



# A Survey Analysis on Online Teaching in an Independent College During the Post-pandemic Era

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**Abstract.** The fast-speed development of information and technology, together with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, has not only changed people's way of living, but also people's concept of learning. During the post-pandemic era, colleges and universities have adopted different forms of teaching to adapt to the new teaching environment. A survey analysis has been conducted in an independent college in Guangdong, which reveals that online teaching in the college has been generally praised, while relevant problems have surfaced in the meantime, such as the unstable network signal and the imperfect online teaching equipment, the teachers' in-proficiency in operating the teaching platforms, the students' weak autonomous learning ability in the online teaching process and the lack of face-to-face interaction between teachers and students. Besides, the findings of the survey among English majors bear out the above-mentioned problems and reflects the particularity of online teaching for English majors. Online teaching should combine the characteristics of English language, make full use of web-based teaching resources, and integrate the efforts of both teachers and students.

**Keywords:** online teaching · survey analysis · post-pandemic era · English majors

## 1 Introduction

As is known to all, the development of science and technology has shaped our way of living and infused new concepts and ideas into our mind. Online teaching, which uses the Internet as the transmission system to provide teaching content to long-distance students, is a striking product of the fast-growing information age. It has the advantages of being free from time and geographical restrictions, convenient and flexible, and rich in resources, which can greatly make up for the shortcomings of traditional classrooms.

In the past several years, online teaching has attracted much attention from diversified fields, especially during the pandemic period. Under the epidemic situation, online teaching has become an emergency means, created an opportunity for the reform of teaching mode, and provided a new perspective for the reform of education and teaching in colleges and universities [7]. To overcome the obstacles brought by the pandemic, carry out normal teaching activities and meanwhile adjust to the changing educational

environment, colleges and universities in China have chosen to change accordingly their teaching style. Since the beginning of 2020, the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, to implement “suspended classes, non-stop learning” and ensure “the integration of online teaching and offline teaching”, colleges and universities across the country has uniformly adjusted the teaching form before students return to school in the spring semester to online teaching. The scope and scale of online teaching activities have reached a record high, setting off a series of discussion. Relevant research into the quality of online teaching has proved its benefits, while at the same time has also revealed some problems worthy of exploring and reflecting. Now, with the normalization of the world epidemic, China has gradually entered a “post-epidemic era”. Strictly speaking, the post-epidemic era is not an era in which the epidemic situation completely disappears, and everything recovers as before, but an era in which the epidemic situation rises and falls from time to time, which has a far-reaching impact on all aspects, especially education [6]. The characteristics and potential problems of higher education and teaching in the post-epidemic era have become topics deserving consideration.

## 2 Online Teaching Status in China During the Pandemic

During the pandemic period, colleges and universities have attached great importance to online teaching activities, and all have formulated online teaching work plans during the epidemic prevention and control period, such as comprehensively mobilizing all forces, speeding up the construction of teaching platforms and strengthening teaching management. Active and effective measures have ensured the smooth operation of online teaching. To ensure that the quality of online teaching and offline teaching is substantially equivalent, colleges and universities have made efforts to select a variety of high-quality teaching resources and to construct overall quality monitoring system. According to the questionnaire survey of relevant colleges and universities, teachers and students generally believe that the teaching is arranged reasonably, and the teaching progresses smoothly, and that online resources are abundant. More than 80% of teachers and students are satisfied with the online teaching organization and the teaching quality [2]. Generally, online teaching during the epidemic has demonstrated the following features: diversified teaching platforms, abundant teaching resources, flexible teaching means and forms, and multidimensional evaluation of teaching quality.

Most colleges and universities have adopted 1 to 2 online teaching platforms, complemented by different online teaching tools and diversified online teaching modes. The online teaching platforms or teaching tools used mainly include: Tencent Conference, Tencent Classroom, China University MOOC, Chaoxing Teaching Platform, Wisdom Tree, Rain Classroom, School Platform, Cloud Class, Ding Talk, ZOOM, WeChat, etc. Judging from the analysis reports submitted by various institutions, many colleges and universities continue to build school platforms in depth in view of their own practical needs.

Besides, the Ministry of Education has built 22 online course platforms, offering more than 24,000 free online courses to colleges and universities throughout the country [2]. The teaching resources used in online teaching mainly include the following types: course PPT, teaching videos, electronic textbooks, reading materials, simulation

software, etc., among which course PPT is mostly and frequently used. Additionally, college and university teachers choose teaching forms flexibly according to nature and objectives of courses. The teaching forms adopted are rich and diverse, such as providing learning materials, live broadcast, online discussion, online questioning-answering, and recording and broadcasting. Actually, in the teaching process, most teachers have applied more than one single teaching method. All colleges and universities adhere to the concept of being student-centered and learning outcome-oriented and formulate evaluation indicators based on the characteristics of online teaching, and comprehensively monitor the quality of online teaching work from multiple dimensions, such as the teaching organization, the teaching content, the teaching methods and the learning effects. The upload and push of online teaching resources, teacher-student interaction, and online control are also included in the scope of evaluation for supervision and guidance.

### 3 Analyses of Online Teaching in an Independent College

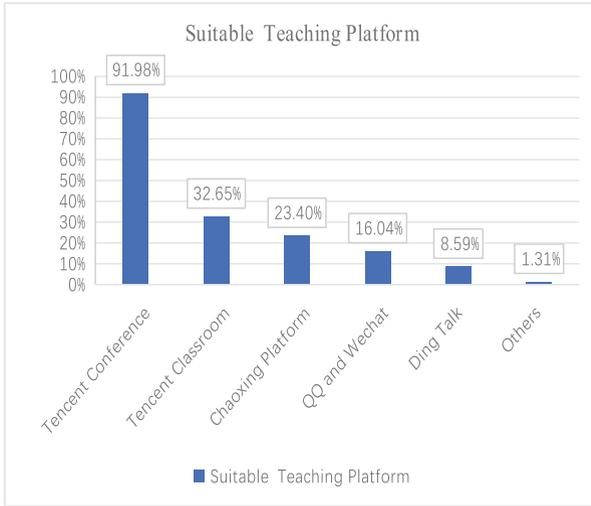
Affected by the ever-changing epidemic situation, at the beginning of this year, students in affected areas could not return to school normally, so relevant colleges and universities still adopted the form of online teaching to assist the implementation of normal teaching activities. The online teaching situation of an independent college in Guangdong Province has been investigated to explore the characteristics of online teaching in the post-epidemic period, analyze the current situation and effect of online teaching of English majors, and put forward relevant suggestions for better integration of educational technology and teaching in the future.

At the beginning of this semester, 9 teachers and 639 students in the college have been suspended from returning to school. From February 28th to March 10th, teachers that have returned to school have conducted classroom teaching or “online-plus-offline” teaching; students that have returned have conducted online or offline learning; teachers and students postponed have carried out online teaching and learning. On March 9, the Office of Academic Affairs of the college distributed the “Online Teaching Survey Questionnaire” to 1,400 online learning students using the Questionnaire Star. As of March 10, a total of 1,222 valid questionnaires have been collected, accounting for 87.3% of all questionnaires.

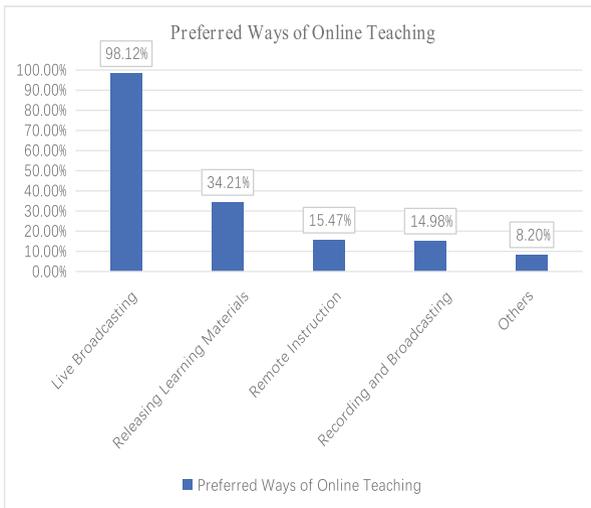
#### 3.1 The Overall Online Teaching Status

It is found from the survey that the college has offered a total of 543 courses, including 64 general elective courses, of which 455 courses taught respectively by 420 teachers are implementing online teaching or online-plus-offline teaching, accounting for 77.3%. The results of the questionnaire survey (see Fig. 1) show that 91.8% of the students under investigation believe that Tencent Conference is more suitable a teaching platform for online teaching and learning. What has been revealed about the preferred way of teaching (see Fig. 2) is that 98.12% of the teachers prefer live broadcasting, with only 14.98% of the teachers preferring recorded teaching.

In addition, as to the teaching effect, the results of the survey (see Fig. 3) show that only 56.71% of the students surveyed think that the online teaching effect is “very good”

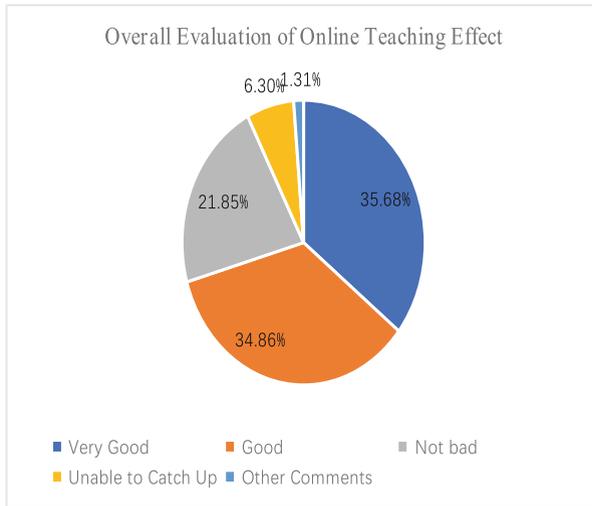


**Fig. 1.** Suitable teaching platform

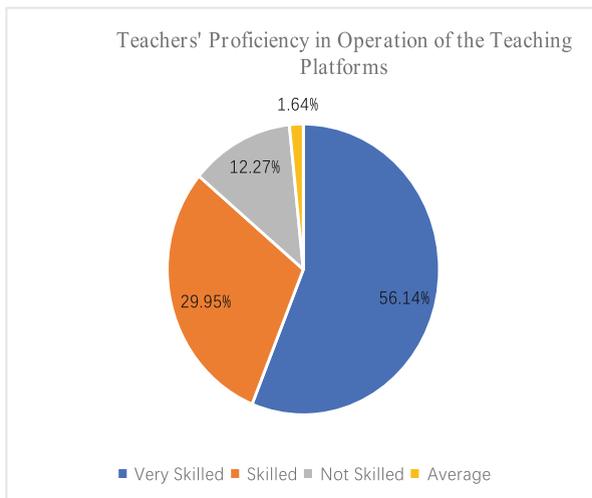


**Fig. 2.** Preferred ways of teaching

or “good” in the first two weeks, and 43.29% of the students doubted the teaching effect. Many factors might have influenced students’ view of the teaching effect, such as the lack of face-to-face interaction, teachers’ in-proficiency in the operation of the relevant teaching platform, the insufficient supplementary teaching facilities in the classroom, distraction of students’ attention in non-classroom environment and the imperfect design of the teaching activities. For instance, 13.91% of the students claim that the teachers cannot use the online teaching platform proficiently (see Fig. 4), which shows that a



**Fig. 3.** Overall evaluation of online teaching effect



**Fig. 4.** Teachers' proficiency in operation of the teaching platforms

small number of teachers urgently need to improve their ability to use information technology. Moreover, only 43.04% of the students consider that they can often participate in classroom interaction, while the rest of the students propose that there is not enough interaction in the teaching process. The design and organization for both online teaching and online-plus-offline teaching still needs to be optimized.

The analysis of the online teaching status in this college proves that online teaching has its advantages and disadvantages. Teachers and students are supposed to work together to find remedies for the shortcomings and thus to optimize the teaching effect.

### 3.2 Feedback on Online Teaching of English Majors

Before 2020, most colleges and universities generally adopted the more traditional offline classroom teaching mode, which still occupied the mainstream position. In the first half of 2020, most professional courses in all colleges and universities adopted online teaching methods, and the traditional classroom teaching mode was transformed into an online teaching mode based on modern information technology. The same is true for English majors. Online teaching has changed from the previous “exploratory” educational reform activities to daily activities that all teachers and students must face. We are supposed to build an intelligent environment for English education and teaching in the new era, which combines in-class and out-of-class teaching, and online and offline teaching [4]. The *Guidelines for the Teaching of Foreign Language and Literature Majors in Ordinary Colleges and Universities* (2020) [1] demands that foreign language education and teaching in the intelligent era keep up with the pace of technological innovation and deeply integrate modern information technology, to promote the reform of the concept, content, mode and method of education. The teaching of various foreign language majors should realize the transformation from the use of technology to the teaching concept [8]. The current research focus of information-based foreign language teaching is changing from promoting teachers’ use of information technology to a more open and pragmatic approach to the integration of technical means and language teaching in the new media environment. Taking into consideration of the requirement and the dominant role of English Majors in the college, the questionnaire results of online teaching of English majors are emphasized and analyzed.

Among the 639 respondents, 237 of them are majored in English. They have provided feedback concerning aspects like the choice of the teaching platform, the teaching form, the interaction, and the teaching effect. As to the teaching platform, most of them think that Tencent Conference is the best choice (92.83%), followed by Chaoxing teaching platform (29.96%) and Tencent Classroom (23.21%). In terms of the teaching effect, as shown in Table 1, only about 57.38% of the respondents from English majors think that the teaching effect is good, with 40.93% of them claiming that the effect is not good, showing little difference compared with other majors.

In the aspect of the teacher-student interaction, most of the respondents seem to be unsatisfied; only 40.51% of them hold that there has been enough interaction in the

**Table 1.** English majors’ evaluation of online teaching effect

Item	Number	Percent
A.A.Very good	41	17.3%
B.B.Good	95	40.08%
C.C.Not bad	84	35.44%
D.D.Unable to catch up	13	5.49%
E.E.Other comments	4	1.69%
Total	237	100%

**Table 2.** English majors' evaluation of interaction

Item	Number	Percent
A.A.Often	96	40.51%
B.B.Occasionally	96	40.51%
C.C.Seldom	40	16.88%
D.D.Never	5	2.11%
Total	237	100%

teaching process and about 20% of them think that the interaction is far from being enough (see Table 2).

### 3.3 Possible Causes for English Majors' Evaluation

Different from other subjects, English teaching focuses on the instrumentality of language in communication, the input of multi-form language knowledge and the output of language use. Meanwhile, it emphasizes the interdependence of language and culture and advocates the use of English in real contexts and the acquisition of English culture through cross-cultural communication. The assessment of English majors' learning effect is largely based on the assessment of students' English language ability. The evaluation of the effect of language acquisition is inherently difficult. As mentioned before, online teaching is limited by various factors. For example, sometimes network freezes and delays occur, resulting in poor teaching effect. Due to the background noise, the teacher can only interact with a single student at a time, and the class is so large that it is impossible to interact with every student, and it is difficult for the classmates to interact effectively. Considering the particularity of English learning, if there is no interaction and communication in teaching, and only theoretical knowledge is learned, the improvement of English language skills is a very slow process.

Additionally, whether it is face-to-face classroom teaching or screen-to-screen online teaching, students need to have a certain degree of autonomy and self-discipline, but one of the problems in online teaching is the lack of effective classroom supervision. In the virtual classroom environment of online teaching, the students lacking in self-discipline believe that there is no external constraint and supervision on whether to participate in learning activities, thus reducing the enthusiasm for classroom participation. Furthermore, online live teaching is dominated by teachers, which cannot give full play to the subjective initiative of students in learning. Students passively listen to teachers' lectures, the opportunity to research and explore denied, their sense of participation and enthusiasm for learning reduced, resulting in bad learning results. Compared with other professional courses in the field of science and engineering, English language does not have a particularly strong continuity, which also makes students have the idea that even if they don't listen to this class, as long as they can study by themselves after class, they can still keep up with the progress, which will to some extent affect the energy invested in the current class, thus influencing the teaching effect.

### 3.4 Enlightenment for English Teaching Based on Information Technology

With the vigorous development of big data, cloud computing and mobile Internet technology, English teaching concepts are changing, teaching theories are developing and teaching environment is being upgraded. It seems that all elements related to teaching are moving towards innovation and change. In view of the problems revealed in the teaching of English majors and the possible causes, we suggest that information technology be effectively integrated with college English teaching to promote students' autonomous learning and improve the teaching effect.

First of all, English teaching mode should be innovated. Flipped classroom, blended teaching and MOOC are the most popular teaching modes in recent years, which represent a development trend in the new era. Take blended teaching, it consists of three core components: online learning, in-class application and after-class practice, which are interconnected with each other. In the online learning process, students can watch well-designed micro-lecture videos independently, complete online exercises and quizzes closely related to the course content and communicate with each other in the online learning community. Classroom teaching no longer takes knowledge transfer as the main form, but creates language application situations around themes, through various language-based, skill-based, or theme-based tasks, so that students are exposed to knowledge display. After-class practice is usually carried out around the authentic language practice project, which is an extension and expansion of classroom learning. For instance, students cooperate to complete projects such as questionnaires, video production, poster design, etc., and use English for classroom presentations or online presentations.

Secondly, both teachers and students of English majors are supposed to improve their ability to use modern information technology. Teachers not only need to further master a wealth of technical knowledge, but also avoid many negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, and rejection caused by online teaching, and should master the specific methods of operating relevant teaching platforms, live broadcast platforms, social media, etc. For students, it is necessary to cultivate the ability to retrieve information, collect data, evaluate digital materials, and use a variety of online learning resources and platforms.

Last but not the least, multi-modal situational teaching methods should be developed to construct an authentic teaching context that is beneficial to stimulate students' interest and improve students' participation in learning. The teaching can be assisted by online teaching resources like Chinese university MOOCs, WeChat public account Moolsnet, iFLYTEK ETS100 and mobile virtual laboratory Mlabs. With the help of these teaching resources, through a reasonable combination of PPT, body movements, facial expressions, appreciation of English videos, and discussion, the application of multi-modalities like sound, text, color, image and action can be realized [3]. In this way, both verbal communication skills and non-verbal communication skills of the students will be trained.

## 4 Conclusions

The current special social environment has put online teaching in an unprecedented important position [5]. The realization of the optimal teaching effect in online teaching needs the efforts of both teachers and students. Teachers' performance plays a crucial role

in online teaching. As the participants and leaders of online teaching, teachers should take learners' satisfaction as the teaching goal and end-result, and actively improve their online teaching skills. The teaching contents, forms and methods, and activities should be carefully designed to enhance discussion and interaction. Simultaneously, timely analysis, control and supervision of students' online learning status should be conducted. In terms of online teaching of English majors, combination of multi-modal resources like sound and image can help to promote learners' overall perception of sound, shape, meaning, intonation and rhythm of English, and achieve more independent and personalized teaching. On the side of the students, the ecological environment of modern information technology has become a necessary factor to improve their autonomous learning ability. Different types of language resources online create the conditions for students to study independently, breaking down the boundaries between different media and realizing the construction of knowledge, which is beneficial to the realization of cross-cultural communication goals in English language learning. We firmly believe that although online teaching is still unsatisfactory, with the development of the times and the progress of technology, with the joint efforts of teachers and students, online learning will become an important way for students, including English majors, to learn.

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