

# A Study on the Construction of Practical Teaching System for English Majors from the Perspective of National Standard

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**Key words:** National Standard, English Major, Practical Teaching System, Construction.

**Abstract:** The construction of practical teaching system is directly related to the development of students' practical ability, which is the key to the cultivation of English professional talents. The *National Standard for Undergraduate Teaching Quality of Foreign Language and Literature Majors in Colleges and Universities* (abbreviated as *National Standard*) is the basis for the evaluation and assessment of practical teaching in English majors. Based on this, this paper starts from the connotation and requirements of practical teaching, analyzes the current gap between the present situation of practical teaching for English majors and the *national standard*, explores the principles for the construction of practical teaching system for English majors, and proposes the ways to optimize and reconstruct the practical teaching system.

## 1. Introduction

Practice teaching is a kind of teaching method to acquire knowledge and ability through specifically-designed practical ways compared with classroom teaching. It is characterized by the completion of knowledge teaching and ability training through practice. It is from abstraction to concreteness, helping students to feel the complexity of the theoretical knowledge or book knowledge applied in specific industries and the specific methods to deal with practical problems. Students can acquire theoretical research materials through practice and cultivate and exercise research ability [1].

Practical teaching is not only the verification, supplement and extension of theoretical teaching, but also the main way to cultivate students' practical ability, learning and cognitive ability, especially research ability and innovation ability. Together with the theoretical teaching system, they constitute two relatively independent and inseparable aspects of the teaching system. Practical ability usually refers to the ability of an individual to use existing knowledge and skills to solve practical problems. It is a competence system composed of basic practical ability and professional practical ability. For colleges and universities, it is one of their important tasks to strengthen the cultivation of students' practical abilities, such as autonomous learning ability, information acquisition ability, observation and analysis ability, experimental research ability, expression and communication ability, and communication and cooperation ability. According to the different requirements of the time ability of different disciplines and majors in Colleges and universities, it is one of the measures to cultivate talents in Colleges and universities to consider the differences in the individual practical ability of different college students, seek different ways of cultivating talents, build different practical teaching systems, choose different practical teaching contents, and adopt different teaching means and methods. Reforming the current situation of "time-consuming and inefficient" in the foreign language teaching and students' poor language application ability, and setting up a practical teaching content system in the syllabus of English major courses are the only way to ensure that students improve their practical ability.

## 2. The gap of practical teaching for English majors from the perspective of *National Standard*

The *National Standard for Undergraduate Teaching Quality of Foreign Language and Literature Majors in Colleges and Universities* (hereinafter referred to as *National Standard*) promulgated in 2018 is the standard for the training quality of undergraduate talents in English majors, and clarifies

the requirements and guidelines for the construction of English majors in colleges and universities [3]. The *National Standard* is composed of ten parts: preface, applicable majors, training objectives, training specifications, curriculum system, teaching and evaluation, teacher team, teaching conditions, quality assurance system, and terminology and interpretation, involving the whole process of personnel training. The promulgation and implementation of the *National Standard* will have a far-reaching influence on the comprehensive reform of undergraduate teaching in English majors and the overall improvement of the quality of English talent training. From the current situation of running schools, there is still a certain gap between the practical teaching of English majors and the requirements of the *National Standard*.

### 2.1 The gap in the setting of practice

The *National Standard* points out that “All schools should carry out practical teaching activities according to local conditions to cultivate students' knowledge application ability and practical ability. The teaching practice should run through the whole undergraduate education stage, accounting for not less than 15% of the total credits of majors. The main contents include extracurricular practical teaching, social practice, novitiates and internships, international background studies, etc.” The *National Standard* not only clarifies the contents and forms of professional internships, extracurricular practice activities, social practice activities and international exchanges, but also increases the proportion of practice in the whole course hours, stresses the combination of theory and practice, and exercises and improves students' practical ability in various activities. This change actually also reflects the diversification trend of the training model for English professional talents. The following problems still exist in the implementation of practical teaching contents: First, the practical curriculum lacks unified planning, and the content of the course is relatively fragmented and unsystematic. The number of practical course hours is too small, which affects the effect of practical teaching. Second, there is a lack of new methods and models for practical teaching. In practice, the traditional teaching methods or theoretical inculcation methods are mostly used, which does not reflect the characteristics of practical teaching. The current practice assessment system does not refine the assessment indicators, and has no perfect evaluation system for the basic knowledge and skills in practice, and the assessment method is single. The students mainly write internship reports, term papers and graduation theses to determine the practical results and measure the effect of practical teaching work. The results of this evaluation mainly reflect the theoretical achievements and the proportion of practical achievements is small, ignoring the cultivation of practical skills and comprehensive abilities, and lacking the process management assessment of each aspect of practical teaching. This kind of evaluation, which emphasizes results rather than processes, and emphasizes appearance rather than substance, cannot comprehensively assess the effect of practical teaching, and is not conducive to the cultivation of students' social adaptability, lifelong learning, communication and teamwork ability.

### 2.2 The gap in practical teaching conditions

The *National Standard* puts forward that all colleges and universities should have relatively stable practical teaching conditions to meet the needs of talent cultivation; they should build professional training rooms, training centers and practical teaching bases both inside and outside the schools according to their professional characteristics and needs; and they should make full use of various resources to build a platform for innovative entrepreneurship education for college students. Compared with theoretical teaching, there are still some shortcomings in the software and hardware support of practical teaching for English majors. Firstly, the practical teaching base inside and outside the school is insufficient, which makes it difficult to meet the practical needs of students. This is mainly manifested in the insufficient number of school-enterprise cooperation bases inside and outside the school, which is difficult to meet the practical needs of students in the learning process, the unscientific and imperfect management of practice bases and the mere formality of the base construction. Secondly, it is difficult to find a targeted college English practical textbook of “real environment, real practice and real exercise”, or the content of the practical textbook is

outdated, which cannot meet the growing social needs.

### 2.3 The gap in the aspect of teachers

Teachers are the key to the cultivation of talents, and the construction of the teaching staff is the driving force and guarantee for the sustainable development of practical teaching for English majors. The *National Standard* adds the entries of the teaching staff, including three parts: teacher structure, teacher quality and teacher development. It puts forward that colleges and universities should formulate the development plans and implementation plans of professional teachers, encourage teachers to constantly update their educational ideas, optimize their knowledge structure and improve their teaching and research abilities through such ways as industry practices. Applied majors should employ personnel with industry experience as instructors to make up for the lack of industry experience of professional teachers. As far as the current situation is concerned, the knowledge structure, teaching ideas, and especially the practical teaching ability of English professional teachers are still weak. Some English teachers pay too much attention to the teaching of language knowledge points, neglect the practice of communicative competence in English language under specific circumstances, and cannot objectively evaluate students' vocational post competence according to the objectives and characteristics of English practical teaching. Some teachers focus on the training of practical English skills, ignoring the teaching of English knowledge points. In fact, the learning of knowledge and the cultivation of abilities are promoting each other and supplementing each other. The main reason why these problems exist is that some teachers cannot flexibly use the theoretical knowledge of pedagogy and psychology to guide practice, and cannot coordinate the relationship between imparting knowledge and cultivating ability. Most English teachers lack the experience of post practice, which also leads to the disconnection between theoretical teaching and practical teaching to a certain extent, and the students unable to adapt to the rapidly changing post requirements.

### 2.4 The gap in the quality assurance system

The *National Standard* adds the requirements of establishing and improving the quality assurance system. The monitoring of teaching quality is the mechanism guarantee to improve the quality of personnel training. That is to say, by formulating curriculum standards, quality standards of classroom teaching, teaching inspection and evaluation systems, the quality of classroom teaching is supervised and improved. At the same time, through the feedback of graduates and the evaluation of employers, the training program can be continuously revised and improved, the quality of talent cultivation can be improved, and a complete closed-loop quality monitoring system with reasonable standards, standardized operation, orderly operation, timely feedback and continuous improvement can be established and improved. At present, most of the English majors in Colleges and universities have not yet established a perfect practical teaching system, and the methods of practical teaching become a mere formality. Compared with theoretical teaching, the content design of English practical teaching is relatively loose and random. The practice content of each part is severely fragmented, lacks internal connection, does not have sufficient scientific planning and overall arrangement, lacks objective and fair assessment and evaluation criteria for practice effects, and the reward and punishment mechanism matching the practical effects are not perfect. The practice assessment is still organized by English teachers. No complete item pool has been established. The content of assessment is not closely related to industry standards.

## 3. The construction principles of practical teaching for English Majors from the perspective of *National Standard*

The construction of practical teaching system for English majors should be closely centered on the training specifications of talents in Colleges and universities and the training objectives of professional talents. First, starting from the requirements of professional knowledge and vocational skills, we should put forward the specific objectives of the practical ability training of this major, and regard it as the goal of constructing a practical teaching system. Second, according to the law of

higher education and the characteristics of talent cultivation in various majors, starting from the requirements of the all-round development of people's quality and ability, according to the status, function and internal relationship of each practical teaching link, we should use systematic and scientific methods to construct practical teaching system, which is compatible with the reform of the talent cultivation program and the curriculum system, and pay attention to the mutual penetration of practical teaching and theoretical teaching, so that all links within the system are connected, coordinated and unified, and have continuity throughout the whole process of university education. Finally, the construction of the practical teaching system must be based on the guidance of certain educational theory, which is scientific, practical and easy to operate.

#### **4. The ways to optimize and reconstruct the practical teaching for English Majors from the perspective of *National Standard***

The reconstruction and optimization of the practical teaching system for English majors need to deeply grasp the connotation of the training objective of national standard talents, consider the actual needs of students and society, and make accurate positioning and overall planning in combination with the actual needs of colleges and local economic development.

##### **4.1 Reconstructing the practical teaching objectives of English majors and optimizing the talents cultivation program**

The goal of practical teaching is the basis and compass of the practical teaching system. The construction of the practical teaching system should closely focus on the training specifications of talents and the training objectives of professional talents in colleges and universities. Based on the training objectives of English majors, the practical teaching objectives of English majors are determined as follows: On the basis of mastering the basic theories and basic methods of the major through classroom teaching, and through the practice and internship activities both inside and outside the school, students can enhance their perceptual understanding of language application, improve the initiative of language application, deepen the understanding of English language rules, enhance the consciousness of abiding by language rules, improve the ability to analyze and solve problems in English language application, and then comprehensively improve the English language application ability and innovation ability of English majors.

##### **4.2 Reconstructing the content system of the practical teaching and optimize the ways of talent cultivation**

The practical teaching courses should be included in the compulsory courses for English majors, which enables students to comprehensively use the knowledge they have learned. The setting of the Practical courses should follow systemic and scientific nature. Specifically, the practical teaching courses should focus on the cultivation of comprehensive application ability, and make the four-year undergraduate practical teaching systematic. According to the needs of the society for talents, translation and business can be constructed under the English major. From low to high at the level of practice are professional skills, professional social practical abilities and innovation and entrepreneurship abilities. The training of basic professional skills is mainly carried out in the first and second grades. The courses include “English Grammar”, “English Phonetics”, “Spoken English”, “Listening” and “Writing”; the practical courses of senior professional skills are divided according to the direction. The courses of the translation direction include “English-Chinese Translation”, “Chinese-English Translation”, and “English interpretation” and so on. The courses of the business direction include “International Trade Affairs (English)” and “Business English Writing” and so on. The training of the professional social ability should run through the whole undergraduate stage. The professional internship courses are mainly arranged in the third grade. The internships in the translation direction mainly include “translation practice” and “translation base internship” and so on; the internships in the business direction mainly include “foreign trade comprehensive practical training” and “enterprise internship” and so on. Innovation and entrepreneurship are the highest level of practice, mainly embodied in the flexible practical course

models such as graduation thesis, participation in teachers' scientific research projects, simulated classroom teaching competitions and translation services. The *National Standard* aims to establish a dynamic and pluralistic curriculum system, which requires the construction of practical courses for English majors to be continuously dug and explored, so that the content system of practical teaching for English majors can keep pace with the times, and from the reality of the school, the students' professional skills, professional social practical ability, professional internship ability and innovation and entrepreneurship ability can be effectively improved. The practical teaching content is the concrete presentation of each practical teaching link, which should be carried out in a step-by-step manner. The practical teaching for English majors mainly includes: language skill training, business skill training, intercultural communicative ability training, humanistic literacy training and comprehensive ability training. The language skill training, business skill training, intercultural communicative ability training, humanistic literacy training and comprehensive ability training of practical teaching can be embedded in the undergraduate four-year teaching, and the method of combining decentralized in-class practical teaching with centralized independent practice can be adopted and gradually promoted to give full play to the role of practical teaching in the cultivation of applied talents.

#### **4.3 Optimizing the practical classroom teaching modes and innovating the teaching forms**

The classroom teaching is the most direct factor affecting the effect of the practical teaching. At present, most local colleges and universities still adopt the classroom teaching mode in the practice of English majors. Under this mode, the teachers have more lectures, the students have fewer opportunities to learn independently, and the students are mostly in a passive state of participation; the teachers input more language knowledge, the students practice less, and the students lack the opportunity to reconstruct knowledge. Only by changing the teaching mode of “the teacher-centered” and the traditional practical teaching mode of English majors in the traditional teaching, establishing the student-centered teaching concept, opening up new English practical teaching classrooms, increasing students' language practice opportunities, and cultivating students' abilities to think independently, analyze independently and solve problems independently, can we fundamentally reverse the situation of “emphasizing on language knowledge input and neglecting practice skill output”. Under the impetus of new media technology, the traditional practical teaching mode for English majors can no longer meet the needs of practical teaching. All colleges and universities should carry out reforms in accordance with the requirements of the *National Standard* and develop diversified teaching forms. In the form of teaching organization, don't be limited to the traditional class teaching system. In addition, inspiring the students to cultivate the students' sense of innovation (e.g., such ways as group cooperation, role transformation, multi-media assistance and tutor guidance can be used in the translation practice), and the relationship between various ways should be cross-integration, dynamic formation and continuous creation. Under the guidance of the *National Standard*, the diversified development of the practical teaching forms and methods for English majors conforms to the development of society and education. Schools should actively use this trend to keep pace with the times and improve the teaching quality of practical courses for English majors.

#### **4.4 Strengthening the construction of practical teacher teams and improving the strength of the teachers through multiple channels**

The teachers who undertake practical teaching should not only have solid theoretical knowledge, but also have strong professional practical ability. All colleges and universities can adopt the method of “cultivation-based, introduction-assisted, and school-enterprise joint training”: We should mainly train full-time teachers in the schools, increase their opportunities for theoretical study and practice in the enterprises, and regularly appoint professional teachers to the enterprises for practical training. At the same time, senior technicians with rich practical experience in foreign trade and translation should be introduced to enrich the team of practical teachers. The *National Standard* holds that the optimization of teacher structure and quality and sustainable development should be combined. The teachers should set up the concept of lifelong learning, and improve the

application ability of modern educational technology by adjusting teaching methods and means, in order to cope with the practical teaching reform of English majors promoted by the *National Standard*. Besides, the schools should take measures to introduce excellent teachers from outside the school to play a synergistic role of different teachers.

#### **4.5 Formulating the evaluation criteria of practical teaching and pay attention to multi-party evaluation**

The evaluation criteria are the criteria that should be achieved in practical teaching. Scientific evaluation criteria can guide teachers to find problems in teaching in time and improve teaching quality. The effect evaluation of practical teaching through such traditional means as after-class homework or practical reports cannot truly reflect the performance of students' practice, and cannot find the shortcomings of practical teaching in time. Therefore, reforming the evaluation criteria of practical teaching will be based on process assessment, supplemented by result assessment, and the combination of teacher assessment and student self-assessment. With the performance of students in the practical process as the main, supplemented by practical works or results, combined with the assessment from full-time teachers in the schools and enterprise instructors, as well as self-evaluation and mutual evaluation of students, we can better guide students to pay attention to the practical process, pay attention to collaboration, and get more exercise from practice.

#### **4.6 Strengthening the construction of software and hardware conditions for practical teaching, and optimizing the cooperation modes between schools and enterprises**

The practical teaching should focus on the requirements of knowledge, abilities and qualities put forward by the *National Standard*, and build a practical platform for basic language skills, comprehensive language application ability, and compound knowledge and ability. For each practical project, specific practical tasks, practical methods, examples, assessment methods and scoring standards will be made. In practical activities, the modern teaching resources such as network, multimedia and language laboratory will be comprehensively used. In the construction of practical teaching bases, colleges and universities should innovate the teaching forms of practical training, take into account the interests of enterprise development, find the joint point of practical teaching and enterprise development, and achieve a win-win situation among students, schools, enterprises and society. On the basis of the application, modification and perfection of practical teaching content, combining theory with practice, colleges and universities can organize and edit a set of complete, instructive and operational practical courses for English majors, which are suitable for the characteristics of colleges and universities. The practical courses can be used to guide the establishment of relatively independent English practical links, provide reference for teachers to work out relevant practical content, and provide a systematic and scientific evaluation system of teaching effects.

### **5. Conclusion**

The promulgation of the *National Standard* means that a new round of teaching reform for English majors with the basic spirit of "quality-oriented, multi-cultivation and excellent classification" has already begun, which will bring opportunities and challenges to the practical teaching of English majors in China. Individualization, diversification and socialization are the trends in the development of practical teaching. Colleges and universities should seize the opportunity to constantly explore the practical teaching system of English majors so as to survive and develop in a pluralistic environment.

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