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### Curriculum-Based Innovation of College English Teaching Concepts from a General Education Perspective

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#### Abstract

At present, the focus of general education in colleges and universities is on determining teaching objectives and teaching reform. The national standard of general education in colleges and universities is how to successfully cultivate qualified talents and how to master an excellent knowledge and ability above. However, in the long-term teaching process of university English courses, a considerable amount of energy has been focused on certification, which neglects the improvement of language application ability.

Therefore, it is necessary to innovate the teaching of college English courses from the perspective of general education. The teaching of college English from the perspective of general education urgently needs to enrich the course content, carry out graded teaching, and clarify the goal of talent cultivation. The teaching of college English in the perspective of general education should pay more attention to the comprehensive cultivation of English language application ability.

**Keywords:** General Education, College English, Teaching Concept Innovation

#### 1. The English Language Teaching Reform, Reform and Innovation in University English, and Opening Up English General Education

As a general education of language learning, it should include general foreign language, academic English, and English for special purposes. As a language tool, English has the characteristics of acquiring information, facilitating communication and enriching humanities, so the university English course should enrich students' knowledge and expand their cultural quality, so that students can learn how to learn and use English for cross-cultural communication, so that they can speak in the language communication and generate internal motivation in learning English. Therefore, the current university English course teaching still needs to deepen the reform, change the teaching concept, not only pay attention to the requirement of students to pass the examination, but also pay attention to the change of English teaching course structure, cultivate students' discursive consciousness and improve students' overall quality. At present, some famous universities in China, such as Peking University, Sun Yat-sen University, Zhejiang University and Tongji University, have already carried out language general education in their teaching, and have made certain achievements, in order to make more universities understand more about the similarities and differences of Chinese and Western cultural values, and to build "one belt and one road" to promote the smooth spread of global common development. In order to make more colleges and universities understand more about the similarities and differences of Chinese and Western culture and values, and to build "one belt and one road" to promote the smooth transmission of global common development, all universities should actively explore the in-depth English teaching reform and open English general education.

#### 2. Adjusting the Structure of College English Courses

At present, in most colleges and universities in China, college English is still a compulsory course for freshmen and sophomore non-majors, but for junior and senior non-English majors, learning English basically depends on "self-consciousness", and students who do not have the task of studying for graduate school have interrupted their English learning. As a foreign language, students' language ability will slowly deteriorate if they are not exposed to it for a long time, which is not good for improving students' overall quality.

The author believes that in the third and fourth years, for non-English majors, language courses are still needed, which can be offered in the form of general elective courses, mainly for the purpose of expanding students' horizons and deepening their knowledge, while special-purpose English courses should also be set up, and graded teaching makes English teaching gradually applied and practical. For example, Sun Yat-sen University, in the construction of foreign language general

education courses, has actively carried out international cooperation and built twelve bilingual or foreign language general education courses. In order to implement the reform of university English teaching, it is still optimizing the structure of university English general education courses, following international standards in the development of curriculum standards and implementation plans, referring to the top 100 universities in the world in terms of talent training and curriculum development; in the process of curriculum construction, relevant experts or famous scholars from famous universities are invited to participate in the construction or teaching work.

In the selection of English general education textbooks, priority is given to those published by domestic and foreign first-class publishers and developed by famous scholars, and students are supported to use the information network environment for independent personalized learning. In the practice of university English general education, students' independent learning using the information network environment accounts for one-half of the class hours and one-third of the credits.

This course is one of the general education courses of English in Sun Yat-sen University. This course mainly introduces students to the history and culture of North America, and in the course construction, famous experts and scholars from North American universities and key universities in China are invited to participate in the construction. The course materials are national standard materials, and there are also related online courses. For example, Peking University's English course is also a mandatory course for the whole university, using a flexible credit system (2, 4, 6, 8 credits) and a graded modular teaching system (Y, A, B, C, C+ levels). The following table shows:

Enrollment Placement	Credit Hours	Attributable Courses
Y Level	8	4 credits of Y Level course +4 credits of A Level course
A Level	8	4 credits of A Level course +4 credits of B Level course
B Level	6	4 credits of B Level course +2 credits of C Level course
C Level	4	4 credits of C Level course/2 credits of C Level course +4 credits of C+ Level course
C+ Level	2	2 credits of "Critical Thinking and Academic Writing"

Level Y has only one course, "Basic English Reading" which is on the basic side.

Level A includes five courses, such as Phonics and Listening Vocabulary, English Reading, English Listening, Practical Basic English Writing, and Basic English Listening.

Level B includes 16 courses such as Overview of American Culture, English Masterpieces and Films, British and American Comedy, Selected British and American Newspapers, and Chinese Culture and Society in Contemporary British and American Documentaries.

The C-level courses include 18 courses such as Business Communication and Expression, Language, Culture and Communication, English at the Frontiers of Science and Technology, Interdisciplinary Reading, and Reading English for Academic Purposes.

One course at the C+ level is Critical Thinking and Academic Writing. The above courses range from Y and A level partial basic application courses, B level cultural learning courses, to C and C+ level specialized professional courses, a total of 41 courses, covering all aspects, graded clearly, from shallow to deep. Students select courses through grading exams using the Internet, in principle in the order of  $Y \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow C+$ . Students are required to complete the university English courses within three years of enrollment (including summer school). In principle, each student takes one University English course per semester. Students choose a larger number of courses in the University English program, which on the one hand has a low repetition rate, and on the other hand is conducive to reflecting that students are the main body of learning, allowing them to choose courses that are conducive to their developmental direction according to their interests, thus promoting the improvement of their overall literacy.

In order to accommodate students' multi-faceted choices, Peking University stipulates that all students must have at least 16 credits of general elective courses after graduation, of which no less than 2 credits of general elective courses in each field and no less than 4 credits of general elective courses taken in their individual fields of specialization. The teachers of the general elective courses are experienced key teachers of the school, and the teaching content focuses on inspiring students' ideas, teaching them learning methods, and cultivating students' ability of independent learning and thinking. Each course has two class hours per week and is completed in one semester. In summary, both Sun Yat-sen University and Peking University, in setting up their general education courses in college English, have given high priority to actively teaching students about international society and culture and promoting cross-cultural college English teaching, which is helping to improve students' overall cultural quality.

### 3. Strengthen the Development of Implicit Curriculum of College English

The implicit curriculum is relative to the explicit curriculum. College English classroom teaching is collectively called the explicit curriculum, while the implicit curriculum refers to the English teaching outside the classroom. The implicit curriculum can better stimulate students' motivation and interest in learning, give full play to students' subjective status, and promote the realization of the teaching objectives of the explicit curriculum.

#### (1) Developing the Hidden Curriculum in Classroom Teaching

The teaching design of university English courses should pay attention to the learning contexts of students of different majors, and in the teaching activities, rich and diverse language materials and situations should be created to enrich students' perceptual cognition and direct experience, so that the classroom becomes more creative and flexible. For example, in the English classroom activities for business and economics majors, a cross-cultural perspective can be incorporated to set up topics to discuss with students the cultural origins of American slang and its connotations, and to instruct students to correctly understand the slang culture and the messages it carries, so that they can become proficient in using the context in the form of audio-visual speaking. Teachers prepare teaching materials and students according to different professional classes, and through

curriculum innovation, they expand the knowledge level for students and improve their language application skills.

#### (2) Developing the Hidden Curriculum in Extracurricular Activities

Colleges and universities implement liberal education in extracurricular activities of college English, they can invite famous experts and scholars from foreign related disciplines to come to the university and give short-term lectures or carry out corresponding lectures for students, they can also hire famous scholars from domestic related disciplines to come to the university to participate in teaching activities, they can regularly carry out exchange activities of English and foreign cultures, they can also hold English salons and organize various recreational activities about language and cultural knowledge, so that students in We can also hold English salons and organize various recreational activities related to language and cultural knowledge, so that students can learn more about and enrich the cultural knowledge of the world in the extra-curricular hidden curriculum, thus improving their cultural literacy.

#### 4. Strengthen the Teacher Team

Teachers play a vital role in education. If the construction of teachers cannot keep up, even if the curriculum system is well built, it lacks the basic conditions for smooth implementation. Moreover, the English level of the whole society is improving nowadays, which puts forward higher requirements on the level of university English teachers. The teaching activities of university English teachers now not only have to meet the requirements of students using the Internet for learning, classroom informatization and other teaching-related requirements, but also to cultivate international talents for modern times and promote liberal education. However, the level of many university English teachers cannot meet the requirements. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of university English teachers. Firstly, we should strengthen the guidance for new teachers and young and middle-aged teachers to change their teaching concepts and provide targeted and all-round training so that teachers can realize changes in many aspects such as teaching concepts, teaching modes, talent training, curriculum setting and teaching contents to promote the realization and promotion of general education in college English.

In concrete practice, we can "bring in and go out", that is, we can hire relevant experts to come to the university for training on the one hand, and send outstanding teachers to study advanced experience abroad on the other. For example, the specialized technical training needed to develop an informative English general education curriculum will enable teachers to learn modern teaching techniques and carry out informative teaching, while teachers themselves should establish a high sense of responsibility and ownership, so that they can continuously enrich themselves and broaden their horizons during the training. After the training, qualified teachers should be issued with qualification certificates and encouraged to set up course groups to lead the teachers by points. Teachers in the group learn from each other and complement each other, so as to continuously enrich the course resources and improve the teaching methods, and then promote the development of university English general education.

#### 5. Improve the Evaluation Mechanism

The evaluation mechanism plays a guiding and directive role in the teaching of university courses. At present, the English proficiency test for college students in China is mainly the National College English Level 4 and 6 Examination. Many students slacken their learning of English after passing the exams. Therefore, schools should strengthen the monitoring of students' English proficiency, improve the evaluation mechanism, reduce the proportion of final exam results in the total score, and include daily learning habits, learning attitudes, independent learning ability, and English listening and speaking ability into the scope of evaluation, so as to achieve the purpose of urging students to live in active learning, developing students' vision, enriching students' knowledge, and improving students' practical English ability, and then promote the general education of college English. The purpose is to promote the development of general education in English.

#### 6. Conclusion

University English teaching in China's colleges and universities, at this stage, still stays at the level of exam-oriented education, and students learn the language only to master English language knowledge and skills, and know little about the level of cross-cultural communication, and do not learn enough, and the comprehensive quality is not high, and the development of general education can effectively improve the comprehensive quality of college students. Universities should deepen the reform of English teaching, open English general education, adjust the structure of university English courses, promote cross-cultural university English teaching, strengthen the hidden curriculum of university English teaching, improve the evaluation mechanism of university English, and build a university English teaching staff, so as to realize the goal of cultivating university English talents and cultivate talents who are suitable for social development and meet social needs.

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