

# Requirements for Teachers in College English Teaching in China in the New Era

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**Abstract**—After entering the 21st century, China's society has made tremendous progress. Great changes have also taken place in the forms of College English education in China. The focus of College English teaching has also shifted from simple knowledge input to the cultivation of language use ability. As a result, College English courses do not only include general English, but also ESP and general education courses begin to occupy a larger proportion. All these put forward higher requirements for college English teachers. This paper briefly analyses the requirements for college English teachers in the new era and gives some preliminary solutions.

**Key Words**— *Course system of college English, College English education, High-quality professional teaching team, Requirements for college English teachers*

In the 21st century, College English teaching in China has gone through an unusual ten-year development process. In 2003, the Ministry of Education officially launched the project of teaching quality and teaching reform in Colleges and universities, which is included in the four planned tasks. The third one is college English teaching reform. It can be said that in the first ten years of the 21st century, College English teaching reform is characterized by promoting the process of educational informatization, establishing a new English teaching mode supported by computer network technology, paying attention to training students' listening and speaking ability and self-learning ability, and advocating the combination of formative assessment and summative assessment.

## I. TASKS OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

College English teaching does not start from zero. The vast majority of college students have already learned English at the middle school stage. They have acquired basic English language skills and basic knowledge, and have basic English language competence. The design of English teaching in middle schools starts from the students' cognitive level and learning development needs. The content is close to the students' real life. The language of the text is simple and the vocabulary is about 3300 words. College English teaching is an integral part of higher education. Its mission and task is to improve the English level of tens of millions of non-English majors in China. On the one hand, College English teaching should link up the English teaching in senior high school, on the other hand, it should embody the characteristics of higher education, have higher requirements for English application ability, pay more attention to the ideological content and broaden the horizon so as to meet the national demand for high-quality talents and the individual development needs of students.

At the University stage, most Chinese universities put listening and speaking in an important position in English teaching, which does not mean weakening the training of other skills. In fact, strengthening listening and speaking is put forward under the premise of "cultivating students' comprehensive English application ability". As far as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation skills are concerned, reading should not be neglected, because reading is the premise and foundation of listening, speaking, writing and translation, and the main channel for input of linguistic knowledge and cultural information. Whether at school or at work after graduation, the most convenient and fast way for most people to get in touch with English is still reading.

## II. THE MAINSTREAM COURSE SYSTEM OF COLLEGE ENGLISH

College English teaching can be divided into three categories: English for General Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, English for General Education.

### A. *The Gradual Decrease in the Share of English for General Purposes*

For a great country like China, it is not easy to propose the abolition of College English teaching. Most college freshmen have weak comprehensive ability to communicate in English, and their knowledge of English language is limited. They need to consolidate their foundation and improve their level by continuing to learn. However, with the advancement of English curriculum reform in basic education, the English level of middle school students is constantly improving. At the same time, the total amount of College Students' credit is under control. Many colleges and universities are reducing course credits. College English course is the most important one. In order to adapt to this trend, the share of general English teaching based on language will gradually decrease, while the share of ESP teaching and general English teaching will gradually increase.

### B. *The Development Trend of Specialized English in Chinese Colleges and Universities*

ESP can be divided into English for Academic Purposes and English for Vocational Purposes which are closely related to professional disciplines. ESP course is a transitional course from general English course to bilingual course. Its teaching purpose is not to impart professional knowledge, but to cultivate students' linguistic competence for effective professional communication. ESP courses can best reflect the characteristics of schools and disciplines, and it is an important way to implement individualized teaching. As far as the relationship between general English and ESP is concerned, ordinary English is the foundation. Without the study of basic English, ESP is difficult to carry out. With the foundation of general English, we should consider the development of ESP teaching. ESP is the "only way" for the future development of College English teaching in all colleges and universities throughout the country. There are some doubts about the view that ESP will gradually become the mainstream.

### C. *The Development of General Education English*

The general education English curriculum aims at improving students' comprehensive cultural literacy. One of the aims of language teaching is to acquire a broader and deeper understanding of the way of life, mode of thinking and cultural heritage of other countries. College English teaching should help students to understand western civilization, ways of thinking and habits of life, to view western culture and core values critically, to familiarize themselves with cultural differences between China and foreign countries, and to cultivate their intercultural communicative competence. Otherwise, we can not achieve the goal of communicating effectively in English. Therefore, the nature of College English is defined as both instrumental and humanistic.

### D. *The Design of New Course System of College English*

In order to meet the needs of the times, we must focus on the construction of College English curriculum system. This system should be consistent with the orientation of the school, the objectives and requirements of personnel training. It includes general English, special purpose English and general education English. The proportion of the three should be appropriate. Colleges and universities should design individualized syllabus and construct college English curriculum system according to the actual situation. The implementation of these to the operational level is to carry out curriculum design. Curriculum design is a key link between teaching concept and teaching practice, which defines what to teach and what courses to offer macroscopically. First of all, curriculum setting sets the direction, guides our teaching to what direction, and sets the focus of teaching. It stipulates the key points of teaching. If the curriculum is not properly set up, it may restrain us and take the wrong path. At the same time, the curriculum has set up a platform on which teachers can exert their abilities, potentials and creativity. College English is not only a reading, writing and audio-visual course, but also a curriculum system. Curriculum reform should be an important part of College English teaching reform. Many schools are actively exploring the curriculum design, striving to achieve the combination of basic and selective, stipulating the combination of action and optional action to achieve three balances, namely, the balance of compulsory and optional courses, the balance of input and output, and the balance of language and culture.

One of the important tasks in the construction of College English curriculum system is to strengthen the connotation construction of specific courses. In recent years, many schools have taken the reform of College English teaching as an opportunity to carry out curriculum construction and achieved remarkable results. In accordance with the teaching concept of "student-centered, teacher-led" and supported by modern information technology, these courses innovate teaching content, cultivate students' comprehensive English application ability and autonomous learning ability, and make contributions to improving teaching quality. In order to build a more scientific College English curriculum system that can meet the needs of the society and students, we should also strengthen the efforts of offering follow-up courses, develop and construct special-purpose courses and general education courses.

## III. BUILDING A TEAM OF PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS WITH HIGH QUALITY

Teachers are a key factor in promoting college English teaching reform and improving teaching quality. China's education management departments attach great importance to strengthening the construction of the teaching staff, and propose to "strive to create a high-quality professional teaching team with noble ethics, exquisite business, reasonable structure and full of vitality", which points out the direction for the construction of College English teaching staff.

According to the College English Teaching Survey (2010), 77% of College English teachers have master's degree or postgraduate degree, 8% have doctoral degree and 8% are studying doctoral degree. The combined ratio is 85%, compared with 54.7% in 2001. This shows that the academic structure of College English teachers has made remarkable progress compared with the past, but there is still a big gap compared with the academic echelon that has been popularized in other disciplines. The low educational level is a restrictive factor affecting the development of teachers. At present, the proportion of professors and associate professors in College English teachers is 4% and 27% respectively. In addition, the proportion of female teachers is high, reaching 80%.

Therefore, we should make every effort to optimize the structure of the teaching staff. One of the important measures is to encourage young teachers to pursue doctoral degrees and allow them to apply for doctoral degrees in non-English language and literature. The number of doctorates in English Language and Literature in Chinese universities is small, the enrollment is

limited, and the competition is fierce. Interdisciplinary study of doctoral degree by young teachers can not only improve the educational level of teachers in a short time, but also provide teachers' guarantee for the construction of College English curriculum system.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Foreign language teaching involves developing language competence, imparting language knowledge and cultivating cross-cultural awareness. It has its own particularities, and requires teachers' professional level and teaching ability to be particularly high. An important part of College English teaching reform is to apply computer technology to English teaching and establish a new teaching mode based on classroom and computer, which requires that students' principal position and teachers' leading position be reflected in the teaching process. Teachers undoubtedly play a leading role in setting teaching objectives, choosing learning content, designing classroom teaching and managing teaching activities. Their teaching ability and level directly affect the teaching effect and quality. College English teachers in the new era must strengthen their study, improve their English level and optimize their knowledge structure so as to be competent in teaching.

The practice of College English teaching reform has proved that the majority of foreign language teachers are the main body of teaching reform. Whether the teaching reform can be carried out smoothly and the teaching quality can be improved largely depends on the initiative, initiative and pioneering spirit of front-line teachers. In the process of College English teaching reform, a group of new-type compound College English teachers have emerged, which are characterized by familiarity with foreign language teaching theory, perfect English application ability, good computer application ability and wide knowledge. College English teaching reform provides a rare opportunity and platform for teachers' development.

Colleges and universities should take college English curriculum as a platform to build a "dynamic" teaching team in teaching reform and practice, and constantly improve teachers' professional level and teaching ability. We should advocate teachers' research and teaching, apply the results of teaching and research to teaching practice, and strive to build a professional college English teaching team with reasonable structure, professional title, academic qualifications, gender and academic background.

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