



Exploration of Innovative Paths for College English Teaching in the New Era

Xiaoqing Yao

School of Art, Yango College, Fuzhou, Fujian, China

Abstract: Universities are an important platform for cultivating high-quality talents, and the quality of English teaching is closely related to students' international competitiveness and the future development of the nation. However, during the organization and implementation of English teaching activities, the traditional teaching methods and models that have long been used in universities can no longer meet the current era's demand for English talents, making the reform of English curriculum teaching models imperative. From multiple perspectives, this paper explores the paths for innovating and developing college English teaching models in the context of the new era, with the aim of improving the level of English teaching in China.

Keywords: college English; English teaching; teaching model; innovative paths

1. Introduction

Against the background of rapid globalization and informatization, college English teaching faces unprecedented opportunities and challenges. With increasingly frequent international exchanges, English, as an international lingua franca, has become increasingly important. Traditional college English teaching models emphasize the instruction of basic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, while neglecting the cultivation of students' practical application abilities, particularly showing deficiencies in innovative thinking and intercultural communicative competence. With the rapid development of information technology, especially the large-scale application of advanced technologies such as the Internet, big data, and artificial intelligence, the paths and methods of college English teaching have been updated [1].

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of College English Teaching

2.1 Single Teaching Model

In many universities, traditional cramming teaching methods are still widely adopted in the teaching process. That is, teaching activities remain teacher-centered, neglecting students' initiative and active participation. Under this model, students are forced to receive knowledge passively and lack enthusiasm for actively participating in classroom interaction. A single teaching model fails to emphasize students' dominant role, treating them as containers of knowledge rather than active constructors. This weakens students' interest and motivation for learning, leads to a dull classroom atmosphere, and reduces learning quality. Moreover, such a model does not comprehensively consider individual differences among students. A one-size-fits-all teaching approach cannot meet students' personalized needs, causing some students to feel difficulty in learning while others find the teaching content insufficiently challenging, which over time reduces their interest in the course content. The cramming teaching model also places excessive emphasis on the transmission of theoretical knowledge while neglecting the practical application of language knowledge. Students have few opportunities to use English in real contexts in class, making it difficult to improve their speaking and listening abilities [2].

2.2 Outdated Teaching Content

In some universities, English teaching materials are updated slowly and fail to keep pace with the times and the international situation, which can be attributed to several key factors. The mechanism for selecting teaching materials is rigid, with universities placing greater emphasis on classic value and stability while neglecting timeliness and innovation, resulting in outdated content that cannot reflect current knowledge systems and skill requirements. The teacher training system is imperfect, with insufficient investment, leading to teachers' limited mastery of new knowledge and skills. As a result, they rely on outdated textbooks and teaching methods and find it difficult to convey up-to-date and practical information. In addition, English teaching is disconnected from actual industry demands, focusing primarily on language fundamentals while ignoring links with industries and enterprises. Consequently, what students learn does not match practical job requirements, which affects their ability to apply English in the workplace.

2.3 Lack of Intercultural Communication

English teaching often emphasizes the transmission of language knowledge while neglecting the cultivation of students' intercultural communicative competence. This problem is specifically manifested in the absence of cultural instruction, a lack of practical opportunities, and limitations in teachers' cultural literacy. English textbooks tend to focus excessively on language elements such as grammar and vocabulary, while providing insufficient introduction to the cultures of English-speaking countries. As a result, students find it difficult to gain an in-depth understanding of English cultural backgrounds and to adapt to multicultural environments in real communication. At the same time, college English teaching generally lacks practical platforms for intercultural communication, and students rarely have opportunities to engage in face-to-face exchanges with people from different cultural backgrounds, which undoubtedly restricts the development and enhancement of their intercultural communicative competence [3]. In addition, some English teachers themselves lack comprehensive cultural literacy, making it difficult to effectively integrate intercultural communication-related content into teaching practice, thereby preventing students from receiving sufficient guidance and support in this area.

3. Exploration of Innovative Paths for College English Teaching in the New Era

3.1 Constructing a Blended Teaching Model

In the context of educational informatization, constructing a blended teaching model has become a key approach to improving the effectiveness of English teaching. Universities should carefully select or develop comprehensive online teaching platforms, such as international platforms like Moodle and Blackboard, or domestic platforms such as Zhihuishu and Chaoxing Erya. These platforms should include functions such as video viewing, online testing, discussion forums, and assignment submission, and be capable of recording students' learning data to provide teaching feedback for instructors. Before the course begins, teachers should release preview materials on the platform, including recorded video lectures, reading materials, and guiding questions, to encourage students to engage in independent preview learning. After class, review materials and practice exercises should be provided to help students consolidate their knowledge. Activities such as "daily practice" can be designed to push course-related exercises and encourage students to complete them online, thereby forming sustained learning motivation. Teachers should reduce lecturing time and organize activities such as group discussions, case analyses, and role-playing. For example, "English corners" can be established or "simulated international conference" projects can be conducted to enable students to practice speaking and listening skills in simulated intercultural communication environments and enhance their English application ability. Teachers should make use of the data analysis functions of online platforms to monitor students' learning progress and outcomes in real time and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. In addition, methods such as online questionnaires and peer evaluation should be adopted to collect student feedback, continuously improve teaching methods and content, and maximize teaching effectiveness [4].

3.2 Strengthening the Cultivation of Autonomous Learning Ability

In the design of autonomous learning tasks, teachers should integrate course content to create tasks that are both challenging and engaging. For example, an "English Original Reading Program" can be implemented by selecting classic or contemporary literary works and requiring students to complete the reading within a specified time, followed by submitting reading reflections or participating in group discussions on online platforms. The "English Translation of Current Affairs News" task encourages students to select international news for English-to-Chinese or Chinese-to-English translation practice, thereby enhancing their English language proficiency and increasing their awareness of current affairs. These tasks should have clearly defined objectives, procedures, and deadlines, and be accompanied by necessary online resource links to promote students' independent inquiry. In terms of learning resource development, universities should establish a comprehensive English learning resource repository that includes diverse materials such as e-books, video tutorials, and online courses. An "English Learning Cloud Platform" can be created to integrate all resources, facilitating students' retrieval and use. The platform should be equipped with personalized recommendation functions that push appropriate learning resources based on students' learning history and interest preferences, thereby improving learning efficiency.

WeChat groups, QQ groups, or dedicated forums can be established to enable students to exchange learning experiences, share learning resources, and resolve questions. Teachers should regularly organize "learning sharing sessions" and invite student representatives to share learning experiences, translation works, or reading insights, thereby enhancing students' expressive abilities and promoting mutual learning and motivation. Awards such as "Autonomous Learning Star" and "Best Learning Group" can be established to commend and reward students who perform outstandingly in autonomous learning, for example through certificates, scholarships, or learning supplies. This helps stimulate students' motivation for autonomous learning and fosters a positive and progressive learning atmosphere [5].

3.3 Introducing Cultural Teaching Elements

In course development, specialized English culture courses should be designed. For example, a course on “British Literary History” can systematically introduce classics from Shakespeare to modern writers, guiding students to appreciate the cultural heritage of Britain. An “American Film Appreciation” course can analyze classic film clips, enabling students to experience American social life and values. These courses should combine theoretical instruction with interactive discussion to help students develop a profound understanding of culture. “English film screenings” can be held regularly, with carefully selected films that reflect the cultures of English-speaking countries, followed by group discussions to encourage students to express their viewing experiences in English. An “English Song Contest” can encourage students to perform English songs and understand cultural backgrounds through lyrics, thereby strengthening the integration of language and culture. In addition, an “English Drama Festival” can be established to guide students in performing classic plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, allowing them to deeply experience culture through role-playing.

Teachers should make use of online resources, such as authoritative English-language media including the BBC and CNN, to select current news and in-depth reports to support teaching. A “daily English news reading” activity can be designed, requiring students to read and briefly discuss news articles every day, thereby improving their language skills and keeping pace with international developments. At the same time, materials such as TED talks and English-language documentaries can be introduced to broaden students’ horizons and stimulate critical thinking. Cooperation with international universities can be promoted through “online exchange student” programs, enabling students to engage in one-to-one language and cultural exchanges with foreign students. Through regular video calls and the joint completion of cultural projects, students can practice language skills in authentic contexts and gain a deeper understanding of different cultural ways of thinking and lifestyles, thus laying a solid foundation for becoming talents with an international perspective.

3.4 Enhancing Teachers’ Information Technology Application Ability

Cultural teaching is an indispensable part of English teaching. Through diverse forms such as films, music, and literary works, it helps students gain a deeper understanding of the cultural background and social customs of English-speaking countries and enhances their intercultural communicative competence. For effective implementation, strategies need to be carefully planned. In course development, specialized English culture courses should be designed. For example, a course on “British Literary History” can systematically teach classics from Shakespeare to modern writers, guiding students to appreciate the cultural heritage of Britain; an “American Film Appreciation” course can analyze classic film clips, enabling students to experience American social life and values. These courses should combine theoretical explanation with interactive discussion to help students form a profound cultural understanding.

“English film screenings” should be held regularly, with carefully selected films that reflect the cultures of English-speaking countries. After the screenings, group discussions should be organized to encourage students to express their viewing experiences in English. An “English Song Contest” can encourage students to perform English songs and understand cultural backgrounds through lyrics, thereby strengthening the integration of language and culture. In addition, an “English Drama Festival” can be established to guide students in performing classic plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, allowing them to experience culture deeply through role-playing. Teachers should make use of online resources, such as authoritative English-language media including the BBC and CNN, to select current affairs news and in-depth reports to support teaching. A “daily English news reading” activity can be designed, requiring students to read and briefly discuss content every day, thereby developing language skills and keeping up with international trends. At the same time, materials such as TED talks and English-language documentaries can be introduced to broaden students’ horizons and stimulate thinking. Cooperation with international universities can be carried out through “online exchange student” programs, enabling students to engage in one-to-one language and cultural exchanges with foreign students. Through regular video calls and the joint completion of cultural projects, students can practice language skills in authentic contexts and gain a deeper understanding of different cultural ways of thinking and lifestyles, laying a solid foundation for becoming talents with an international perspective.

3.5 Strengthening International Exchange and Cooperation

At the level of international university cooperation, active efforts should be made to seek in-depth collaboration with well-known overseas universities to jointly promote joint training programs. The establishment of “dual-degree programs” serves as a typical example, allowing students to study at two leading universities at home and abroad and ultimately obtain dual degrees. This process helps students gain in-depth experience of foreign cultures and broaden their academic horizons. In addition, regular academic exchange activities, such as academic seminars and scientific research cooperation, should be organized and students should be encouraged to participate actively, thereby promoting the exchange of ideas and knowledge sharing. The introduction of foreign teachers is of vital importance for enhancing the level of internationalized

teaching. Foreign instructors should be invited to teach on campus on a long-term or short-term basis to provide students with an authentic English environment, and to deliver special lectures sharing overseas teaching experiences and cultural insights. To further strengthen academic exchanges between domestic and foreign teachers, collaborative research projects can be established to jointly explore academic frontiers, which will help enhance local teachers' international perspectives and teaching capabilities.

International exchange programs are an important channel for students to personally experience different cultures. Based on this, English teachers should carefully design "overseas study tour" programs, organizing students to undertake short-term study at foreign universities, visit historical and cultural sites, and participate in local social activities, enabling students to experience foreign cultures in an all-round manner. At the same time, "international volunteer" programs can be carried out, allowing students to learn through service. This not only improves intercultural communication competence but also cultivates a sense of global citizenship. Encouraging students to participate in international competitions is an effective way to enhance English proficiency and international competitiveness, such as organizing students to take part in high-level competitions including the "World University English Speech Contest" and "Global English Debate Competition." Pre-competition training and mock competitions can strengthen students' language expression and logical thinking abilities. Award-winning students can gain international recognition and lay a solid foundation for their future academic and professional development.

4. Conclusion

The innovation of college English teaching in the new era is of great significance, as it affects students' international competitiveness and the future development of the nation. At present, college English teaching still faces problems such as a single teaching model, outdated teaching content, and a lack of intercultural communication. To address these challenges, it is necessary to explore new paths, including constructing blended teaching models, strengthening the cultivation of autonomous learning ability, introducing cultural elements, enhancing teachers' information technology application ability, and strengthening international exchange and cooperation. These measures can stimulate students' learning interest, enhance their practical application ability, and cultivate intercultural communicative competence. Universities should establish sound teaching evaluation systems, strengthen faculty development, increase investment in teaching, and pay attention to students' needs and learning outcomes. The implementation of these strategies and measures will continuously improve the quality of English teaching and cultivate high-quality talents with international perspectives and competitiveness for the country.

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