

# Research on the Teacher Education System with Chinese Characteristics

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## ABSTRACT

Building a teacher education system with socialism with Chinese characteristics is an important task to build China's education modernization 2035. Since the reform and opening up, our country's political philosophy, economic system, education system, and industrial structure have undergone rapid changes, and national politics, economy, culture, and education have experienced unprecedented transformations. A strong country in education, science, and technology, with talented individuals, has become the foundation for our country to stand in the turbulent world. Teacher education has naturally become the core of reform in our country and even the world. The teacher education system with Chinese characteristics based on modern times, looking to the future, exploring a teacher education system that is more suitable for socialism with Chinese characteristics, providing realistic methods for updating the modern teaching team, and laying a solid foundation for building a modern socialist education power in an all-round way.

## KEYWORDS

Teacher education system; Chinese-style modernization; Teacher development

## 1 Introduction

In the increasingly competitive 21st century, with rapid advancements in science and technology, talent has become a key indicator of a nation's comprehensive strength. The cultivation of talent, in turn, relies on education, making high-quality education a practical goal pursued by most countries worldwide. Any progress in education depends on the role of teachers as intermediaries. Teachers are pivotal to educational development and serve as the bridge for knowledge transmission. Therefore, building a high-quality teaching workforce and promoting high-quality educational development have become focal points of reform. This paper examines the teacher education system with Chinese characteristics by analyzing its historical evolution, current challenges, and proposing recommendations for future development.

## 2 Historical Review of China's Teacher Education System

The enterprise of teacher education constitutes a monumental undertaking crucial to national development and national rejuvenation, encompassing the reform and advancement of the teaching profession. It also represents a perpetual endeavor that emerges and evolves alongside the progress of human society. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the teacher education system has undergone continuous transformation, largely mirroring the broader historical trajectory of development.

At the dawn of the People's Republic of China, the Party's primary task was to rehabilitate the devastated national economy. Since economic development relied on talented personnel, vigorously promoting education and cultivating talent became a consensus throughout the Party. After thoroughly assessing the prevailing economic conditions, the Party and the state decided to comprehensively learn from the Soviet educational system. Adopting the Soviet model of education helped China swiftly restructure its school institutions and effectively train teachers. However, after approximately three years of implementation, various shortcomings of the Soviet-style teacher education system began to emerge, including its closed nature, uniformity in talent cultivation models, and inflexibility in training methods. Consequently, China adjusted and refined the Soviet educational model, establishing a relatively independent and comprehensive normal education system on this basis, which laid a solid foundation for the future development of the teacher education system.

Reform and opening up have provided our country's socialist cause with prosperous, productive forces and enabled all undertakings in our country to flourish. However, the shortage of teacher resources has become an urgent issue that needs to be resolved. "Vigorously developing and strengthening teacher education, and building a teaching force that is both politically committed and professionally proficient, is a long-term strategy for developing the education sector and improving its quality." The 1978 "Opinions on Strengthening and Developing Teacher Education" issued by the Ministry of Education further clarified the three-tiered teacher education system consisting of undergraduate normal education, specialized normal education, and secondary normal education. It also progressively laid out specific requirements for the

operational regulations, teaching plans, and curriculum standards of various types and levels of teacher education institutions. Therefore, various primary and secondary schools began implementing reforms based on their actual circumstances, engaging in self-innovation and improving the teaching workforce. They focused on enhancing teaching materials and strengthening teacher development, while clarifying training requirements for primary and secondary school teachers. Simultaneously, a series of policies were successively introduced, further consolidating the "three-tier teacher education system."

China in 2012, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, marking a new historical direction for China's development. This significant political theory has endowed the Party's historical mission, theoretical framework, goals, and tasks with new contemporary significance, providing a temporal coordinate and fundamental basis for us to deeply understand the new stage and characteristics of China's current development and to scientifically formulate the Party's lines, principles, and policies. Accordingly, China's teacher education system has also entered a new era. Against the backdrop of globalization and digitalization, profound transformations have occurred in educational philosophies, teaching methods, instructional approaches, and educational content. Through long-term efforts, China has established the world's largest education system, with the overall level of its educational modernization now ranking among the upper-middle tier of nations globally. Building a modern socialist country in all respects hinges on education as its fundamental cornerstone. Therefore, cultivating a high-quality modern teacher education system is the key to realizing the modernization of education. These principles hold profound significance for comprehensively enhancing the quality and caliber of the teaching profession and accelerating the modernization of education.

### **3 The Practical Problems of the Teacher Education System with Chinese Characteristics**

Educational modernization is not only a key component and benchmark of national modernization, but also a crucial prerequisite and foundation for it. Teacher education, serving as a vital support for promoting educational equity and improving educational quality, constitutes a fundamental project for accelerating the realization of educational modernization. Building a high-quality modern teacher education system is both a prerequisite and an essential requirement for achieving the "Education Modernization 2035" goals. While significant achievements have been made in establishing a teacher education system with Chinese characteristics, its implementation process has been influenced by various factors.

#### **3.1 The Quality of Teachers is Uneven**

Education is an important way to improve people's comprehensive quality and promote their all-round development. It is an important cornerstone of national rejuvenation and social progress. It is a cause of decisive significance to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Teachers are one of the oldest professions in human history, and one of the greatest and most sacred professions. People often say: 'Teachers are the most noble profession under the sun. Since ancient times, the Chinese nation has had a fine tradition of respecting teachers, respecting education, and advocating wisdom and learning. It is the so-called 'country will rise, and teachers will be valued and Fu will be valued; your teacher and heavy Fu, the law of existence.' In ancient times, Confucius was praised as "the most holy teacher" and was known as "the master of all ages. In the history of more than 5000 years of civilization development of the Chinese nation, heroes and masters are inseparable from the hard work of generations of teachers. However, in recent years, it is not uncommon for teachers to be corrupt. Whether in developed or western regions, whether in primary and secondary schools or higher education, teachers will use their functions to favoritism. Instances of kindergarten teachers exploiting children's immature physical and mental development to harm them; university faculty leveraging their positions and resources to threaten students, engaging in negligent supervision, inappropriate language, perfunctory teaching, and even academic misconduct; as well as primary and secondary school teachers arbitrarily resorting to corporal punishment in defiance of school regulations, insulting students' dignity, and even launching physical assaults—all of which inflict both physical injury and psychological trauma(Li Shiping, et al, 2006). The root cause of these frequently occurring issues lies in the inadequate cultivation of professional ethics and integrity among teachers. Such teachers truly place students at the heart of their practice, rather than exploiting students' psychological immaturity, the unequal ethical relationship between teachers and students, or societal status disparities to harm them—actions that ultimately undermine the development of a high-quality teaching workforce.

#### **3.2 The Quality of Teacher Education Needs to be Improved**

The professional competence of the teaching workforce directly impacts the quality of teacher education. To build a professional teaching corps, educators must not only meet defined academic qualifications but also fulfill essential requirements in pedagogical knowledge, educational skills, and professional ethics. However, numerous factors impede the development of a professional teaching workforce. For instance, the teacher qualification certificate system, designed to enhance teachers' professional standards, serves as a prerequisite for entering the profession. Yet, due to relatively low certification standards, obtaining a teaching certificate has become comparatively easy. Normal university students can

typically acquire certification simply by completing prescribed courses and registering for the examination at the appropriate time, making the qualification process less rigorous. Under these circumstances, candidates often rely on just a few months of cramming rather than undergoing systematic training in educational theory and teaching methodologies. Without proper instructional practice or assessment of personal character and integrity, the overall quality of the teaching force gradually declines. Moreover, curriculum quality significantly impacts teachers' professionalism. A well-structured lesson requires not only preparation in teaching methods, instructional materials, and student needs but also demands that educators integrate social realities and interdisciplinary content to creatively synthesize and impart knowledge (Cheng Jianping, 2023). However, those without systematic training in educational theory and child development often lack the necessary skills to effectively prepare and deliver lessons, monitor student progress, or enhance their instructional capabilities through innovative teaching practices. This situation ultimately undermines the professionalization of the teaching workforce and compromises the overall quality of teacher education.

### **3.3 The Distribution of Teacher Resources is Uneven**

China is a large country with a vast territory. The coastal areas are economically developed, and the western regions are economically weak. Therefore, many normal universities are concentrated in the central and coastal areas. These areas have established more normal colleges, while the western region, on the contrary, shows a situation of more east and less west. For example, there is only one Qinghai Normal University in Qinghai, and there is no normal university in Tibet; however, there are four normal universities in Zhejiang. Although there are only two Beijing Normal University and Capital Normal University in Beijing, they are all high-level normal universities. In addition, among the six normal universities directly under the Ministry of Education, only Shaanxi Normal University is in the northwest region, Southwest University is in the southwest region, and the other four are distributed in the central, northern, and eastern regions. The normal students in normal universities are the reserve army of local teachers, and they are mostly local teachers after graduation. In this way, the teachers in the western region will become weak, leading to a resource imbalance (Qu L, 2024). Therefore, many teachers are reluctant to go to the western region for development. This leads to the imbalance of the regional structure of teacher education. In addition, there is also a problem of uneven distribution of the number of teachers' majors. For example, the proportion of students enrolled in Chinese, English, and other subjects is relatively large, but there are not so many posts when they graduate to find work, especially in English subjects. The phenomenon of unemployment after graduation will occur, while some science and engineering subjects, such as chemistry and physics, will not be able to recruit people, and some sub-subjects will have fewer employment opportunities.

## **4 Suggestions on the Development of the Teacher Education System with Chinese Characteristics**

Educational modernization serves as a crucial pillar for national modernization, and a high-quality, professional, and innovative teaching workforce is key to accelerating this process. Teachers have always played an indispensable and supportive role in educational transformation, and in the new journey of building a strong educational nation, they undoubtedly bear critical missions and tasks. Therefore, constructing and developing a teacher education system with Chinese characteristics is an important means to advance educational modernization (Zhao Ying, 2021). However, the supportive role of the teacher education system remains insufficient, and its development requires collective efforts.

### **4.1 Strengthening the Development of Teacher Ethics and Professional Conduct**

Centenary plan, education-based. Teachers are the foundation of education and the source of education. It undertakes the important task of making every child grow up healthy and providing a satisfactory education for the people. The prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation, and the development of education require us to cultivate a team of high-quality professional teachers with noble ethics, exquisite business, reasonable structure, and vitality, and a large number of good teachers need to emerge. To become a good teacher, we must have good ethics. The provisions of teachers' professional ethics in teachers' professional standards around the world are embodied in the unity of three aspects. First of all, there should be professional norms, good teachers' concepts, students as developing people, treating every student with an equal attitude, not using their power to squeeze and scold students, and teaching honestly. Secondly, it is necessary to have professional knowledge, including subject knowledge and education and teaching knowledge, and finally have professional ability, teaching ability, management class ability, and self-reflection and improvement ability (Li Z, 2024).

### **4.2 Cultivating Innovative Teachers**

To achieve educational innovation, it is essential to cultivate a cohort of innovative educators. Teachers must develop a creative mindset, proactively enhance their innovative thinking and capabilities, and integrate these into curriculum instruction. Educators should expand their knowledge base, keep pace with evolving educational theories, and engage in original critical reflection. They need not only mastery of their own discipline but also familiarity with related and interdisciplinary fields, merging specialized knowledge with cross-disciplinary perspectives to broaden their intellectual

horizons(Wang Linfa and Zeng Yi,2022). This approach helps students construct interdisciplinary knowledge frameworks, transforming isolated facts into interconnected networks that enhance both innovative capacity and conceptual understanding.

Simultaneously, teachers should regularly participate in academic exchanges to assimilate advanced educational philosophies and methodologies from distinguished and experienced colleagues, thereby refining their own pedagogical approaches. By delving into the spirit of educational excellence, they can elevate their professional ethos. Thus, integrating standardized competencies with innovative practice constitutes an indispensable component in building a high-quality teacher education system.

### 4.3 Centering on Normal Colleges and Universities, Balance the Distribution of Educational Resources

Teacher education is a specialized field dedicated to cultivating future educators. Although its core mission is to prepare prospective teachers, it is noteworthy that a significant portion of faculty members in higher education institutions are not trained in normal universities or teacher colleges. Moreover, in recent years, many comprehensive universities—particularly those designated as "Double First-Class" institutions—have established teacher education programs to train teaching professionals. Since 2023, the state has supported leading universities, particularly those designated as "Double First-Class" institutions, in selecting graduate students with outstanding academic records and a passion for teaching under the "National Outstanding Teacher Program" . This initiative aims to supply primary and secondary schools with high-quality educators(Meng Y , 2025). Additionally, efforts have been made to establish collaborations between "Double First-Class" universities and teacher training colleges. Where feasible, teacher training institutions and comprehensive universities are encouraged to jointly develop specialized courses, enhancing teacher candidates' disciplinary expertise and modern scientific knowledge. Regular teaching skill competitions for teacher candidates are also organized to further strengthen their professional competencies. We will build a cooperative relationship between universities and primary and secondary schools, and teach in designated primary and secondary schools in accordance with the ' National Excellence Plan ' agreement. In addition, we should strengthen the training of directional normal students, improve the treatment of directional normal students, transport talents to the west by orienting the western region, improve the education level of the western region, and encourage normal students to build their hometowns(Gao C, 2025). It can also improve educational facilities, such as uploading high-quality teachers ' classrooms through the Internet platform, to achieve cloud transmission of high-quality classrooms, help areas with poor educational resources to absorb high-quality educational concepts and courses, and provide a steady stream of high-quality educational support for underdeveloped areas.

## 5 Conclusion

To rejuvenate the country, we must first strengthen the teacher. Teachers bear the mission of spreading knowledge, spreading ideas, and transmitting truth. They shoulder the important task of shaping the soul and shaping the life of the times. They are the first resource for educational development and an important cornerstone for national prosperity, national rejuvenation, and people's happiness.

### About the Author

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