

# Research on the Paths and Mechanisms for Enhancing the Teaching Competence of Young University Teachers in the New Era

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**Abstract:** The high-quality development of higher education in the new era places higher demands on the teaching ability of young teachers in colleges and universities. Young teachers, as the backbone of the teaching and research teams in colleges and universities, are directly related to the quality of talent cultivation and the long-term development of higher education. By analyzing the core connotations and current predicaments of the teaching ability of young teachers in colleges and universities in the new era, this paper explores effective ways to enhance the teaching ability of young teachers from four dimensions: training system, practice platform, evaluation mechanism, and guarantee measures, and builds a long-term improvement mechanism that is all-round and multi-level. It provides theoretical references and practical lessons for universities to strengthen the construction of young teachers' teams and promote the improvement of teaching quality in higher education.

**Keywords:** Young college teachers; Teaching ability; Improvement paths; Long-term mechanism

**Online publication:** December 20, 2025

## 1. Introduction

As higher education enters a stage of high-quality development, the core position of talent cultivation becomes increasingly prominent, and teachers, as the key subjects of talent cultivation, have a direct effect on the quality of education and teaching and the effect of talent cultivation. Young college teachers, as the new force and future backbone of the teaching staff, carry an important mission of passing on knowledge, cultivating talents and innovating academic knowledge. In the context of the new era, higher education teaching reform is deepening, and information technology is deeply integrated with education and teaching, which puts forward higher requirements for young teachers' teaching concepts, teaching methods, teaching skills, etc. Li Qiongfeng (2019) pointed out that the improvement of teaching ability of college teachers faces multiple predicaments, such as the disconnection of training content and the lack of personalized guidance, which have become key bottlenecks restricting the improvement of higher education quality<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, it is of great theoretical significance and practical value to systematically study the paths and mechanisms for improving the teaching ability of young college teachers in the new era.

## **2. The core connotation of the teaching ability of young teachers in colleges and universities in the new era**

### **2.1. Advanced teaching concepts**

Young teachers in colleges and universities in the new era should establish student-centered teaching concepts, respect students' dominant position, and pay attention to students' individualized development and all-round growth. At the same time, they should keep up with the trend of higher education reform and development, establish advanced concepts such as quality-oriented education, innovative education and lifelong learning, and incorporate value guidance throughout the teaching process to achieve the fundamental goal of fostering virtue and nurturing talent.

### **2.2. Solid basic teaching skills**

Basic teaching skills are the foundation for young teachers to carry out teaching work, including the ability to design teaching, the ability to teach in the classroom, the ability to organize and manage teaching, the ability to design blackboard writing, the ability to apply modern educational technology, etc. The scientific nature of instructional design and the effectiveness of classroom interaction are the core indicators for measuring basic teaching skills. Solid basic teaching skills can ensure the smooth progress of teaching activities and enhance the effectiveness of classroom teaching.

### **2.3. Flexible teaching methods and means**

Education and teaching in the new era put forward higher requirements for the innovation of teaching methods. Young teachers should be proficient in a variety of teaching methods, such as case-based teaching, project-based teaching, flipped classroom, blended teaching, etc., and be able to apply them flexibly in combination with the characteristics of the curriculum and the actual situation of the students. Tian et al. (2023) pointed out that in the context of the digital transformation of education, teachers' digital teaching ability has become a core teaching skill <sup>[2]</sup>. Young teachers need to be proficient in using modern educational tools such as online teaching platforms and virtual simulation technology to enrich teaching methods and enhance the interest and interactivity of teaching

### **2.4. Strong practical teaching ability**

Practical teaching is an important way to cultivate students' practical ability and innovative spirit. Young college teachers should have strong practical teaching abilities, including experimental teaching, internship guidance, social practice organization, etc., and be able to organically combine theoretical knowledge with practical application. Xiong Sipeng and He Qizong (2016) found that the lack of industry practice experience is the main reason for the weak practical teaching ability of young teachers <sup>[3]</sup>. Most young teachers enter universities directly after graduation and have an insufficient understanding of industry development trends and job requirements.

### **2.5. Good teaching, research and reflection abilities**

Teaching research and reflection are key to a teacher's professional growth. Effective teaching development programs should focus on both the training of teaching skills and the cultivation of teaching research capabilities. The coordinated development of both is the inevitable path for young teachers to move from novices to experts. But currently, 50% of young teachers report weak teaching research capabilities, publish less than half as many teaching-related papers as teachers of the same age, and their teaching reflections are mostly formalistic and fail to effectively promote the improvement of teaching abilities.

### **3. The current situation and predicament of the teaching ability of young teachers in colleges and universities in the new era**

#### **3.1. There is a gap between teaching concepts and the demands of this era**

Some young teachers, deeply influenced by the traditional teaching model, still adhere to the teacher-centered teaching philosophy, emphasizing the imparting of knowledge and ignoring the students' dominant position and individualized needs. Ju Peng (2024) pointed out that in the assessment of the implementation effect of "curriculum-based ideological and political education", 78% of the courses led by young teachers had the phenomenon of "labeling", failing to achieve the organic integration of value guidance and knowledge imparting, reflecting their insufficient understanding of the educational concepts of the new era <sup>[4]</sup>.

#### **3.2. The basic teaching skills need to be strengthened**

Most young teachers in colleges and universities have a high level of education, but lack systematic training in teaching skills. A survey of 20 universities across the country shows that 72% of young teachers lack systematic teaching theory training and rely only on basic training at the teacher education stage. A systematic review by Gonzalez-Calvo et al. (2024) also found that there are problems, such as fragmented content and insufficient practical guidance in the induction of new teachers in most global universities, which is highly consistent with the current situation of universities in China <sup>[5]</sup>. Some young teachers lack scientificity and rationality in instructional design, and only 43% of young teachers can independently complete curriculum design that conforms to the OBE concept. There are problems such as poor language expression and inaccurate grasp of key and difficult points in classroom teaching, which have restricted the improvement of teaching quality.

#### **3.3. Weak practical teaching ability**

Most young teachers lack relevant industry experience, which leads to insufficient practical teaching ability. In experimental teaching, some teachers are not proficient in the experimental operation procedures and have difficulty effectively guiding students to conduct experiments. In internship guidance, there is an inability to provide targeted career guidance for students.

#### **3.4. Insufficient awareness of teaching research and reflection**

The tendency of some young teachers to focus more on research than teaching is quite obvious. They mainly concentrate on applying for research projects and publishing papers, and pay insufficient attention to teaching and research. The core of the teaching academic movement is to promote the equal importance of teaching and research, but under the current evaluation orientation of colleges and universities, young teachers lack the motivation and ability to actively carry out teaching and research.

#### **3.5. The evaluation and incentive mechanisms are not well-developed**

At present, the teacher evaluation system in some universities still centers on research achievements and gives less weight to teaching work, resulting in young teachers lacking the motivation to improve their teaching ability. According to a 2023 survey at a university, 78% of young teachers listed "lack of time to participate in training" as the biggest obstacle, while the proportion of new teaching development projects to teachers' total working time at the university was only 3.2%, reflecting the imbalance between resource input and evaluation orientation.

## **4. The path to improving the teaching competence of young teachers in higher education institutions in the new era**

### **4.1. Build a systematic training system**

#### **4.1.1. Induction training**

For newly recruited young teachers, conduct concentrated training on teaching concepts, basic teaching skills, and teaching rules and regulations. The Ministry of Education's 2011 document on higher education teaching reform clearly requires that colleges and universities should establish teacher development centers to provide systematic training for new teachers

#### **4.1.2. On-the-job training**

Establish a regular on-the-job training mechanism and conduct specialized training based on the teaching needs and career development plans of young teachers. The training model based on microteaching and research has been proven to be effective. By combining theoretical teaching, such as constructivism and discovery learning, with classroom design practice, it can effectively enhance the pertinence of training. Technology-enhanced professional development programs can effectively enhance teachers' digital teaching capabilities. It is recommended to adopt a blended training model of "online self-study + offline workshop".

#### **4.1.3. Mentorship**

Implement the "dual mentorship" teaching practice, assigning each young teacher a teaching master and an industry expert as mentors. Mentors are responsible for guiding young teachers in teaching design, classroom teaching, teaching research, etc. They help young teachers identify problems and make timely improvements through microteaching, teaching observation, etc. This model not only carries forward the fine teaching tradition but also makes up for the lack of professional experience of young teachers.

### **4.2. Build a diversified platform for practice**

#### **4.2.1. Teaching practice platform**

Provide young teachers with ample teaching practice opportunities, encourage them to undertake teaching tasks of various courses, and participate in projects such as quality course construction and online open course construction.

#### **4.2.2. Teaching and research exchange platform**

Establish a teaching and research exchange mechanism for young teachers, and regularly organize activities such as teaching observation, teaching competitions, and teaching and research salons.

#### **4.2.3. Industry practice platform**

Strengthen cooperation between universities and enterprises and industries, and establish industry practice bases for young teachers. Encourage young teachers to work on the front lines of enterprises and industries, participate in project research and development, and accumulate industry practice experience. At the same time, industry experts are invited to participate in the teaching work of colleges and universities to provide practical teaching guidance for young teachers and promote the close integration of teaching and production practice.

### **4.3. Improve the scientific evaluation mechanism**

#### **4.3.1. Optimize the teaching evaluation index system**

Establish an evaluation index system centered on teaching quality and increase the weight of teaching work in teacher evaluation. It is suggested that the weight of indicators related to teaching ability be no less than 10%, and the evaluation indicators should cover multiple aspects, such as teaching attitude, teaching content, teaching methods, and student

satisfaction, emphasizing the combination of process evaluation and result evaluation. Use a variety of evaluation subjects, including student evaluation, peer evaluation, supervisor evaluation, self-assessment, etc., to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the evaluation results.

#### **4.3.2. Strengthen the application of teaching performance**

Link teaching evaluation results directly to teachers' professional title promotion, job appointment, performance assessment, rewards and incentives, etc. In the title evaluation, focus on the teaching ability and teaching performance of young teachers, such as requiring them to publish at least two papers in core teaching journals. Establish a teaching achievement reward system to recognize and reward young teachers who have made outstanding achievements in teaching reform, curriculum construction, etc., to stimulate their enthusiasm for improving teaching ability.

## **5. Construction of a long-term mechanism for improving the teaching ability of young teachers in colleges and universities in the new era**

### **5.1. Motivation mechanism**

#### **5.1.1. Intrinsic motivation**

By strengthening education on professional ethics and conduct, guide young teachers to establish correct educational ideals and professional beliefs. The stimulation of intrinsic motivation needs to be combined with teachers' personal career planning to help them recognize the long-term value of improving teaching ability for career development. Help them develop personalized career development plans, clarify the goals and directions for improving teaching ability, and move from external administrative regulations to internal initiative and self-awareness.

#### **5.1.2. External driving force**

Improve the teaching evaluation and incentive mechanism to create a favorable atmosphere of "valuing and promoting teaching". By publicizing the teaching deeds and experiences of outstanding young teachers, they play the exemplary and leading role of role models. Xiao Wang, a young teacher at a normal university, raised his student evaluation score from a low level to 4.8 out of 5 by participating in the teaching development center workshop and using the flipped classroom model. This case fully demonstrates the effectiveness of systematic training and can serve as a typical example to inspire more young teachers.

### **5.2. Operating mechanism**

#### **5.2.1. Coordination mechanism**

Establish a three-level coordinated mechanism involving schools, colleges, and teaching and research sections, and clarify the responsibilities and divisions of labor of each level of the departments. The school level is responsible for formulating the overall plan and policy measures and coordinating various resources. At the college level, specific implementation plans are formulated based on the characteristics of disciplines and specialties. Teaching and research sections are responsible for organizing and conducting daily teaching and research activities and implementing various training tasks.

#### **5.2.2. Feedback and adjustment mechanism**

Establish a feedback and adjustment mechanism for the improvement of teaching ability of young teachers, and understand the problems and needs of young teachers on time through questionnaires, symposiums, teaching supervision, etc. Based on the feedback information, make dynamic adjustments and optimizations to the training system, practice platform, etc., to avoid the disconnection between the training content and the actual needs.

### 5.3. Safeguards mechanism

#### 5.3.1. Organizational guarantee

Establish a leading group for the improvement of teaching ability of young teachers, with the deputy director in charge of the school as the group leader, and members including the heads of relevant departments such as the Academic Affairs Office, the personnel office, and the teacher development center, as well as the leaders in charge of teaching in each college. The leading group is responsible for coordinating and promoting the work of enhancing the teaching ability of young teachers and resolving difficulties and problems encountered in the work.

#### 5.3.2. Institutional guarantee

Improve the relevant regulations and systems for enhancing the teaching capabilities of young teachers, including training systems, mentorship systems, teaching evaluation systems, incentive systems, etc., to form a standardized and institutionalized management system. Ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with established rules and regulations, and that the work to enhance the teaching ability of young teachers is carried out in an orderly manner.

### Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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