

# *Research on the Current Situation of the Teaching Skills of ESP Teachers in Colleges and Universities and its Countermeasures*

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**Abstract**—By investigating the current situation of ESP teachers' teaching skills in colleges and universities, this paper finds out the problems existing in the teaching skills of ESP teachers in colleges and universities, and analyses the factors affecting the development of ESP teachers' teaching skills in colleges and universities. The purpose is to explore and try to put forward ways to promote the development of ESP teachers' teaching skills in colleges and universities, to improve ESP teachers' teaching skills and the quality of college English teaching, and to promote teaching and students' English Learning. This paper takes 100 ESP teachers from 40 universities in Shandong Province as the research object, investigates and studies the present situation of ESP teachers' teaching skills, analyses and discusses the existing problems, and tries to put forward some pertinent and operable suggestions to improve ESP teachers' teaching skills. This provides a more practical reference and guidance for the development of ESP teachers in colleges and universities, so that they can pay more attention to the training and application of teaching skills in teaching practice, so as to explore more effective teaching methods, and ultimately achieve the purpose of improving teaching effect.

**Keywords**—colleges and universities; teachers' professional development; ESP; teaching skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the deepening of globalization, English, as one of the international common languages, is increasingly used in international affairs, business and trade, academic research and cultural exchanges. Foreign language ability has become a necessary basic skill in modern society and an important tool to help students adapt to modern society better [1]. Students have fewer opportunities to contact and use English after class, mainly because of the lack of English language environment. Therefore, classroom teaching is the main way for Chinese students to learn English. College English teaching is different from junior and senior high school. It pays more attention to students' understanding of the society, economy and culture behind the language, instead of focusing on the fixed knowledge input of words and grammar. First of all, the age and personality characteristics of the college students are

different from those of primary and secondary schools. Their thinking and behavioral characteristics are closer to adults, so they can not simply apply the teaching methods that are applicable to the primary and secondary schools. Secondly, the English class hours in colleges and universities are relatively small, so we should not expect to finish all the contents in class time, but pay attention to the methods and ways to teach students to learn, and guide them to choose appropriate materials and content for supplementary learning after class. At last, the aim of college English learning is not merely in students' acquisition as well as mastery of knowledge, but also to pay more attention to students' ability to use English, combining English with their major, so as to promote students' professional learning in English and cultivate students with all-round development. Therefore, to improve the quality of college English teaching and ensure that students can acquire basic English skills and professional knowledge in the classroom to meet the requirements of future development is not only a very important issue, but also an inevitable requirement for talent training [2]. ESP teacher is a new force emerged under this background.

## II. INVESTIGATION AND ANALYSIS OF ESP TEACHERS' TEACHING SKILLS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

This paper investigates 100 ESP teachers in 40 undergraduate colleges and universities in Shandong Province in the form of questionnaires, hoping to fully and truly reflect the current situation of ESP teachers' teaching skills development in colleges and universities. It finds out the possible problems in the development of ESP teachers in colleges and universities, and analyzes and discusses the problems so as to put forward suggestions for improvement. Through investigation, it is found that the ESP teachers who are surveyed have the following problems.

### A. *Focusing on the Classroom Content and Paying Insufficient Attention to Students*

Through the analysis of the survey result, the author finds that most of the teachers who are surveyed still have traditional teaching concepts, tend to focus on the classroom and teaching content, and pay less attention to students. This shows that teachers do not take the teaching object as an important basis for preparing lessons and lectures, and do not fully recognize the important role of learners in the teaching process. Reflected

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in the actual teaching work, it is to ignore the teaching object. And the teaching methods and means are identical. Because of the different teaching subjects, the teaching based on students' individual ability tendency cannot be carried out effectively. At the same time, students' interest in learning is neglected by teachers. Therefore, teachers seldom try to arouse students' interest and enthusiasm in learning, which is one of the manifestations of teachers' neglect of learners.

#### *B. Lack of the Awareness and Ability of Evaluation and Feedback*

The survey result shows that the surveyed teachers generally fail to recognize the importance of evaluation and feedback skills, and the teachers' mastery of evaluation and feedback skills is also very unsatisfactory, which is a teaching skill that ESP teachers lack very much at present. Teachers' inadequacy in evaluation and feedback skills may be due to, first, teachers' backward evaluation concept. Many teachers only pay attention to summative evaluation, but do not realize the importance of formative evaluation. Therefore, they think that it is enough to test the students' learning results in the final exam, and they do not pay attention to daily evaluation and feedback. However, in the modern educational concept, the importance of formative evaluation has been greatly enhanced, even higher than that of summative evaluation. Summative evaluation is concerned about shaking and grading. It is a traditional way of evaluation. At the end of the learning stage, it is necessary to quantify students' learning ability and effect, which is mainly achieved through examinations. The examination is usually formal and serious, which can easily lead to a series of emotional problems, such as feeling nervous and anxious. The formative evaluation is an assessment of emotions, attitudes, learning methods and the efficacy of the students in their studies. This is a continuous and dynamic development assessment based on the whole process of students' learning. Its purpose is to encourage students to make progress by standardizing their learning process. Teachers should recognize the importance of formative evaluation, do a good job of timely and regular evaluation and feedback in daily teaching work. Before or at the beginning, the problem can be found and solved in a timely manner, and the students can be encouraged and helped to make continuous progress [3]. Secondly, due to the heavy daily teaching tasks and heavy workload of teachers, there is little time and energy for regular evaluation and feedback of students. In the open questions of the questionnaire survey, many teachers mention the suggestions of "taking time" and "reducing the amount of teaching", which shows that overweight teaching tasks are not conducive to the development of teachers' own abilities. Lack of time and energy for teachers to reflect, recharge and improve will not only make teachers stagnate, but also prone to job burnout. Thirdly, there is no good design of scientific assessment mechanism. In the school's daily teaching work, mid-term and final examinations are the only formal evaluation mechanisms for students, and there are almost no regular and periodic daily evaluation mechanisms. Under the guidance of the evaluation mechanism that only pays attention to the results but not to the process, it is naturally difficult for teachers to realize the importance of evaluation and feedback, thus ignoring the development of this aspect.

#### *C. Lack of Awareness and Ability to Use Modern Information Technology*

The survey result shows that the surveyed teachers generally fail to recognize the importance of modern information technology application skills, and the teachers' mastery of it is also unsatisfactory. It is a teaching skill that ESP teachers lack very much at present.

With the rapid development of society and the progress of science and technology, as well as the wide application of the Internet, modern information technology has increasingly exerted a significant impact on people's way of life, thinking and behavior, bringing great changes to all walks of life. Specifically in the field of education, the Internet has brought explosive growth of knowledge, rich learning materials, high-quality teaching resources and a new way of learning. Students can query information and search information through Internet terminals anytime and anywhere, and the way to acquire knowledge is greatly broadened. The new technology has brought new ideas, new opportunities and many facilities for education. However, for some conservative teachers, these are not so easy to accept. First of all, some old teachers have their own style of teaching and the methods. And after decades of repeated practice, the traditional philosophy of education is rooted in the spirit of teachers [4]. When change occurs and develops rapidly, this part of teachers often can not respond in time, or it is difficult for them to change.

Secondly, modern information technology has brought many challenges to teachers. In terms of knowledge reserve, the popularization of the network makes the access to information unprecedented and convenient. Students can access knowledge and information at any time and anywhere through the network terminals such as computers and mobile phones, and participate in various discussions and exchanges. The classroom is not the only way to obtain knowledge, and the authority of teachers is affected. The diversification of classroom modes, the enrichment of curriculum content and the expansion of students' knowledge require ESP teachers in colleges and universities to master more extensive and abundant knowledge than before, and to maintain continuous learning to update their knowledge system. Only in this way can teachers give more support and help to students and solve various problems raised by students. In the field of information literacy, facing a large amount of information on the Internet and the uneven resources, it is a very important ability to learn how to identify and select what one needs. Selecting suitable English learning materials for students, presenting them in an appropriate way and guiding them to acquire high-quality English learning resources by themselves require ESP teachers in colleges and universities to have good information literacy.

#### *D. Insufficient Ability to Mobilize Interest in Learning*

The survey result shows that teachers can correctly understand the importance of stimulating interest and maintaining skills. But the mastery of teachers themselves is not ideal, which is a very deficient teaching skill.

There are many possible reasons for teachers' inadequate ability to arouse their interest in learning. Firstly, teachers attach importance to the analysis of learners. Teachers must

have a good understanding of students' psychological characteristics, personality, hobbies and needs, in order to accurately judge the interests of students. According to the result of the questionnaire, the analysis of the students by the teachers has received little attention, which led to teachers may not understand students at all, no matter which kind of student groups are using the invariable teaching methods. They fail to teach students in accordance with their aptitude, let alone initiative to work hard to find students' interests [5]. Teachers must strengthen the in-depth understanding of learners, carefully analyze their characteristics and needs, and find out the connection between the content of education and the interest of the student, combining closely the interests and needs of the student in education, so as to really release the interest and enthusiasm of the students.

Secondly, that is the personality characteristics of teachers themselves. If a teacher himself is more humorous, lively and good at mobilizing the atmosphere of the classroom, then it is easier to mobilize students' emotions, thereby stimulating their interest in learning. If a teacher is a more serious and stereotyped type, he may make the classroom atmosphere more dull so that the students feel depressed and difficult to arouse interest. Character characteristics are not optional for teachers, but teachers can adjust their emotions, and strive to create a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere to help stimulate students' learning enthusiasm. Teachers should love to be enthusiastic about students and teaching. They should engage themselves wholeheartedly in it and inspire students through their own actions.

### III. THE DEVELOPMENT PATH OF ESP TEACHERS' TEACHING SKILLS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

#### A. Path of Teachers' Self-development

##### 1) To improve the knowledge system constantly

Teachers, as preachers, professors and expositors, should first possess profound professional knowledge and extensive knowledge in order to organize teaching content flexibly in the classroom and explain profound knowledges in simple languages. As an ESP teacher in university, we should put more emphasis on the integrity of our system of knowledge for students. Unlike junior and senior high school students whose attention is mainly focused on textbook content, college students have wider horizons, broader range of activities and richer interests. Therefore, teachers can not stop at the established textbook knowledge. They must continue their education if they want to get a good result of teaching. Most importantly, they must continue to learn the subject knowledge, teaching knowledge and other negative knowledge of Humanities and Society, and establish a complete knowledge system, which is the basis for the development of teaching skills.

In this research questionnaire, the ways and methods of teachers' self-development are investigated openly. According to the answers of the surveyed teachers, the author finds that the occurrence of key words such as "learning" and "knowledge" is particularly high. The surveyed teachers generally believe that insisting on learning and broadening knowledge play a better role in promoting the development of

teaching skills. Teachers themselves should have a wide range of knowledge, establish a complete knowledge system, and continue to learn, and constantly improve their overall quality. At the same time, "theory" is also a key word that the surveyed teachers mentioned more. The teachers who were interviewed stressed the importance of the learning theory, and confirmed the role of orientation of teaching in practice. They believed that only by combining teaching theory with teaching practice, could they really improve their teaching skills.

##### 2) To strengthen the Teaching Reflection

Teaching reflection requires teachers to think critically about their teaching behavior in the form of experience and summary so as to improve their teaching ability. The practice greatly helps teachers to improve their teaching skills, but the reflective practice can help to improve the teaching skills. The theory is based on a lot of practice, careful thinking and scientific summary. Teaching theory can guide teaching practice, make teaching behavior more directional and purposeful, so as to achieve better results. If teachers can objectively evaluate their teaching behavior after class, find out the crux of the problem through rational thinking and actively find the countermeasures, and also summarize and develop effective ways, then in the long run, teachers' teaching skills will have a qualitative leap and improvement. In the questionnaire survey, teaching reflection is recognized as the most effective development strategy for promoting teaching skills by teachers, which shows that many teachers can fully recognize the importance of teaching reflection and affirm the effectiveness of teaching reflection [6].

##### 3) To concern about students

The aim of education is to promote the learning of students and the teaching should be focused on the students. Teaching content, teaching methods, teaching steps and so on all need to take students into account. Teachers must understand students' characteristics, interests and development status, and carry out teaching work in a targeted manner. At the same time, paying attention to students also requires teachers to really care about students, love students, and take care of students' emotions and needs. Only when teachers take students as the beginning and the end of the education can they promote the students' development.

##### 4) To emphasize professional emotions

The professional emotions of teachers include both emotions of teachers and that of students. They not only emphasize teachers' professional ethics, but also care for students. First of all, teachers must have a sense of reverence for their profession, make clear their responsibilities and obligations, and strive to assume this responsibility. At the same time, they should be passionate about teaching and devote themselves wholeheartedly to teaching. Secondly, teachers should also cherish the love for students, invest in real emotions, take the initiative to care for students, and take care of students' emotional needs. Regardless of students' achievements, personality, family and appearance, teachers should treat them equally. They should care for and love students from our hearts. At the same time, efforts should be made to discover the shining points on each student, encourage students, and cultivate students' self-confidence.

### *B. The Support and Guarantee that schools Should Provide*

The development of teachers' teaching skills needs not only their own efforts, but also the support and help of colleges and universities to provide rich and diverse development opportunities and resources.

#### *1) Providing a variety of training*

Teacher training is divided into pre-service training, in-service training and on-the-job training, in which in-service training and on-the-job training are carried out after the teachers enter the school, which requires the school to organize and arrange. The development of teachers' teaching skills is a dynamic process. In addition to the foundation laid by pre-service training, in-service training is needed to enrich and enhance.

Firstly, schools should ensure the orderly development of training, regularly organize teacher training, ensure the periodicity and regularity of training, and avoid arbitrary arrangements on impulse, or let alone. The survey shows that teachers have such needs, but schools are not doing enough. Secondly, schools should provide teachers with a variety of training opportunities, such as expert lectures, short-term training, long-term training, exchanges and visits, and ensure high standards and quality of training. According to the survey result, most teachers believe that the opportunities provided by schools are not enough. And they hope that schools can provide much more such kind of support. Finally, schools should expand the scope of training to ensure that every teacher has regular opportunities to participate in training and promote their sustainable development. Due to the limitation of training scale, it is impossible for all teachers to participate in a certain training, which requires schools to provide a variety of opportunities to arrange for teachers to participate in stages and batches. Under the circumstance that some high-quality training opportunities are indeed limited, it is indisputable that schools need to select teachers' qualifications, achievements and performances. But at the same time, it should be considered in many ways. For example, although some young teachers are less qualified and have fewer achievements than the old ones, they are excellent and should be taken care of and encouraged by the school.

#### *2) Organizing the teaching observation activities regularly*

Teaching observation is an important and effective way. By observing excellent teachers' classroom, we can experience the whole process of teaching. By observing how excellent teachers deal with different teaching contents in different teaching situations, and reflecting on the gap between their own teaching methods and excellent teaching methods, they can improve them pertinently. Teaching observation includes watching excellent teachers' classroom videos and on-the-spot observation. Watching classroom video is a very convenient way. It is not limited by time and space. Teachers can flexibly arrange the time and place of learning. Through watching videos, teachers can learn a wide range of methods of dealing with different types of lessons, and appreciate the ways and strategies of dealing with problems encountered by teachers of different styles. Another advantage of teaching videos is that after the end of the videos, demonstration teachers are usually

arranged to explain and reflect on their teaching concepts, teaching design, teaching objectives and teaching difficulties. Some videos will have expert comments at the end. In this way, teachers can get more useful information from teaching videos and deepen their understanding of teaching [7].

#### *3) Strengthen the Construction of Teaching Team*

The teaching team is an important form of organization of education in colleges and universities. It can enhance the cooperation and overall ability of all aspects and effectively improve organizational efficiency. To strengthen the training of teachers, that is to organize the teachers in a planned and purposeful way on the management of higher education, to establish an effective team cooperation mechanism, to promote teaching discussion and exchange of teaching experience, to develop teaching resources and to improve teaching level. The teaching team has the advantage of integrating the resources of teachers, making full use of the advantage of the team and building a model of cooperative education. Providing favorable environment for teachers' development, especially young teachers with insufficient experience can grow rapidly with the help of other team members. A typical teaching team model is a traditional but effective way to promote the development of teachers' teaching skills, similar to the "teacher-apprentice system". Its characteristics are flexible and pertinent. Through one-to-one guidance and assistance, the different situations of each teacher can be fully taken into account. However, its effectiveness depends on the guarantee of implementation and must be truly implemented. Schools should establish a perfect "transmission and help" mechanism, organize new teachers and experienced excellent teachers to form a one-to-one support group, to ensure that each new teacher can get the help and advice from the old teachers. Secondly, the school should formulate detailed implementation regulations, including implementation cycle, implementation form, implementation results inspection, etc.

#### *4) Establishing communication platform*

The school should set up two communication platforms. One is that between teachers and the other between teachers and students. Teachers can share experience among them, overcome difficulties together, and evaluate each other's suggestions so that both sides of the exchange of teachers can gain. There are various communication platforms between teachers, such as teaching and research rooms, sharing meetings, teacher workshops and so on. In order to ensure the implementation of communication, it is necessary for schools to improve the communication platform system, operation and evaluation mechanism. The communication between teachers and students is relatively flexible. Considering that university teachers seldom have fixed office space, unlike junior and senior high schools, students can find teachers to communicate at any time in the office. Therefore, flexible arrangements must be made in various forms, such as special arrangement of time for communication, simple communication between teachers and students by the end of class time, and search by class committees among students, assemble opinions and then reflect them to teachers, etc. Schools should first arrange regular teacher-student exchanges to ensure that the most basic communication between teachers and students can be guaranteed and that there are smooth channels of

communication between teachers and students. At the meeting, students can make suggestions on teachers' teaching, such as what kind of teaching methods they prefer and what kinds of extra-curricular content they hope teachers to provide. Teachers should know students' ideas and needs for teachers' reference. Teachers should pay attention to students' performance and learning effect in time. On the one hand, students should be aware of their learning situation. Learning progress, on the other hand, is to put forward the direction of improvement and efforts to students. Through this kind of communication, teachers and students can increase their understanding of each other, resolve misunderstandings or contradictions between them, and improve the relationship between them so as to promote teaching better.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study provides an overview of the concept, the classification and the progress of research on teaching skills. It finds some prominent problems, such as the traditional teaching concept, the lack of attention to students centered on classroom content, the lack of awareness and ability to use modern information technology, evaluation and feedback, the lack of interest mobilization and reflection ability, etc. In view of the main problems in the teaching of English in universities,

this paper proposes ways to improve the teaching skills of ESP teachers in colleges and universities from both teachers and schools, with a view of providing useful reference for the development of ESP teachers' teaching abilities and skills in colleges and universities.

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