

# Enhancing Teacher Professionalism Through High-End Collective Lesson Presentations: A Discipline-Based Model for Educational Innovation

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**Abstract:** High-end collective lesson presentation refers specifically to a form of group lesson demonstration and discussion in which high-level professionals or academic teams at the professorial level participate in listening, evaluating, and guiding the process. Compared with virtual communication on the internet, face-to-face exchanges between experts and ordinary teachers offer a vivid sense of presence, specialization, and scholarly inquiry, making them particularly valuable. This format provides teachers with a strong real-world impact combining subject theory and teaching practice. It is characterized by its high academic content, forward-looking disciplinary perspective, and rich, concrete content. Participating teachers experience the seamless integration of speaking, listening, and evaluating, presenting a multidimensional and comprehensive professional engagement that integrates observation, reflection, memory, and coordination. This process helps teachers deeply understand the curriculum standards, stay current with disciplinary developments, adopt effective teaching methods, refine instructional design, elevate their intellectual outlook, and strengthen critical thinking skills. High-end collective lesson presentations serve as a specialized and innovative platform with a strong on-site presence. They support the formation of new reform models, accelerate the development of regionally distinctive disciplinary cultures, and effectively enhance the professional development of teachers.

**Keywords:** High-End Collective Lesson Presentation; English Subject; Teacher Professional Competence; New Curriculum;

## Core Literacy

### 1. Introduction

The professional development of teachers is a continuous and dynamic learning process, wherein their internal professional structures are constantly updated, evolving, and enriched.<sup>[1]</sup> This development is characterized by its procedural, continuous, and systematic nature. The National Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020) explicitly states that schools should "develop distinctive features, cultivate renowned teachers, and nurture outstanding talents."<sup>[2]</sup> However, the current state of teacher professional development in China remains far from ideal. Repetitive and uninnovative training activities often lead to teacher burnout. While many teachers express a strong desire to enhance their professional competence, common issues persist in practice—such as weak research awareness, insufficient collaboration, and a lack of theoretical guidance in classroom teaching. Clearly, effective leadership, deep communication, practical engagement, and multidimensional reflection are urgently needed to support teacher professional growth. From 2018 till now, a new round of high-end collective lesson presentations was conducted as part of the Beijing Secondary School English Teaching Capacity Enhancement Project at the School of Foreign Languages and Literature, BJ Normal University. The expert panel consisted of five members: the authoritative Professor Wang, renowned scholars Professors Luo, Qian, and Sun, and a well-known researcher from the Beijing Municipal Education Commission. A total of 22 participating teachers were from schools such as Miyun No. 2 High School, Daxing No. 1 High School, Bayi School, Beijing No. 10

High School, Fengtai No. 8 High School, Lize Middle School, Fengtai No. 2 High School, Yuanyang Branch of Shijingshan School, BNU Liangxiang Affiliated School, Changle No. 1 High School, Beijing No. 12 High School, and Changping No. 2 High School. During the activity, teachers introduced their teaching contexts and student profiles, designed lessons based on the project's "3×3 Framework," explained their understanding and application of core competency goals, and conducted self-evaluations on anticipated highlights, blackboard designs, and presentation slides.

Since its introduction in 1987, lesson presentation has been recognized as "a new format for large-scale improvement of teacher quality" and has attracted significant academic attention. <sup>[3]</sup> High-end collective lesson presentation specifically refers to group lesson discussions involving subject-matter experts or scholars with high disciplinary authority. While it shares common elements with general lesson presentations—such as articulating what to teach, how to teach, why it is taught that way, and how to guide students—it differs significantly in form and function. Ordinary lesson presentations are typically declarative and resemble lectures on instructional planning. In contrast, high-end collective lesson presentations integrate both evaluative and research-oriented elements, aiming to improve lesson preparation quality through observation, expert feedback, and peer support. Evaluative presentations assess teaching competence, while research-oriented presentations focus either on teaching methodology or content. <sup>[4]</sup> Despite its dual nature, this form of high-end professional discourse remains underexplored in current academic literature.

## 2. Immediate Impact of Teachers' Participation in High-End Collective Lesson Presentations

While participating teachers were generally familiar with the academic terminology of the Curriculum Standards, including the four dimensions of core competencies in English—linguistic competence, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability—and the six key curricular elements—thematic context, discourse types, linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, language skills, and learning strategies (Ministry of Education, 2018), their

understanding often remained superficial. When asked to elaborate on these concepts through their own teaching designs, many realized their grasp was partial or fragmented. For instance, issues arose when teachers were tasked with articulating the global meaning of a text's theme.

### 2.1 Deepening Understanding of the Curriculum Standards and Keeping Pace with Disciplinary Developments

In one example, Teacher A identified the text's theme as the qualities required of a journalist, based on the dialogue between Zhou Yang and Hu Xin. Teacher B interpreted it as the standard process for writing a good news article. The expert panel commented that these interpretations conflated three potential themes—how to be a good journalist, how to write a good article, and what qualities journalists should possess—without fully addressing any of them, thus revealing a disconnect between the theme and the actual text.

Experts clarified that setting a goal like "students will be able to write a quality news article" was impractical. The text mainly depicted the author's memorable first job experience, not the essential traits of a good journalist. Therefore, the first step in instructional design should be to create a relatable context, prompting students to discuss their own imagined first job experiences.

Through expert feedback and face-to-face engagement, teachers gained more nuanced insights into theme identification, which in turn stimulated a deeper interest in reading the Curriculum Standards, encouraged focused reflection on core competencies, and supported alignment with contemporary disciplinary directions.

### 2.2 Adopting Effective Methods and Improving Instructional Design

During the collective lesson presentations, teachers showcased various popular activity formats such as role-playing, mind mapping, reading circles, jigsaw activities, and in-class group assessments. These served as valuable references for other participants, but the expert panel's critiques helped teachers distinguish between meaningful pedagogical innovation and surface-level activity.

For example, Teacher B designed a sequence where students first identified job titles from a PowerPoint slide, performed role-reads, constructed a career classification map via brainstorming, and then wrote about their own career plans. Experts pointed out that unless clearly tied to the thematic goal, such activities risked becoming “activities for activity’s sake.” Role-reading, in this case, lacked depth and failed to engage students meaningfully. Additionally, while suitable for younger students, the visuals and tasks appeared degrading for high school learners and were only marginally related to the actual theme of becoming a good journalist.

The panel emphasized the integration of objectives, content, and emotional resonance in lesson design. Activities must be rooted in discourse, theme, and content, and should foster connections between students’ emotional experiences and learning. When using multimedia, educators must consider implementation depth, breadth, and coherence—ensuring that the power and the point of PowerPoint are well-aligned.

### 2.3 Elevating Intellectual Vision and Enhancing Critical Thinking

The Curriculum Standards introduced an unprecedented emphasis on thinking quality, particularly innovative and critical thinking. Participation in high-end collective lesson presentations made teachers more acutely aware of their cognitive limitations, particularly in how they previously accepted textbooks uncritically.

Teacher A reflected: “I rarely questioned the authority of textbooks. This experience reshaped my view and made me recognize the depth of the conceptual framework underpinning English instruction. It greatly helped me approach critical evaluation in class.”

Teacher B wrote: “This completely overturned my previous understanding of the textbook. I realized how critically underdeveloped my thinking was. My lesson design did not align with the principles of the new curriculum. The experts’ feedback pushed me to reconsider my pedagogical foundations.”

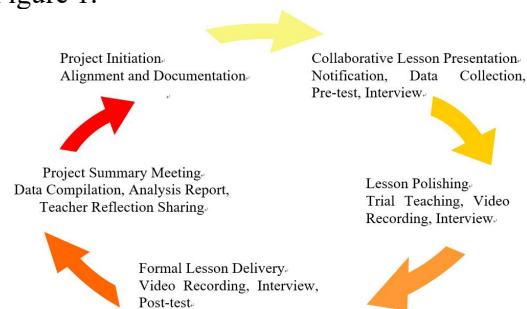
Reflective practice involves transcending past beliefs and behaviors, envisioning future growth, and pursuing professional self-surpassing. [5] Pedagogical design only

enters the “conscious stage” after a cognitive transformation. The development from spontaneous to intentional thought is key to moving from lower to higher levels of instructional practice. Thus, high-end lesson presentations—guided by expert insight—can profoundly reshape teachers’ thinking and pedagogical frameworks, providing a rare opportunity for conceptual renewal.

These activities foster teachers’ understanding of core competencies in greater depth, including the formation of textual concepts, which is foundational to reading literacy. [6] By critically interpreting texts through the lens of competence-based teaching, teachers are better prepared to design student-centered, contextually relevant lessons.

### 3. Characteristics of High-Level Collaborative Lesson Presentations

The high-level collaborative lesson presentation held at ×× Normal University serves as the initial stage of the Subject Teaching Capacity Enhancement Program (see Figure 1). As a prologue or prerequisite to new curriculum practices, these presentations are not meant to focus solely on isolated lesson content. Rather, their primary objective is to prepare for high-quality collaborative lesson planning, enabling teachers to deeply understand and embody the core competencies of English as a subject, thereby laying a solid foundation for subsequent classroom implementation. Guided by expert mentorship and supported by theoretical frameworks, this activity integrates theory, inquiry, reflection, and development, focusing on teachers, textbooks, and pedagogy within real-world instructional contexts to meaningfully enhance professional competence. As showing through Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Basic Workflow of the Subject Teaching Capacity Enhancement Project**  
According to Figure 1., It can be seen that throughout the five key stages—collaborative

lesson presentation, trial teaching, lesson refinement, formal instruction, and summary report—participating teachers are expected to complete a full cycle of professional practice. The initial stage of collaborative lesson presentation is especially crucial, serving as both a foundation and a safeguard for the quality of subsequent phases.

In this phase, frontline teachers reveal their evolving educational philosophies and highlight gaps between their understanding of core competencies and practical implementation. Simultaneously, expert panels exhibit sharp insight and critical thinking evaluation through collaborative coaching and cross-evaluation strategies.

### 3.1 High Academic Value

During these presentations, teachers are expected to articulate their understanding of instructional content, objectives, key difficulties, methodology, and teaching procedures, all in accordance with designated curriculum standards and pedagogical theories.

<sup>[7]</sup> High-level collaborative lesson presentations are regarded as authoritative and innovative forms of professional development, widely respected within the field for their standardization and academic rigor. The components generally include: analysis of teaching materials, understanding of students, instructional and learning methods, procedural flow, blackboard design, and lesson highlights. <sup>[8]</sup> The General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards, hereafter referred to as the Standards, put forward the concept of disciplinary core competencies, advocating for an activity-based learning approach and aiming to enhance students' quality of thinking. These goals necessitate both a shift in teachers' professional mindsets and an upgrade in their instructional capabilities. Collaborative presentations involving contributors to the Standards themselves ensure that these aims are powerfully enacted.

### 3.2 Strong Foresight in Subject Understanding

High-level collaborative presentations respond to the pulse of contemporary education reform, often preceding the official implementation of accompanying textbooks. This forward-looking practice ensures alignment with the objectives of the Standards. The

student-centered framework of "understanding, practice, innovation"—also referred to as the 3×3 Framework—is not a static chart but a dynamic and multidimensional process. <sup>[9]</sup> Through discussion and expert feedback, teachers develop a substantive understanding of abstract educational concepts, which deepens their reflection and enhances the relevance of their instructional strategies. This process challenges existing assumptions, prompting teachers to consider disciplinary core competencies at the outset of each lesson and to remain attuned to current subject trends, thus encouraging them to question and realign their own capacities and teaching approaches.

### 3.3 Rich and Specific Content

Teachers participating in the presentations come from diverse schools and grade levels, resulting in a wide range of covered content, varying text genres, and distinctive instructional designs. The integration of educational technologies further enriches these presentations. Whether exploring the practical application of the activity-based learning approach, the articulation of thematic meaning, text interpretation methods, or assessment strategies, the scope is comprehensive and the content concrete. <sup>[10]</sup> Every presentation is grounded in actual teaching practice, offering participants meaningful opportunities for selective adoption and adaptation. When multiple teachers present alternative designs for the same lesson (i.e., varied interpretations of the same topic), the expert team conducts comparative analysis to illuminate different dimensions of the Standards. <sup>[11]</sup> This in turn deepens the understanding of core competencies and fosters dynamic dialogue among educators, encouraging mutual learning and advancing both pedagogical awareness and instructional competence.

## 4. Long-Term Impacts of High-End Collaborative Lesson Presentation

High-end collaborative lesson presentation yields three major long-term effects that significantly influence educational reform and teacher professional development.

### 4.1 A Specialized and Creative Platform Fosters New Reform Models

The organizational structure of high-end collaborative lesson presentations can be

summarized into five coordinate systems: the presenting teacher group, the expert panel, the facilitator, the supporting and research service team, and the audience observers. Notably, the face-to-face arrangement between the expert panel and the presenting teachers highlights the redefinition of relationships among schools, experts, and frontline teachers. As Teacher D remarked, "Through this session, I received evaluations and guidance from highly skilled and experienced teachers. I finally understood how theoretical thinking and standards manifest in daily classroom teaching. This model is excellent!" Clearly, the dialogue between expert teams and frontline teachers forms a complete and innovative professional communication platform.

Moreover, the tripartite structure composed of schools, expert panels, and frontline teachers represents a new system of social division of labor, allowing each to fulfill its function more effectively. This facilitates the identification of regional breakthroughs in subject-area innovation, encourages grassroots administrative reform, and promotes the establishment of an operational consortium for disciplinary culture development. Emphasis is placed on analyzing how diverse participant groups co-shape, isomorphically co-exist, and co-develop within reform contexts—laying the foundation for new reform models and practical experiences.

#### **4.2 Paired Guidance Encourages Long-Term Academic Connections**

During high-end collaborative lesson presentations, presenting teachers closely follow expert guidance, integrating new insights while shedding outdated practices. They experience a high-level transformation from practice to theory. As Teacher B noted, "Experts answered my questions face-to-face and helped resolve the 'persistent issues' I often encounter in my teaching. Even more exciting is that I can stay in touch with them through email, QQ, or WeChat. This is truly invaluable!"

Furthermore, as teachers articulate the theoretical rationale behind specific instructional procedures, they externalize the otherwise implicit cognitive processes involved in lesson planning. This allows observers to understand not only what is done but why it is done—deepening their

instructional competence and pedagogical thinking. The core lies in interpreting the rationale behind teaching methods, enabling observers to appreciate the presenter's depth of understanding and teaching philosophy. Colleagues attending the session may also find like-minded partners, exchanging ideas and drawing mutual inspiration, ensuring they are no longer alone on the path of professional development.

#### **4.3 Influencing Teachers' Cognitive Quality and Intrinsic Professional Development**

There is a profound correlation between high-end collaborative lesson presentations and the development of teachers' professional capabilities. The dynamic interaction between expert teams and individual teachers generates a productive tension that accelerates knowledge acquisition, truth discovery, and the spread of best practices. According to neuroscience, environmental factors are a major driver of brain plasticity, and structured, immersive environments are particularly conducive to the development of creative thinking. As Teacher A reflected, "This experience dramatically accelerated the growth of my professional knowledge. I now have a vivid, intuitive understanding of the concepts, standards, and principles behind the new curriculum. I genuinely believe I can grow into an expert teacher!"

Teacher C added: "After listening to the experts' comments, I began to observe how I think—as if I were standing outside myself. I became aware of my limitations and developed a desire to liberate my mind from its constraints."

This is perhaps the most encouraging long-term outcome of high-end collaborative lesson presentations. As Krishnamurti (1985) observed, when the mind understands the movement of its own process, it grasps the full meaning of thinking. At that point, a free mind emerges, and creativity naturally follows. The development of creative thinking enables teachers to transition from externally-driven professional development to self-directed growth—reflecting a proactive, needs-based approach. Ultimately, this shift highlights the teacher's identity as a "whole person," advancing a deeper, more intrinsic form of professional development.

### **5. Enhancing Subject Culture through High-End Collaborative Lesson Presentations: Toward Integration and Transformative Teaching**

Currently, subject culture development in China is undergoing a significant shift—from a singular and uniform approach to one characterized by diversity and integration. At the heart of educational modernization lies the modernization of the individual. A high-quality, professional, and innovative teaching force is the cornerstone and ultimate guarantee of this transformation. From this perspective, high-end collaborative lesson presentations (HCLPs) offer an effective mechanism for cultivating a shared pedagogical community. They serve to rectify a long-standing issue in conventional lesson presentations—an overemphasis on “presenting” content, with insufficient attention to “evaluating” it.<sup>[12]</sup> HCLPs promote a transition from standardized, formulaic approaches to more personalized, reflective, and research-based practices.

The innovation and quality of lesson presentation depend heavily on a teacher’s grasp of educational theories, practical teaching experience, and command of curricular content. The development of HCLPs reflects a paradigm shift in the goals of lesson presentations—from assessing teachers to empowering their professional development. These sessions create a dynamic space in which new ideas, theories, and perspectives are tested and validated through practice, enabling teachers to engage deeply with the evolving demands of 21st-century instruction.<sup>[13]</sup> An effective presentation is one that communicates educational philosophy, embodies teaching principles, demonstrates instructional competence, and expresses pedagogical vision with clarity and eloquence. Equally important is the role of expert evaluation within the HCLP framework. Evaluation is not merely an adjunct to presentation but an essential part of it. Evaluators must bring both breadth and depth of expertise, as shallow or generic feedback can obscure the purpose and reduce lesson presentation to a mechanical exercise.<sup>[14]</sup> Only through integrating presentation with professional evaluation can teachers approach lesson planning and instructional design with clarity, reflection, and growth-oriented mindset.

This integration enhances pedagogical reflection and fosters sustainable professional development.<sup>[15]</sup>

In addition, HCLPs represent a unique avenue for optimizing subject resource allocation. They foster awareness and involvement in cultural development, encouraging a shift from closed to open modes of thinking.<sup>[16]</sup> By doing so, HCLPs contribute to the formation of regionally distinctive disciplinary cultures and accelerate the professionalization of educational practice on a systemic level. For example, incorporating literacy development strategies into science instruction, or integrating digital competencies into language teaching, reflects this multidimensional integration.

### **6. Promoting Multidimensional Integration and Transformative Teaching**

As China continues to advance its subject education system, it becomes increasingly essential to prioritize the fusion of interdisciplinary insights and adopt transformative teaching strategies. HCLPs naturally lend themselves to this purpose by providing a collaborative platform where disciplinary boundaries can be bridged, allowing educators from different backgrounds to engage in cross-pollination of pedagogical ideas.

Furthermore, transformative teaching—defined by a student-centered, inquiry-driven, and outcome-oriented pedagogy—demands more than procedural reform. It requires a fundamental rethinking of how teachers engage with content, students, and the learning environment. HCLPs support this by offering structured yet flexible opportunities to experiment with innovative instructional models, critically reflect on existing paradigms, and reimagine the role of teachers as facilitators of deep learning rather than transmitters of knowledge.

In conclusion, the high-end collaborative lesson presentation is not only a tool for teacher training but also a catalyst for broader educational reform. Through promoting diversity, integration, and pedagogical innovation, it significantly contributes to the modernization of education and the flourishing of a more reflective, dynamic, and professional teaching culture.

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