years of reform and development, China's society has gone through rapid development, and ideological and political education should also keep pace with the times and inspire young students' ideals and beliefs. The introduction of socialist core values has injected brand-new contents into ideological and political education, and the concept of shared development has laid the theoretical foundation for practicing socialist core values<sup>[4]</sup>. Integrating shared development concept into ideological and political education helps carry forward the characteristics of young people with high aspirations, promotes college students to establish a sense of social responsibility, and pushes ideological and political education to form a new normal. Contemporary college students are born in the new era and grow up after the reform and opening up, which provides a wide stage for them to display their vitality. The spiritual power of youth is directly related to the ambitious goals and beliefs. Spiritual power is the result of the stimulation of goals and beliefs. Goals guide the direction of life, and beliefs determine whether a career can be successful. Promoting shared development requires youth to have the spirit of the times. The logical starting point of adhering to people-oriented development focuses on the requirement of a people-centered education concept. Centering on the healthy growth and development of young people is conducive to fostering the main force that will fuel the development of society in the new era.

### **(2) Applying the Concept of Shared Development to Stimulate the Free and Comprehensive Development of Youth**

The five development concepts unify and promote the continuous reform and development of colleges and universities. Integrating the concept of shared development organically into ideological and political education can continuously improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education of college students to help them

develop freely and comprehensively. The free and comprehensive development of people establishes the subject position and value of people. It is the highest value pursuit of Marxism. Shared development covers all people, highlighting the fundamental position of the people to achieve the happiness of the people for the purpose. Moreover, the interests of the masses are the starting point and destination of the cause of the Party. Shared development corresponds to the period of socialist development that is in continuous improvement. As youth, we must be clear about the situation we are in and not be conformist. As the main force for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, we must develop freely and comprehensively in the process of promoting the realization of the Chinese Dream in the new era. For this reason, ideological and political education for youth must serve the free and comprehensive development of youth, start from the subtleties of youth development, put into practice the guidelines and policies for the training of youth, and give them the maximum amount of independent choice. The various educational entities in the social system must give strong support to young people in various fields. Shared development is about people's living conditions and enhancing their well-being. It motivates individuals to actively participate in the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. The ideological and political education and activities for youth should play their due role under the concept of shared development. It should inspire youth to shoulder the responsibility of honor and unify personal and social values in the historical journey to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, so that the shared development and the innovative development of youth ideological and political education go in the same direction and achieve synergy.

## **4. The Innovation of Ideological and Political Teaching under the MOOC Mode in the New Era**

MOOC is the product of large-scale online open courses in the new era, which provides an unprecedented platform of communication and innovation for innovating ideological and political education, breaking through geographical boundaries and transforming teaching modes. President Xi Jinping has pointed out at the propaganda and ideological work conference that "we should adapt to the new situation where social informatization continues to advance to speed up the integrated development of traditional and emerging media, fully use new technologies and applications to innovate media communication methods, and occupy the high ground of information

dissemination”<sup>[5]</sup>. “The Internet is the most dynamic area of development in our era”<sup>[6]</sup>. MOOC, as a new teaching and dissemination method, education method and teaching method in the Internet medium, transmits helpful and beneficial cultural knowledge, carries out ideological and political education, strengthens the initiative and consciousness of the educated, strengthens political stance, improves political literacy, guards the ideological position in the face of complicated Internet information interference, and makes the value of ideological and political education penetrate into people’s hearts.

### **(1) Innovating Ideological and Political Education and Exploring New Teaching Ways**

The education and teaching methods in the new era should respect various characteristics of students and consider their individual differences. The reform and innovation of ideological and political education in colleges and universities should inevitably promote the innovation of teaching methods, and colleges and universities in the new era should adapt to the unique innovative strategies brought by the Internet to ideological and political education in the new era. First, the use of “flipped classroom” in the teaching practice of colleges and universities. In the process of using flipped classroom in education and teaching, the traditional classroom teaching mode is overturned, and the traditional classroom teaching mode is broken, so that the main body of classroom teaching shows a trend of diversity. With corresponding videos and teaching materials before class, students can watch videos repeatedly and ask for help from teachers and partners. It has aggregated scattered teaching resources together to serve the teaching, increasing interactivity in learning. Focusing on the concept of classroom communication, cooperation and inquiry, it is a breakthrough and innovation in the education model and learning style. Combined with the actual situation of students, it arranges and controls learning of students, and teaching can be carried out in a relaxed atmosphere in and out of classroom. Second, the use of blended teaching mode under MOOC. The development of science and technology has strongly promoted the change and innovation of teaching mode, and advanced the deep integration of information technology and curriculum teaching. Blended learning is student-centered. It opens up students’ thinking space, and is no longer teacher- and textbook-centered, making teachers more flexible and diverse in their teaching methods. In the blended teaching mode, teachers are knowledge communicators and become facilitators to guide learning. Teachers can provide students with the latest resources of subjects and develop online learning plans, daily homework, classroom discussions, examinations, evaluation and feedback mech-

anism through micro-class and micro-video, etc., which can effectively make up for the defects of single online learning type and traditional classroom type. It will analyze comprehensively and systematically from the aspects of knowledge and skills, process and method, emotion, attitude and value, etc., so that the teaching form can be used throughout the whole process.

### **(2) Strengthening Mutual Communication and Exchanges among Colleges and Universities to Optimize Educational and Teaching Achievements**

As a center for cultivating informational talents in the new era, colleges and universities need to rely on various forms of communication to meet their educational and management goals and requirements. Strengthening interpersonal communication, especially information exchange between colleges and universities, deepening teaching structure, improving teaching quality and conducting academic research are important. First, strengthening communication between universities is conducive to deepening education reform and improving teaching quality, and strengthening communication between various departments and schools is conducive to be understood by other departments, absorbing the results of others’ experience and making up for shortcomings, so that education can be carried out in depth. Second, it is conducive to the scientific management of universities. In order to improve management, the importance and necessity of interpersonal communication and unity and collaboration among college leaders should be recognized. Regular exchanges of ideas and communication should be organized among universities (e.g. academic seminars, college students’ entrepreneurship cooperation forums, establishment of university alliances, etc.), which is conducive to unifying ideological understanding and improving educational and teaching achievements, eliminating misunderstandings and resolving conflicts in a timely manner, conducting criticism and self-criticism, enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and better cooperating and working together to accelerate the synergy of educational development. Universities should twin with each other, learn from each other and promote the development of each other. On the basis of trust, universities can work together to accomplish the difficulty in ideological and political education development.

## **5. Implications for Continuing to Promote Ideological and Political Theory Reform and Development in the New Era**

In the new era, we should continue to push forward the reform and opening up. Reviewing the glorious course of reform and opening up in the past 40 years, it has greatly

changed the image of China, and the Chinese nation has ushered in a historic leap from standing up, becoming rich to being powerful! Only in line with the historical trend of innovation can we continue to enrich and develop in practice with the times, to unify the promotion of ideological and political construction with reform, development and stability, and to facilitate the sustainable development of ideological and political theory in the new era. President Xi Jinping has put forward at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia that “China’s 40 years of reform and opening up have provided many invaluable inspirations, the most important of which is that for a country or a nation to revitalize, it must advance in the logic of history and develop in the trend of the times”<sup>[7]</sup>.

We should insist on the unification of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics and ideological and political education in colleges and universities, gather strength, guide colleges and universities to integrate personal growth and progress into national construction, and give full play to the conscious initiative of ideological and political education of college students in colleges and universities. We should also focus on comprehensive and coordinated development to grasp regularity, enhance creativity, and adapt to the changing new pattern of reform and opening up. “Reform and opening up is the great awakening of the Party, and it is this great awakening that has given birth to the great creation of the Party from theory to practice. Reform and opening up is a great revolution in the history of the development of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation, and it is this great revolution that has driven the great leap forward in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics!”<sup>[8]</sup> China’s innovation and development cannot be separated from the world, and the world’s innovation and development cannot be separated from China. China’s reform and opening up has not only developed itself but also benefited the world. We

should adhere to Marxist theory and socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era as guidance, adhere to reform for development, strive to explore and follow the laws of ideological and political construction, continue to innovate and develop a new situation of ideological and political education, so as to let the fountain of vitality of China’s politics, economy and culture gush to the fullest, and strive to achieve the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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# On the Context Vein of “Competence” and Its Generating Mechanism-based on the Perspective of Situational Learning Theory

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## ABSTRACT

“Key competence” has become a hot vocabulary in educational reform in recent years. However, the essential connotation and specific generation mechanism of “competence” as its basic concept are still far from clear, and often controversial due to vague expressions. The rise of the concept of “key competence” undoubtedly originated in the West, but in the context of Chinese, its meaning has changed significantly. By analyzing the origin and evolution of the concept of “competence” in the Western social context and the concept from “quality” to “competence” in the Chinese social context, we can deeply understand the essence of the concept of “competence” and further clarify the specific generation mechanism of “competence” and its relationship with education. Analyzing the formation of competence based on situational learning theory emphasizes the occurrence of competence through participation in situational activities, the development of learning courses and identity consultation, which can provide some inspiration for the formation of competence.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, there are different views on competence research. Different countries have their own key competence framework, and different scholars have different understandings of competence. Based on this situation, exploring the origin and essence of competence is of great value to educational theory and practice. Only by clarifying the essence of competence, can we grasp the direction in the formation of competence, so that competence can be realized in the participation of situational practice.

## 2. What is Competence

### 2.1 The Connotation and Development of Foreign “Competence”

Now the research on competence rises in foreign countries, using the word “competence” to express “literacy”. Competence wasn’t a unique concept in the field of education at first. It’s a daily term like other words. Basil Bernstein believes that analyzing the social logic of competence helps to explore its origin. He divides the

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social logic of competence into: proclaiming a democratic acquisition; the subject actively and creatively constructs a vivid world containing meaning and practice; emphasizing the self-regulation of the subject; a view of criticizing and questioning hierarchical relations; a time perspective to the present tense <sup>[1]</sup>. The characteristics of these five “competences” correspond to the idea of freedom and progress, and in Basil Bernstein’s classification of competences based on the principle of similarity, the type of freedom/progress is the earliest one he thinks, which focuses on the inherent potential of individuals and opposes the forms of oppressive authority in families, schools and industries. In the 1960s and the early 1970s, “competence” was valued by the supporters of free progress thought, and appeared in different forms in different disciplines, such as Chomsky’s language ability, Piaget’s cognitive ability, Levi-Strauss’s cultural ability and Garfinkie’s cultural ability, but they did not pay attention to education, but competence as a medium of ideological collision. Basil Bernstein believes that the concepts of competence in these different disciplines have converged, and they can become the core role of educational theory and practice because the social logic of competence occupies a dominant position in the re-context field of education and the official re-context field of education. In the late 1960s, with the change of the organizational structure of secondary education to weak classification and the general weakening of differences between primary and secondary schools, competence resonates with this ideology of liberating pursuit, as well as the proposal of “Ploden Report”, which are proof of the dominant position of social logic of competence. In the 1970s, as progressive education was questioned and the state strengthened its intervention in education, the “return to basics” education movement in the United States emphasized that every student must pass the “minimum competence testing”. At this time, competence emphasized the basic skills of reading, writing and counting <sup>[2]</sup>. Competence prevailed in the field of vocational education and human resources in the 1990s, indicating that individuals need to be competent for a certain job. Generalism proposed by Basil Bernstein is also life-work oriented and has the characteristics of “competence”. Then the terms “key and core skills”, “thinking ability” and “problem solving” appeared in the field of generalizationism, meaning that cross-domain competence is increasingly becoming a social demand.

OECD research on competence makes the term competence really popular. In the late 1980s, more and more countries attached importance to the quality of education, and the quality of comparative education seems to be a form of comparative international competitiveness. Based

on this situation, countries continue to explore the evaluation system of education quality, and how to evaluate the quality of education and its role in social and economic development has become a problem. In order to meet the evaluation needs of countries on the quality of education output, OECD launched the Indicators of National Education Systems (INES) project in 1987. In order to better define and evaluate the quality of educational output results. OECD has carried out a number of research projects, including the Cross-Curricular Competencies Project (CCC), the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), the Human Capital Indicators Project (HCI), the International Life Skills Survey (ILSS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Even after so many project studies, there is no uniform definition of competence as a result of educational output. To compensate for the lack of research, the OECD launched the Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (DeSeCo) in 1997. The OECD aims at a successful individual life and a sound society, analyzes social visions and individual life needs, combs previous research results, interviews and symposiums with representatives of different professional fields such as sociologists, evaluation experts, philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, economists, historians, statisticians, educators, policymakers, policy analysts, trade unions, employers, domestic and international institutions, and ultimately forms a key competence framework, namely, interactive use of tools, autonomous action and action in socially heterogeneous groups <sup>[3]</sup>. From the nature of OECD itself, as an economic organization, its purpose is to promote the economic and social development of member countries and promote world economic growth; helping member governments formulate and coordinate relevant policies to improve the living standards of member countries and maintain financial stability; encourage and coordinate the efforts of member countries to assist developing countries, help developing countries to improve economic conditions and promote economic development of non-member countries. Education is in their eyes the tool of economic development, they are concerned about the contribution of education to the economy. Recently, the key figure of DeSeCO project, has directly said that education and capacity development are “critical investment” for individuals and society. The focus of DeSeCo project on “key competence” is to promote economic growth through human resources <sup>[4]</sup>. From the perspective of its research process on key competence, OECD combines the opinions of representatives of different professional fields and disciplines to formulate the framework, and does not start from the field of education alone, which determines that competence is a cross-do-



main concept.

OECD defines competence as the ability to meet complex needs by using and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in specific situations<sup>[5]</sup>. This is mainly defined from the functional point of view, with the purpose of individual successful life and good social operation. With the development of knowledge economy, globalization and information technology, we are living in a complex and changeable world. The competence of OECD is defined in the background. Basil Bernstein defines the changing attributes of this era as “short-termism”, which refers to a process of continuous development, disappearance and substitution of skills, work and scope of work. Life experience does not depend on the expectation of future stability and the positioning of the future. Based on this situation, people need to develop the new ability of “trainability”. Basil Bernstein believes that trainability means that individuals need “certain competences”, which are very important for the survival of individuals themselves, economy and society. At the same time, it is also “empty”. Individuals need to rely on material consumption, that is, market products to establish temporary stability, direction and evaluation. This outward projection is consistent with functional attributes.

In this way, it seems that the change and development of the times and society require people to need competence, which is an external given standard. But this competency does not represent a passive adaptation, but also an active force for change. Society is human society, and people are people in society. The complex and changeable situation of the present era and society is created by human beings, and people have found the role of competent people in this era and social development, that is, to improve international competitiveness, economic, political and social problems. Competent people become competing resources for comparison among countries and promote people to define and choose competence. When we find out what is competence, as long as everyone can have competence, then the development effect on the whole society and the world can be imagined. Only in this way can the world we live in be truly complex and changeable, and we also adapt to this complex and changeable. While adapting to the development of society and times, we are also creating and changing the world. Competence is not only the requirement of the times and social development, but also a tool for people to actively change the world.

## 2.2 The Evolution of Competence in China

Cai Qingtian and others believe that national key competence refers to the “knowledge”, “ability” and “attitude” that individuals must learn through education in order to

develop into a sound individual, which can not be lacking in response to the needs of complex social life situations. Especially, it refers to the comprehensive state of “quality education” that individuals learn through school education curriculum design, which is referred to as “competence”<sup>[6]</sup>. At the same time, when selecting and defining competence, they put forward the following reasons: international competitiveness, local care, education in a broad sense (including character and moral education), basic ability and functionality to be a person, and teachable and learnable<sup>[7]</sup>. They translate competence into literacy, which may focus on “basic ability as a person” and “teachable and learnable”, corresponding to “prime” and “raise” respectively. In terms of whether competence can be taught, DeSeCo project believes that competence is continuously adjusted with the process of human social civilization, and competence is gradually acquired and improved from the day after tomorrow, rather than innate. Cai Qingtian et al. regarded competence as acquired from school education, and believed that key competence can contribute to the continuous inertia and integration of the development of subject courses in various learning fields, and can achieve the cultivation of competence through different fields/scientific learning in various educational stages, and take key competence as the main axis of Taiwan’s 12-year national basic education curriculum reform. Through the comparison between the two, it can be found that the formation of competence in DeSeCo project emphasizes the improvement in the whole acquired environment, rather than confined to school education. Taiwan regards competence as the result of school education, highlights the teachability of competence and misinterprets the formation of competence.

The word competence is originally associated with morality and values in Chinese. When choosing and defining competence, Cai Qingtian and others integrate character and moral education factors into it, which makes up for the defect of “competence” from a functional perspective and abandons morality and values<sup>[8]</sup>. OECD believes that personal quality and value are not competence, but the conditions for the development of human ability. That is to say, although such competence does not include personal quality and value, it has preset personal quality and value before a person has competence. So far, the word competence contains the connotation of quality and value, which makes many countries also regard moral quality as the component of competence. For example, the Singapore government puts forward four ideal educational achievements, namely: cultivating self-confident people, active learners, active contributors and enthusiastic nationals, and takes the core values of respect, integrity, love, resil-

ience, harmony and responsibility as the decisive factors of the competence framework. The “Curriculum Architecture” in “Learning to Learn-Curriculum Development Direction” in Hong Kong, China is composed of three interrelated parts: learning field, common ability, attitude and values<sup>[9]</sup>.

In the framework study of Chinese students’ development of key competence, we also learn from the research experience of OECD and adopt a combination of theoretical and empirical research to analyze the value orientation, national policies, traditional culture and curriculum standards of key competence in various countries. At the same time, experts and representatives in different fields are interviewed and seminars are held. In 2014, China promulgated the “opinions on deepening curriculum reform to implement the fundamental task of moral education”, putting “key competence” in deepening curriculum reform to implement the education goal of moral education<sup>[10]</sup>. In China, the cultivation of moral quality plays an important role both in traditional culture and in public awareness, which leads to the primacy of moral quality in policy analysis, traditional culture analysis and interviews. In China, key competence is defined as the necessary character and key ability that students should have to adapt to the needs of lifelong development and social development, including cultural foundation, independent development and social participation<sup>[11]</sup>. Here we can still see the shadow of competency, pointing to and adapting to the complex and changeable society. But at the second level, that is, humanistic heritage, scientific spirit, learning to learn, healthy life, responsibility, practice and innovation of these six aspects, the moral quality revealed is very strong, the functional attributes of competence are missing. The quality education concept of cultivating people with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physique and aesthetics has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. If we change another set of standards and treat competence from a functional perspective, it may be a huge impact on current education. Under the influence of political, cultural awareness and educational traditions, China’s quality has still been put into the melting pot of quality education and committed to cultivating people with all-round development, which has become a way to implement quality education.

From the perspective of competence development mentioned above, “literacy” and “competence” are still different. If we break away from the characteristics of “competence”, there will be some misconceptions about competence only from the Chinese meaning of literacy. Liu Xilang regards quality as the “alloy” of innate endowment and acquired education. Competence is the lower

concept of quality, which belongs to the part of acquired education, in order to highlight its teachable, learnable and measurable characteristics<sup>[12]</sup>. This is exactly different from the fact that the quality emphasized by the DeSeCo project is gradually improved, which indicates the process of human growth and is from the perspective of human self-development. The acquired cultivation means the shaping effect of external environment on human beings, and then the competence will become the result of external indoctrination. He regards quality as an “alloy” of innate endowment and acquired education, which may be more in line with the original meaning of competence

People can use imagination and creativity to construct a world, can let more people gather together through language harmonious survival, can consciously division of labor and cooperation. This is the uniqueness of human beings and the essence of human beings. Whether it is the OECD’s interactive use of tools, autonomous action and in social heterogeneous groups are emphasized in this human nature. Society is created by people. If society becomes a “occupation or position” and needs people to be competent, then only by grasping the essence of people, no matter how the society and the world change, we have mastered the fundamental force and can naturally adapt to this complex and changeable society. It is the use of these competence that promotes social changes, and they are also necessary to be competent for social changes. This does not mean that people have acquired competence from birth, at birth, people have the potential to become people or have the potential to become people with competence. People are people in society. They must gradually grow into a person and improve their competence in the interaction of social situations and the participation of social practice. How to become a person with competence in situational interaction and social practice participation, which may require a revolutionary way of learning, situational learning theory can give us some inspiration.

### 3. How Competence Forms

Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger pointed out that learning is an integral part of social practice, and “legitimate marginal participation” is the descriptor of individual involvement in social practice, which also becomes the descriptor of learning<sup>[13]</sup>. Legal marginal participation means that individuals invest more or less in and exist in the field of participation until they reach full participation and become one of the diverse and unique members of the community. The process of individual’s legitimate marginal participation is learning, and participation in practice is the interaction in various situations of practice. In this case, competence is also generated. In other words, com-

petence is generated in a wide range of daily activities and practice.

### 3.1 Participation in Situational Activities

The generation of competence or the growth of people is inseparable from the situation, the situation is not only refers to the specific circumstances of a person in a certain time and space, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger believes that the situational activities related to knowledge and learning characteristics; negotiation characteristics of meaning; the nature of learning activities to engage in learner relevance (attraction, dilemma-driven). The world is constituted in a social way, and people's participation in practical activities is also bound to be carried out in a social way. The objective form and system are linked with subjective understanding by means of interaction. In this process, the meaning of the world to people, the relationship between people and the world, and the relationship between people in the world are generated, and the changes of people and history are realized. This historical and human change is consistent with the concept of competence we believe. That is, the formation of competence is realized in this context of meaningful negotiation. As Basil Bernstein said, competence refers to the process of participating in and building the world, which is formed imperceptibly in informal interaction. When we get the mother tongue, it is not deliberately taught, but formed in the mother tongue environment. Even when children cannot speak, they can respond to what we say, which means that children can understand what we say. Dewey mentioned in the book "Democracy and Education": "If the pronunciation of the hat is not connected with the action of many people, it will be as meaningless as the snoring that is not clear. When her mother took the baby out, she put something on her head and said "hat"... Through the combination of other tasks in the event, the hat's voice quickly gets the same meaning for children as for mothers; the sound of "hat" becomes a symbol of their activities. Language is composed of sounds that can be understood each other. This fact alone is sufficient to show the connection between the meaning of language and common experience."<sup>[14]</sup> Chomsky believes that performance is the external language expression of children, and competence is the language rule system and production mechanism behind these language expressions<sup>[15]</sup>. Children get the meaning of language in situational activities and organize it in the brain with the participation of activities to understand the meaning of others' statements and make corresponding feedback. When children acquire language meaning and organize it, they acquire the rule system and production mechanism of language, and language com-

petence is gradually improving. When we can speak, language competence is manifested in the form of behavior. When teachers teach students grammar rules in schools, namely, what are subjects, predicates, objects, and how they are organized, students have already obtained such rules and are always reflected in daily expressions, but they have not systematically combed their external systems.

When we study English, we always focus on recite the meaning of words and grammar rules for mechanical learning, from situational activities. This kind of learning without situational activities is difficult to obtain language meaning and rule system. If we construct an English learning environment like learning mother tongue and participate in situational activities, language competence will play a role and gradually improve. We can build a virtual environment by watching videos, but this environment must be long-term and continuous. The most real English learning environment is to live directly in English-speaking countries. In this environment, we actively and continuously participate in English communication practice to maintain our work and life. Through continuous interaction in activities, the growth experience of English communication is constantly enriched, and the internal rules and significance of English are gradually obtained. Gradually, we become a "English speaker". It is a process from legal marginal participation to full participation when the unskilled use of English to the skilled use of English communication grows into an "English speaker". In this process, our language rules system is further expanded, language competence is further improved, so that we are competent for more activities. At the same time, our communication and collaboration competence is also generated in situational activities, which shows that a specific practice often leads to the formation of diverse competence. The occurrence of competence is integrated into the process of legal marginalization and full participation. It is the product of interaction in situational activities, which means that human change is holistic and cannot be carried out in isolation.

### 3.2 Developing Learning Courses

In situational activities, individuals have a holistic understanding and understanding of practical activities through legitimate marginal participation, and know what practical activities are and what to learn. In this case, a "learning curriculum" is developed in situational activities. Learning curriculum is composed of situational opportunities. That is, learning opportunities are more given by practical activities. This cannot be understood as the participation of practical activities is task-driven, but situ-

ational activities allow participants to build a learning relationship with other members of the community of practice, and truly participate in practical activities through interaction with other members of the community to promote human growth and the occurrence of competence. Those direct guidance-based teaching, adopting external requirements and regulations, has become the goal of participating in practice to achieve these requirements and regulations, which forms a kind of restricted participation, and cannot allow individuals to truly participate in practical activities, nor can they achieve the formation of competence. Using some fixed tasks and activities to train students, so as to achieve some requirements and standards, hoping to cultivate students “creativity, critical thinking, focus and other qualities”, just form a limited participation. Bruner once said: “It’s extremely difficult to deduce directly from performance, even if not impossible.”<sup>[16]</sup> To achieve accomplishment through training is similar to the proposition of functional theory. Different functions of the human body are trained through specific activities to achieve certain standards, hoping to cope with various environments and solve different problems. But this kind of mechanical rigid training, just solidified the relationship between certain functions and specific activities, but lost the ability to migrate. Therefore, taking competence as the teaching goal, it is impossible to achieve the occurrence of competence by clarifying the characteristics and evaluation criteria of competence and developing a set of general teaching models for competence training. Basil Bernstein believes that the time, space and discourse under the competence model cannot produce a clear structure and classification, and they cannot establish order and transfer order. The nature of control in the learning process will become a personalized form. It emphasizes learner-centered, and mainly evaluates the teaching discourse with implicit and fuzzy evaluation criteria, because the output under the competence model is difficult to evaluate objectively.

As Dewey said, “purpose as a foreseeable ending, activities have a direction. This prediction has three functions. First, it includes careful observation of specific situations, attention to what is the means to reach the end point, and finding obstacles to the road. Second, he proposed the appropriate sequence of means to facilitate economic choices and arrangements. Third, we can choose the way to choose.” Therefore, purpose is not a conventional and rigid requirement, and it often has a flexible guiding role in the process of achieving purpose. Accomplishment is generated in the process of real participation in practical activities. For the purpose of accomplishment realization and the guidance of purpose, it is necessary to think about how to let learners participate in real practi-

cal activities. Legal marginal participation is a means for learners to truly participate in practice. Before learning the core aspects of practice, learners should learn marginal, less intensive, less complex and less important tasks. As far as possible to let learners get rid of the central authority and the provisions of the individual restrictions, so that learning courses in practice, so that individuals can more interact with other members of the community of practice and meaning negotiation. Through this process, learners can truly participate in practical activities, and gradually become a member of the community of practice to achieve competence. Basil Bernstein argues that the teaching resources required by the competency model cannot be predefined textbooks and teaching procedures, but require autonomous construction. In the process of legitimate marginal participation and the development of learning courses can provide learners with a variety of structural resources and play an independent role in the construction of teaching resources. To help learners to provide a real practice situation, so that learners can continue to participate in the process of competence is what we need to pay attention to.

### 3.3 Identity Negotiation

“Activities, tasks, functions and understanding cannot exist in isolation; they are part of a broader relationship system, and they have their own significance in these relationships.” This means that each activity in social practice is related to a certain social relationship, which is more clearly related to identity. In the process from the legitimate marginal participation of activities to full participation, learners grow into a complete individual in the community of practice, accepted by other members and become one of them. In this process, learners spend more time and effort, take more responsibility, encounter more difficulties and adventure tasks, not only to obtain more knowledge and skills, but also means the dynamic change of identity. Identity represents a label and membership of the community of practice. We can give this identity meaning by doing what we need to do. That is, participating in practice. Identity is a display of experience and competence<sup>[17]</sup>, competency here may point to a community of practice, rather than a profession and position, because it is not only knowledge and skills but also represents the ability of learners to interact specifically with members of the community of practice, to view the world in a specific way through the impact of identity, and to explain and use the history of practice. Identity is always negotiated in practice and represents a change in competence. There is no doubt that we exist in different communities of practice, and become a joint of multiple identities. We need



to reconcile the competence of different identities, which indicates the growth of a person and the improvement of quality. When we become full members of the community of practice, we experience competence and are recognized to be competent, and even with the transformation of the community of practice, our identity and competence will continue to negotiate my improvement. The practice community does not mean that it is a closed circle. Different practice communities have connections in practice, so as to promote the practice. Practice itself is also the practice of connection, and the practice of participation in connection can also promote the improvement of competency. The reconciliation of different identities, the practice of participation connection and the degree of participation represent the negotiation changes of identity and competence. In the negotiation of identity, we can define who we are, rather than rely on others' discourse and self-imagination. This definition means that people grow into people, is the gradual improvement of competence. With identity negotiation, competency is not limited to a community of practice, but to different communities of practice, practice and the world. Participatory practice can not only construct identity, but also promote participation. Being a member of the community of practice is often more attractive than some external rewards and knowledge and skills, which we usually think of as "internal rewards". In the formation of competence, we should focus on learners' practical participation, guide the change of identity, pay attention to the significance and role of identity in the formation of competence, and provide learners with the support of identity negotiation. Meeting with different people in life is our normal life. This non-participation state can sometimes promote participation, and contribute to enhancing learners' experience and promoting identity change. This provides some enlightenment for us to help learners to participate in practice. Let learners interact with different things and people as much as possible.

#### 4. Conclusions

Competence has different definitions in different disciplines. We do not expect to give a unified definition of quality, but hope to grasp the connotation of quality competence and the essence of being human, and realize the occurrence of quality through legal marginal participation in situational activities. Although the formation of this competence is not so specific and clear, so that competence does not appear to take detailed plans and standards for training, but more emphasis on the nature of competence, fit the perfect characteristics of competence, provide inspiration for the formation of competence. When learners continue to develop into members of the com-

munity of practice in participating in practice, they have made contributions to the production and reproduction of the community of practice, maintaining the continuity and replacement of the community of practice, and at the same time, it also means that the production and reproduction of competence, and the power of the society to adapt and change can also exist forever.

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