

# **Analysis of the Reform and Innovation in Higher Vocational English Education**

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**Abstract.** The innovation of Higher Vocational English education is a systematic project, mainly including the innovation of the education idea, the education pattern, the teaching content, the teaching method and the educational system. The reforms of English teaching in higher vocational colleges under the education innovative idea are imperative under the circumstances. The reforms will focus on ideas, teaching methods, educational models and tools, etc. Teaching must agree well with the characteristics of higher vocational students, meeting the needs of their future employment and social development. To carry out innovative education in higher vocational English teaching, we use these methods, which can create democratic and harmonious classroom atmosphere, encourage students to explore, stimulate students' learning initiative, to innovate the classroom teaching, and carry out the reform of evaluation model at the same time.

## **1 Introduction**

At present, reviewing the international market, the knowledge intensive industry will become the leading industry. However, China's high-tech industry is still in its infancy, complying with the international trend of high-tech industry development, this requires to solve two problems: first, facing the international market to develop the economy, on the basis of improving the quality of workers in our country; second, solving the problem of employment and reemployment of the existing workers. However, these two aspects need the education, especially the vocational education to achieve [1]. Under the vocational educational conception of "people oriented" in many developed countries, the educatees not only learn the skills, but also develop themselves, improve the ability of innovation, and enhance the sense of responsibility. However, at present, China's vocational education is still in a simple way to establish the principle of vocational education from the angle of the employment requirements, which only focuses on letting the vocational educatee master a skill, as a result, ignores the urgency of the demand for educating overall-developed talents in the development of the world. China's vocational education should form the origin of force in the respects of respecting the educatees, serving the educatees, and satisfying the requirements of the educatees, developing the cross - cultural, interdisciplinary and all-round developing talents, which makes China's vocational education follow the road of internalization.

With the great leap forward development of Higher Education, China's vocational education develops itself very well in a surprising speed. A new system of higher vocational education has been initially formed, which meets the needs of the socialist modernization construction basically. Exploring the social culture and value orientation of higher vocational education, which is contained and embodied in this social phenomenon, makes us realize that the development of higher vocational education in our country is a necessity under the development of society. Moreover, we should further carry forward the characteristics of advanced culture in its, which reflects the social progress and direction of development through the innovation of higher vocational education today. This has an important practical significance for higher vocational education to be more widely recognized and supported by the society [2].

Vocational colleges are the main force of Vocational Education, they all use English as a compulsory basic course. How to change ideas in English teaching, to expand students' thinking space, and to make the teaching of knowledge and the cultivation of creative ability develop synchronously is very important. Combined with the characteristics of higher vocational English

and their own teaching experience, this paper discusses on how to reform the English classroom teaching in higher vocational colleges, to cultivate students' innovative ability.

## **2 The Problems and Research Status of "Practical English" Course Teaching in the Traditional Higher Vocational Education**

The vocational education in our country has undergone earth-shaking changes in recent years, a vigorous curriculum teaching reform has been carried out, and has achieved gratifying results. Unfortunately, most of the higher vocational colleges focus on the professional construction. Higher vocational English teaching, as a quality basic course, has not been paid enough attention. There are some serious problems. First of all, although most of the vocational colleges can adhere to the principle of service-guided and employment-oriented. The main task is to develop the work force with application skills in production front line. Compared with the undergraduate colleges, the orientation is clear, the target is specific. But higher vocational education has not yet formed a teaching system which is suitable for its own development. In the practical English course teaching, many schools basically continue to use the undergraduate teaching mode. Just, it slightly decreases on the standard. The trend phenomenon of the regular institutions of higher learning is obvious. The characteristics of higher vocational education are lacking. Personnel training and social services are out of touch. Students' English ability and application ability is far from the demand of the society. Secondly, in the traditional teaching mode, Students' individual differences are not given due attention in the English foundation, interest, future career development direction and so on. Made them develop in the same direction, students' individual needs are not satisfied, and when they go into the society, the employing units are not satisfied. Therefore, from the perspective of service oriented education, whether it is from the perspective of service students or service society to examine, the teaching of "practical English" in Higher Vocational Colleges fails to reflect the service function of education and teaching[3].

Aiming at the above problems, many national vocational colleges such as Ningbo vocational college, Shenzhen vocational technical college and has been trying to explore solutions. They use the research production at domestic and foreign to carry on the reform of higher vocational English teaching and kick off the "practical English" teaching reform in higher vocational colleges. Stratified teaching can solve the problem of students' basic differences in a certain degree, making the students of all levels get reasonable development, meeting the requirement of serving the students. However, from the perspective of the service oriented education system, this reform is not enough. The magnitude of reform which is based on the work process, project teaching and so on is very small, a lot of schools even become formalistic.

## **3 Connotation of Innovation Education in Higher Vocational College English**

In a broad sense, innovation education is the education to enable people to innovate. The education, which is the main purpose of cultivating people's innovative quality and improving the ability of innovation can be called innovation education. For school education, the innovative education refers to the growth of life and improving people's innovation as one of the important goals of the training, and in all the teaching process, the innovative education strengthens the cultivation of students' innovative quality, which makes the innovation of teachers and students effectively improved. Since the reform and opening up, although great change has happened in China's political, economic and other aspects where it is full of change and innovation, education has made great progress. But because of the lag of education development and the increasing pressure of examinations, our education is still more conservative and the lack of innovation, which is difficult to meet the demand for a large number of innovative talents in the construction of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics and the national revival. Therefore, we carry out the innovative education and clearly put forward the innovative training as one of the important goals of education and teaching, and the innovation education should be cultivated and improved in all education and teaching activities, especially about the reform of measurement and evaluation on

students' innovative aspects, which will cause the major changes of the examination system and the content, which has a great impact on traditional education[4].

Teaching is the unity of "teaching and learning", so we should change the idea from two aspects of teachers and students. First of all, when making English teaching strategies in Higher Vocational Colleges, we should fully consider that the teaching goal is to train the students to master the necessary and practical English language knowledge and skills who are provided with the initial capability of reading and translation related to the professional English and lay a certain foundation for further improving the ability of the application of English. Second, higher vocational education is to train the senior technical talents, who can understand the professional, operate and take charge of various affairs in the first line of production and economy, information and other fields. Aiming at this goal, English teaching should focus on cultivating students' practical ability, emphasizing the basic knowledge of language learning and language basic skills training to help students master learning methods. Teaching content should follow the principle of "practical based, enough for the degree", and the choice of teaching content should be practical and representative to meet the actual needs of the production line.

Modern education ideas think that teachers are not only the executor of the teaching task, but also the decision makers of the teaching activities. When teachers play the role of good decision makers, it is necessary for teachers to carry out effective planning and reasonable choice of teaching methods, and when facing the problems, teachers should be creative in teaching methods. Teachers should rethink the teaching activities, adjust and control the strategies they use in the teaching activities. These control behaviors are the optimization of teaching strategies, and the behavioral responses of teachers on the basis of self-reflection. Teachers' teaching is for students' learning, who should fully take the students' cognitive level into consideration in the teaching, so as to be targeted to develop teaching strategies and mobilize the enthusiasm and interest of students learning. When organizing teaching materials, teachers should have the structure and levels, clear the relationship between the elements and systematize it in order to help the students to absorb, master and digest the knowledge. English of most students in Higher Vocational College is weak, and the previous learning content is not solid enough and thorough, so the actual teaching should focus on the cultivation of English language application ability and strengthen the learning of basic knowledge, such as lexical analysis, speech and listening and speaking training, phrase analysis, sentence structure analysis and discourse analysis and translation. Also, pay attention to the cultivation of students' language communicative ability and avoid too much emphasis on the formal structure of the language, while ignoring the communicative value of language, being out of the context, and not practicing [5].

#### **4 Innovative Education in Higher Vocational English**

At present, one of the most important factors that restrict the improvement of the quality of Higher Vocational English teaching is the reform lag of teaching methods. That is to say, if the teaching method can't be improved, it is very difficult to improve the quality of English teaching fundamentally. Therefore, we must optimize the teaching method, and refer to the harmonious development of knowledge, ability and quality as the goal of English teaching. Higher vocational college is a skill teaching type college, and the characteristics of social service and the higher vocational education are inseparable with distinct regional and industrial characteristics. The concept of "serving the students, the society and the employing units" in higher vocational college should be used in the training of talents, and it is realized that the service oriented education system is a kind of open education system. Thus in the principles of personnel training, the traditional idea should be changed, and it is realized what need for students society has in English, what difficulties students have in learning English, what aspects their interest in English represents, and what the way is to solve the needs of social people in English learning. And with the changes of these needs as a rule, if the need has changed, the school will also produce a corresponding set of changes in order to respond to changes in a dynamic setting.

First of all, the past teaching method of the knowledge imparting type and the teaching method

not adapted to the new teaching material should be changed to the communicative teaching method, which is also called "the idea method" or "the function method" and which is a kind of teaching method to cultivate the communicative competence of language in a specific social context based on the project of language function. The communicative teaching method is the tool of communication that takes the communicative competence as the language teaching goal, and at the same time which develops the language abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The interdependence of language and communication is admitted in the communicative teaching method that aims to cultivate the communicative function and where it is clear that the goal of the second language teaching is to cultivate the communicative ability of the creative use of language, as far as possible to encourage learners to play the initiative and enthusiasm of verbal communication activities. The communicative method emphasizes students as the center, the first to analyze the needs of the second language learners, where teaching content and teaching methods must be determined from the needs of learners. The teaching characteristics of higher vocational education are career oriented, and students hope that their educational experience and background can be directly related to their personal interests, professional interests and goals. Therefore, teaching should serve for students' communication and be language functions as the key link. According to the practice principle, students in different majors are arranged special language teaching. The teacher can choose the corresponding workplace topics as teaching contents according to the students' majors, such as product labeling, want ad, resume, operation and maintenance guidelines, aimed at combining the professional to cultivate students' abilities to read, write and translate general business documents and the abilities of simple oral and written communication in foreign business activities[6].

Second, the communicative teaching method makes the teaching process communication that is both a learning goal and a means of learning. In the actual teaching process, teaching goal should be to cultivate students' communicative competence, teaching program is target orientation program, and teaching methods should emphasize the language teaching based on the task, that is, teachers provide tasks, while students make full use of their internal learning mechanism in the completion of the task, so as to strengthen the language inside and the communication behavior outside. For example in this topic about advertising, the teacher can let students develop their learning enthusiasm and creativity of self-directed speech advertising. In the process of writing the script, it is related to the basic knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, sentences and so on. The teacher guides the students to correct their grammar mistakes, and the students' English level will naturally be improved. During the course of the performance, the students practiced speaking through role play and become the master of the classroom. The communicative ability has been developed. We know that, as a kind of behavior, language is based on a certain social environment. In the actual teaching process, the teachers cannot move the real scene into the classroom, but can make use of a variety of multimedia teaching equipment to create close to real communication scenarios. A large number of verbal communication activities are used to cultivate students' communicative competence in the form of group activities. The classroom communication activities and extracurricular activities in the communication are combined. For example, teachers can make use of virtual technology to simulate the working situation, which improves the students' English practical ability and workplace communication skills. Teachers can stimulate students' learning interest and motivation by setting up professional English courses.

In short, according to the characteristics of higher vocational students, we combine the theory of constructivism, to reform the traditional English teaching methods and to promote the communicative teaching method, and encourage students to be diligent in thinking and good at practice, and cultivate students' scientific spirit and innovative consciousness.

## **5 The Ways of Innovation Education in Higher Vocational College English Teaching**

### **(a) Innovate the classroom instruction**

Even to this day, "the teacher's dignity" idea is still deeply ingrained in the minds of many teachers. The teacher is the master of the class as a matter of course. The students become the

plasticene in the hands of teachers understandably, resulting in "cramming education" and "stuffed ducks" phenomenon. When a class comes down, students passively listen to the teacher, following the teacher's baton to turn. It is difficult to develop their own creative thinking. Only in the conversational and equal status, establishing a friend type relationship between teachers and students of democracy, sincere, mutual respect, the students can boldly challenge, boldly express their views and stretch their personality. Consequently, the individual consciousness and potential can be fully played. In the study, the students feel the pleasure and sense of achievement, no mental pressure and burden, so that it was easy to stimulate students' creative potential. In the traditional English class, teachers mainly impart ready-made knowledge. In the learning process, students mainly accept, cognize, remember and repeat the knowledge that it imparts. This will not be possible to play the students' creativity. It is difficult to stimulate students' innovative spirit. If we want to change this situation, first of all, the teacher should take appropriate roles according to the actual need, using reverse thinking method to carry on the teaching design. The teachers guide the students to imagine, to think, to learn, to speak, and let them learn to be independent and happy.

Enabling students to "live" in the classroom, and actively participating in classroom activities, the teachers should carefully design the teaching process to provide the students with a full stage to fully show the self. In the teaching, the teacher can not only organize the students to carry on the time limit group discussion, but also conduct special class discussions or debates on important issues, combining with student experience and life practice. Organizing a good discussion, firstly, teachers need to choose the discussion content which is easy to arouse students' interest. Because psychology shows that when people are interested in a certain thing, it will stimulate the demand for this thing. The teachers can let the students discuss which computer viruses exist, the advantages and disadvantages of downloading software on the Internet, why people are the weakest link in the computer security system and so on. These discussions can not only stimulate students' interest in the textbook knowledge, but also extend the student's study interest to the extracurricular. Secondly, teachers should be good at setting up the topic according to the teaching goal. Problems can also be raised by the students themselves, which are often more convenient to create appropriate problem situations. Through the setting of the ingenious problem, we strive to make every time we have a wonderful content and original thinking.

We should try to make the students become the organizers and planners of classroom activities, so that students will be more initiative and positive. For example, the teachers let the students carry on the scene dialogue planning and the performance, the textbook drama planning and the role performance, etc. Through these activities, not only the classroom atmosphere will be more active, the more important is that the students have changed from passive listeners to active participants in classroom activities. Their subjective consciousness has been fully respected and strengthened in this process, the consciousness of active learning and innovative consciousness has been enhanced. The learning ability is improved, and creative ability is cultivated.

#### **(b) Reform the evaluation pattern**

Our existing examination system cannot be scientific, fair and reasonable to reflect the students' English ability, and there is no real feedback of teaching quality. Therefore, it is imperative to reform the evaluation mode and improve the quality of English teaching.

In everyday teaching activities, the teacher can observe students' learning behavior, cognitive style, emotional characteristics and students' oral and written homework purposefully and designedly, and make feedback to the students in a timely manner. Through the timely evaluation, not only students can grasp their own learning situation, but also the teachers can learn a lot of information. For example: Whether students are expected to make progress, what they have learned, which learning strategies are helpful to the students, which teaching strategies are the most effective, which activities students like, what problems the students still have, etc. In this aspect, we use teacher evaluation, student self-assessment, peer assessment and after-school interview to obtain information and affirm the students' strengths in a timely manner, and to find the problems in time and solve the problems as soon as possible.

The establishment of learning archives is the main means of formative assessment. Learning files

are used to collect students' learning achievements in a period or a term. Generally it is divided into 6 steps: collection, reflection, assessment, selection, thinking and evaluation. Learning files can show the progress and achievements of students after studying hard, also can cause students to reflect on their own learning process. So that students learn more about themselves and enhance self-confidence. At the same time, the student archives also provides specific records of students' progress for teachers and parents, helping teachers to teach students according to their aptitude, choosing the correct teaching strategies for the teaching activities in the next round. The learning file is helpful in analyzing the learning strategies adopted by students.

In the learning process of the learners, teachers should pay attention to their achievements and give the affirmation, timely finding and correcting problems in order to help and encourage students to learn more effectively. When the teacher carries on the formative evaluation of the student's homework, the classroom performance and the study file, the feedback information, diagnosis and encouragement should be the main, the specific assessment scores are not given. And the specific evaluation criteria are consulted and formulated by the students and the teachers according to the content and nature of the evaluation. In this process, what students get are not high or low scores, yet it is the help and respect. What they experience is success and happiness, and it lays the foundation for future success.

## **6 Conclusions**

The new English teaching model has changed the traditional teaching mode, which takes teachers as the center and simply imparts language knowledge for a long time, beginning to establish a student-centered autonomous learning and individualized teaching mode, which has profound significance to cultivate Chinese students' strong comprehensive application ability of foreign language. Taking the strict teaching attitude, the advantage of the modern teaching equipment and the advanced teaching concept as a guide, the teachers innovate curriculum education and teaching management mode, develop English teaching strategies for vocational college students, and widen the communication of students study and using, which gives students a broad employment prospects.

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