

# Application of Participating Teaching Method in Business English Teaching

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**Abstract.** The development of the society has fundamentally changed the demand for talents, but the traditional “teacher-centered” method cannot meet the needs of the market. However, participating teaching method from UK actively stimulates the classroom atmosphere by engaging participants with different backgrounds, personalities and knowledge frameworks. This essay, based on analysis of the characteristics of business English, is going to find out the practical significance, necessity and strategy of participating teaching method which aims to enrich teaching methods to cultivate excellent business English talents.

## 1. The Current Situation of Business English Teaching in China

In recent years, China's international economic and trade position has been continuously improved. More and more foreign companies have set up branch offices in China, and many Chinese companies have also frequently participated in competition in foreign markets. These changes have higher requirements for graduates who should not only have solid knowledge in English and a broad international perspective, but master the business theories and related practical work. Under the circumstances, Business English major came into being and gradually developed into an independent discipline. At the end of 2006, the State Ministry of Education approved the establishment of a business English major in college undergraduate programs. By the end of 2017, there are more than 367 colleges and universities having this major. Business English major has injected new vitality into Chinese college education; however, the new market has higher requirements on the cultivation of business English talents in terms of quantity and quality, and it strives to cultivate and improve students' ability of English application, cross-cultural communication, business practice, critical thinking, innovation and self-study. This is a great challenge for educators to achieve this goal.

The change of the times has prompted colleges and universities to carry out many reforms. However, many teachers still use traditional exam-oriented ways in business English teaching. During the process, teachers emphasize theoretical explanation but ignore practice. This method can help students get good grades and certificates to make them have the sense of achievement, but in the long run, passively and mechanically accepting knowledge will gradually make students lose the ability of self-learning and finally affect their enthusiasm, initiative and creativity, and this method makes many business English graduates suffer a lot when they are hunting for jobs, and some of them even are eliminated by the market.

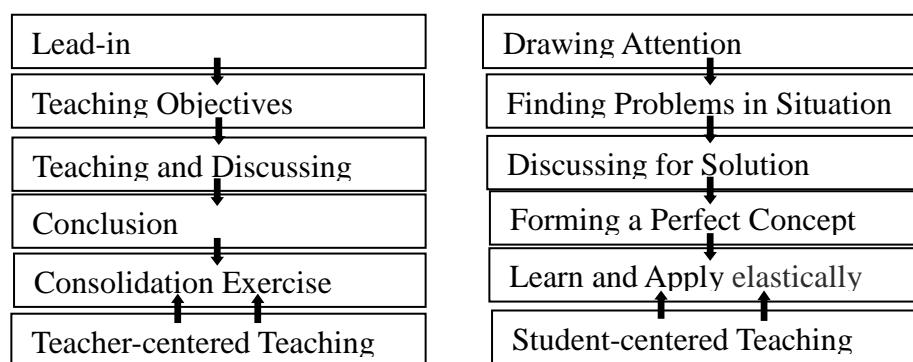
Except for changes of the market, students are also different from the past ones. Current students are more “knowledgeable” because of the improvement of living standards and the widening of the horizon. Their ways of collecting knowledge are becoming more and more diverse and convenient, so traditional teaching methods cannot satisfy their desire of “high efficiency, innovation and difference”. Changes in students also inevitably lead to adjustment of teaching methods.

## 2. Application of Participating Teaching in Business English Classroom

Participating teaching is compatible with the advantages of case-based teaching, discussion teaching,

experiential teaching, discovery teaching, inquiry teaching, heuristic teaching and lecture-style teaching, which can effectively help students combine the classroom learning with social reality. Well-selecting topics such as energy saving, environmental protection, multiculturalism, modern science and technology, encyclopedic life, and fashion can attract their attention so as to effectively stimulate their interest in initiative learning, so it is active to put what they learned into the reality. Meanwhile, because of interest, it is more willing for students to solve problems through communication, exploration, data collection and analysis.

As Figure1 shows, comparing with the traditional teacher-centered method, participating method is more easy to stimulate students' interest and beneficial for them to use the applied English and business knowledge to understand the actual situation and to improve their abilities to solve real problems.



**Figure 1.** Hands-on Inquiry Based Learning Model

For instance, in the business reception unit of business interpreting class, teachers used to unilaterally explain the common expressions and problems in the reception, and then do interpreting exercise. Students listened carefully in class, but forget after class. But now, teachers organize class discussion first to lead students to freely discuss the information and expressions that the reception task needs. Then, through the listening and interpreting practice, students could intuitively understand the reception process, and the actual dialogues make the students easy to learn the related etiquettes and the corresponding interpreting skills. Afterwards, the teacher will supplement and improve the missing information. Later, students may design and practice reception tasks. Finally, students will comment first, and teachers will explain later on content design, language expression, interpreting skills, social etiquette and other relevant aspects. This method can maximize the attention of students, allowing them to experience the use of English in real business world and conducting understanding and application of jerky and unfamiliar business knowledge to improve their ability to listen, speak, and interpret in English and to develop their business practice capabilities.

Therefore, participatory teaching is very consistent with the regularity of cognition, and it is also a teaching theory associated with quality education and lifelong learning theory. It is not only a reform and improvement of existing teaching methods, but also the true return of teaching objectives because it emphasizes the role of teachers is to teach students the correct method of doing things and to lead students to have the ability of active learning.

Current teachers should encourage, explore and lead students to think, to doubt and to express their different ideas but not just remember conclusions. For example, it is about interview etiquette of business English reading course. Traditional method usually requires students to read by themselves first, and to answer some relevant questions; then, the teacher will explain the reading skills and vocabulary. Many students find it really boring. But now, teachers give the text as a preview material. During the class, students will do the mock interview. It is more natural for students to master the relevant language, content, skills, and etiquettes. This improves not only students' relevant business capabilities but also their abilities of solving doubts and difficulties. During the process, students gradually cultivate their independent personality. It is particularly important for Business English students because modern market needs comprehensive talents with

business knowledge, English communication skills and related business communication skills. Participating teaching is just this kind of method that returns classrooms to students and encourages and guides students to conduct effective learning by themselves so as to gradually cultivate their abilities of independent thinking, judgment, problem solving and critical thinking.

As the Chinese saying goes, the gentleman leads the door, and the practice depends on the individual. Students are the real subject in the learning process, and teachers' role is to give students the key to open the door of knowledge and lead students to understand the scientific laws of knowledge and the method of learning. Therefore, instead of telling all the knowledge to students directly, teachers should encourage students to collect knowledge by themselves. For the design of classroom activities, teachers should give students time and atmosphere to collect information, understand information, digest information, and transform information instead of covering students' eyes to the cognitive destination. This is really necessary for business English students because it is really helpful to cultivate and improve their practical application capabilities. However, traditional English teaching cannot take students' requirements into account.

The use of participatory teaching really meets market demand. It not only focuses on cultivating students' autonomous learning ability and creative thinking ability in English, but also strengthens the practical operation ability and application ability in business knowledge because this method is designed to allow students to gradually have the interest and initiative of knowledge exploration, lifelong learning, independent thinking and problem solving, good expression and communication, and continuous innovation. For instance, integrated English course contains the customs of English-speaking countries. Teachers usually simply use PowerPoint to explain the customs of various countries, but the effect is not satisfactory. Now teachers may encourage students to conduct a "take me to travel" contest. In order to win the competition, students must collect a large number of customs in advance in relevant countries. Meanwhile, in order to attract the attention from other students during the competition, students fully use their imagination and creativity to make good use of various methods such as questions and answers contests or poster campaign to attract other students to vote. The team with the highest vote would win and can get a chance to have a short-distance travel for free. The enthusiasm of students is fully mobilized, and the customs and related cultures of the countries along the tourist route are familiarized and grasped in a happy and intense atmosphere. At the same time, students' abilities of organization, communication, and business operation are all significantly improved.

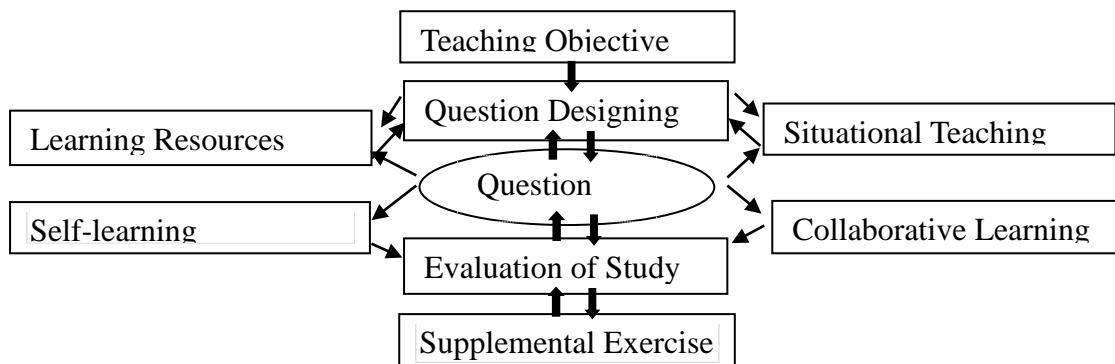
Except for various teaching methods, the design of teaching activities should also match students' characteristics of "modern" and "knowledgeable". Teachers should give enough respect and recognition to students' fresh ideas. For example, in business reading course, there is a discussion of a financial phenomenon, a foreign leader, or a cultural phenomenon. Teachers should learn to appreciate while communicating with students, rather than blindly rejecting new ideas which are different from their own intrinsic or traditional concepts. Training of talents is a long-term and scientific cognitive process which cannot be completed within a short period; therefore, it cannot be eager for quick success, so it cannot use fixed methods to cultivate scholars in different ages. In the process of learning, students as subjects should be relaxed, healthy and happy, rather than being repressed in personality. Otherwise, they will gradually lose interest in learning and even become tired of study.

In a word, learning should be a long-term natural process. Therefore, students should not just learn simple knowledge, but learn independent learning methods and independent thinking skills. In short, participatory teaching is a multi-level and multi-angle teaching method which is adapted to different conditions, times and students, and it is efficient for students to improve their overall abilities.

### 3. Suggestions for Business English Teaching

The changes of the market and students have put forward new requirements for teaching. Learning is a scientific and systematic process, so in order to cultivate excellent business English talents, teachers should improve traditional teaching methods and develop more creative ways to teach. As

Figure 2 shows, teachers should try to lead students to learn independently.



**Figure 2.** Problem Solving Teaching Model

First, Teachers should create an equal and harmonious atmosphere and relationship. In addition to excellent English expressions, business English talents should also acquire business knowledge and relevant communication skills so as to better shoulder the heavy responsibility of business activities and become an excellent application-oriented business English talent. Therefore, in the business English class, in order to better meet the purpose of teaching, teachers should first abandon the traditional thinking of supremacy, turning from the imparter of knowledge into the guider of students, carefully design and organize teaching activities under the concept of equality and adopt student's reasonable advice. And in order to better achieve the teaching objectives, teachers should create the atmosphere so that students are interested in participating in the process of knowledge exploration. Meanwhile, teachers should constantly update their knowledge and keep pace with the times, carefully finding and discovering topics that students like from a global perspective, skillfully passing questions to students through classroom activities, and allowing students to study with questions, research with questions, think with questions and share collecting data with peers to promote the discussion to ultimately guide students to dialectically and objectively use their information to solve practical problems.

At the same time, as a cross-discipline major, business English teaching should not only strengthen students' English language and business knowledge, but also develop their professional skills in English and business. Therefore, in the classroom, teachers should make full use of modern methods such as multimedia and networking. With the help of pictures, objects, and image materials, the abstract business knowledge in textbooks can be vividly presented to students. This way will help the students enter the real business world more quickly and improve their English application ability, business knowledge, subjective awareness and interest in learning.

Meanwhile, the activity design should not only provide opportunities for excellent students or students who are good at expressing, but also consider students with poor expression or quiet character. Every student should be guaranteed to have equal opportunity. After participating the performance, students are allowed to master the ways of knowledge exploration, expression skills, and professional method of problem solving.

Except for the previous items, teachers should also encourage and cultivate students' innovative thinking, which will improve students' divergent thinking, intuitive thinking, and dialectical thinking through participatory classroom activities. This will not only deepen students' understanding of relevant theoretical knowledge but also improve their creative thinking ability based on the use of knowledge. Participating the classroom activities, drills, evaluations, etc. makes students can better understand relevant theoretical knowledge and helps them solve real problems so as to enhance their ability to apply knowledge and potential.

Furthermore, in order to achieve the objectives, teachers need to be careful about the choice of topics. Topic should be suitable for students not only to achieve multi-perspective and multi-level analysis so as to improve their logical thinking ability, but also to maintain their attractiveness to students to ensure a strong desire for knowledge. It means that the teaching process should satisfy

the students' psychological needs and respect the independence and presence of students. Therefore, including the teaching content and the well-selected discussion topics, the design of the activity should not be entirely led and controlled by teachers, but be formulated by students as well. This approach can not only exert students' enthusiasm and initiative, but also meet the students' psychological needs and interest so as to effectively promote interaction between teachers and students. At the same time, because of interest, students are more likely to engage in discussions, and they are more willing to share ideas and communicate with each other so as to continuously improve their own understanding. Meanwhile, satisfying the psychological needs of students can arouse the students' desire to communicate, participate, and share with others. In addition, the sense of being respected will also make students be more willing to actively participate in all aspects of teaching activity, so as to enhance them to learn, to explore and to express more effectively.

In addition, teachers should have good organizational management and coordination capabilities. During the class discussion, teachers should play a role in controlling the overall situation to make sure atmosphere is active but not chaotic; orderly but not rigid. For example, some students tend to stay with their friends when having group discussion, so some teachers choose random grouping to avoid the possibility that friends will communicate in the mother tongue or to discuss irrelevant topics. Even practice proves that the grouping methods should be diversified to improve the efficiency of discussion, but in the early stages, that students are more willing to communicate with acquaintances can be accepted, but later, the groups should be adjusted because of students' complementarily. Adjusting the grouping status can make students have the opportunity to communicate with different people and create collisions of ideas, share learning methods with each other, and constantly improve the cognitive process. Therefore, even participatory teaching is based on students' participation in teaching activities, but it does not mean that such activities are arbitrary and aimless. Teachers should be wise to organize various aspects of the teaching process and be good at guiding students to participate, to explore and to cooperate actively. When the students are discussing, teachers may walk around in the classroom to make sure students discuss the required topic and communicate in English. This not only improves students' business knowledge, but also improves students' language and communication skills and strengthens their ability to explore and solve problems.

Finally, a complete evaluation system should be established in the group discussion. It should consider the performance of cooperation and the differences of individual members, participation and competition. It means students' achievements can reflect not only the enthusiasm and participation of teamwork, but also the individual innovation and the completeness and correctness of the language. The assessment process can be done by teachers and students together. This will not only make the results more equal and accurate, but also improve students' objectivity. This is effective to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, and constantly improve their own knowledge system, and enhance their communication skills and critical capabilities.

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, participating teaching method does not completely abandon and betray the traditional teaching method, but it is the development and innovation of the traditional teaching method. On the one hand, it inherits the advantages of the traditional teaching method and adheres to the teachers' role of helping students. On the other hand, it emphasizes the importance of practical activities. This not only respects the student's individuality, initiative, psychological needs, and cognitive science, but also pays more attention to the students' enthusiasm and creativity, so it is more conducive to students' self-positioning, self-design, and self-development to help them have the ability to study independently, think independently, think creatively, and think critically. And this just meets the market demand for talents. Just because of this, participatory teaching has become popular. But in the process, teachers should focus on cultivating students' innovation and practical ability to organize the class. It is conducive not only to develop students' potential, encourage students to communicate and cooperate among students, but also to develop their individuality which is beneficial for both teachers and students.

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