

# A Study on the Training Path for College English Majors in the New Era - A Case Study of the Curriculum Reform of Spoken English

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**Abstract:** With the development of the social economy, high-quality English talents have become an indispensable part of economic development, and play an important role in foreign trade, education, translation, and other industries. However, the traditional teaching mode of colleges and universities has made it difficult to meet society's and the industry's needs for English talents. In the process of training English talents in colleges and universities, there are some problems, such as the inconsistency between the curriculum and the reality, the traditional education mode, and the unclear goal of talent training. Therefore, college English majors need to change the traditional teaching concept and readjust the teaching objectives, curriculum standards, and teaching contents to meet the needs of high-quality English talents under the social and economic development in the new era.

**Keywords:** College English majors; Talent training; Cross-cultural

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## 1. Introduction

As the pace of China's integration into the world continues to accelerate, the connection between China and the world is getting closer. English plays an important role in economic and trade cooperation, cultural exchanges and tourism interaction. At the same time, the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative has promoted China's deep integration with the world and provided a broader stage for English-speaking talents. Society and the industry have put forward higher standards for English talents in this context. However, the expansion of college enrollment has brought a large number of graduates, resulting in a relative surplus in the English talent market and a worsening social employment environment. Therefore, college English majors must carry out reform and innovation, and optimize the teaching model to train high-quality English talents who truly meet the needs of social development.

## **2. The necessity of college English major talent training in the new era**

### **2.1. Help promoting the comprehensive development of students**

As a discipline integrating language, grammar, and oral English, it mainly cultivates students' language ability, cross-cultural ability, and cultural accomplishment. Under the background of the rapid development of the new era, the teaching purpose of college English needs to be adjusted constantly according to different use environments and scopes, especially in foreign economic activities. College English talents in the new era should not be limited to the study of words, grammar and other skills, but should enhance students' oral English ability and cultural accomplishment based on strengthening students<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, in the process of training English talents, colleges and universities should constantly update the teaching objectives according to the needs of society and the standards of the industry, innovate in the curriculum and teaching content, and guide students to improve their oral ability while mastering the basic knowledge of English. In addition, due to the ever-changing demand for talent in the current society, the demand for compound English talent is constantly growing. In this regard, college English teachers should adapt to the development of the era, adjust their educational goals according to the needs of the industry, strengthen the cultivation of students' practical ability and communication abilities, and promote their comprehensive development.

### **2.2. Help improving cross-cultural communication skills**

With the continuous development of globalization, the exchanges and cooperation between countries have become increasingly close, and multinational enterprises and international organizations and other multicultural institutions have a surging demand for talents with cross-cultural communication skills<sup>[2]</sup>. In this context, it has become an important mission of universities to train international talents with English majors. First of all, students' English expression ability plays an important role in cross-cultural communication. Through the reform of oral English, colleges, and universities can guide students to master standard pronunciation and intonation, and apply English in real situations, enhance students' verbal expression and communication ability, and promote international and cross-cultural communication. At the same time, colleges and universities should introduce some extra-curricular resources in English classroom teaching, appropriately broaden students' international vision and way of thinking, and cultivate their global consciousness. Through in-depth study of the English language as well as the societies and cultures of other countries, students can correctly interpret languages and behaviors in different cultural contexts from an international perspective and avoid cultural conflicts and misunderstandings<sup>[3]</sup>. Through English reform, colleges and universities can improve students' English expression and communication skills in classroom teaching, enhance cross-cultural communication, and cultivate them into high-quality international talents.

## **3. Problems in training English majors in colleges and universities**

### **3.1. Unclear training goal**

Nowadays, in the English education system of colleges and universities, there are detailed descriptions of "how and what kind of talents to train." However, in actual teaching, there is no obvious difference between the training programs for English majors and those for other majors. At the same time, colleges and universities do not have specific training standards for basic English courses, foreign trade English courses, business English courses, oral English courses, translation courses, etc. As a result, teachers of English majors cannot determine the training direction according to the actual needs of students and industry needs<sup>[4]</sup>. In addition, the

lack of clear training goals in colleges and universities will lead to students' poor grasp of English knowledge and skills, which will lead to weak employment competitiveness and failure to meet the needs of society and industry for English talents in the new era.

### **3.2. The traditional education concept is too deep**

Due to the influence of traditional exam-oriented education, some colleges and universities pay more attention to imparting textbook knowledge in the education system and curriculum setting, ignoring the cultivation of students' oral English. As a result, the talents trained by some colleges and universities cannot meet the needs of the industry. The backward content of teaching materials, the lack of innovation and practicality of teaching content and other problems make it difficult to stimulate students' interest in learning, which harms the cultivation of students' comprehensive ability. Secondly, in the actual teaching process, English teaching is still dominated by traditional teaching methods. Teachers, as the "leader" of classroom teaching, firmly control the rhythm of classroom teaching, and students have little room to play, so they can only passively receive English knowledge. At the same time, due to the lack of innovative thinking, teachers of English majors have not formed targeted and diversified teaching plans, and it is difficult to cultivate students from all aspects and multiple angles. Oral English, as a necessary skill to open a future career, plays an important role in college teaching <sup>[5]</sup>. However, in some colleges and universities, there is a serious "superficial" phenomenon in the process of oral English teaching, which exercises students' expression ability by learning sentence patterns, learning templates and rote memorization, ignoring the interest and application of oral English teaching.

## **4. The application path of college English major talent training in the new era**

### **4.1. Stimulate students' interest and improve their learning enthusiasm**

Under the background of the new era, colleges and universities should start from the interest of students to cultivate English majors. Interest is the best motivation for students to learn <sup>[6]</sup>. College English teachers need to maximize students' participation in classroom teaching and stimulate their interest in learning knowledge. In traditional teaching, English teachers usually give priority to the explanation of the textbook content, lead students to learn the sentence patterns in the textbook articles, and require students to "memorize" the key points and difficulties, which makes the course teaching boring. This kind of teaching not only fixed students' exploration thinking, but also limited students' creativity, and it is difficult for students to deeply understand the culture and values contained in it, which is not conducive to improving students' English knowledge and oral. Therefore, English classroom teaching in colleges and universities should combine students' character characteristics and actual needs to create more flexible, living and diversified English classes, to give full play to students' subjective initiative and creativity <sup>[7]</sup>. In addition, the rapid development of information technology provides abundant resources and tools for teaching. College English teachers need to keep pace with the development of the era and combine modern teaching methods in English classes, such as flipped classrooms, multimedia teaching, online conference teaching, virtual technology teaching, etc., to create classroom activities that students are interested in and enrich teaching content. Teachers create a lively and interesting classroom atmosphere for students to enhance their interest in learning. For example, oral English contains cultural festival exchange, love values, world traveling, short video production, high-quality development, and other content. When explaining these contents, teachers can create melodrama performance, imitation and dubbing, speech debate, micro video production, English song cover and other activities to stimulate students'

interest in English learning. Teachers should cultivate students' oral communication, dialectical thinking and employability<sup>[8]</sup>. After students have mastered the basic knowledge, teachers can appropriately increase the difficulty according to students' feedback, introduce some extra-curricular resources or current events into the teaching, and let students expand and repeat them according to these resources and materials, to encourage students to conduct oral training and further improve their English literacy.

#### **4.2. Optimize the curriculum and cultivate practical ability**

In traditional English classroom teaching, college teachers usually treat English majors as knowledge to tutor students and pay more attention to the explanation of theoretical knowledge, thus neglecting the cultivation of students' oral ability and professional abilities<sup>[9]</sup>. Nowadays, with the changes in the demand for English talents, colleges and universities need to change their educational thinking, strengthen students' oral English ability, train their vocational skills and qualities, and lay a solid foundation for adapting to the needs of society and the industry.

- (1) English majors in colleges and universities need to continuously optimize the curriculum according to the standards and needs of the industry, help students master English skills, and improve practical application ability, to better cope with future changes in the industry<sup>[10]</sup>. At the same time, colleges and universities should also set up relevant courses according to the future career plans of English majors, such as commerce, e-commerce, translation, tourism, etc., and set up corresponding elective courses to broaden students' knowledge and ability.
- (2) In the context of frequent international exchanges, colleges and universities should increase the proportion of practical courses, provide more practical platforms for students, guide students to show themselves in concrete practices, and cultivate their oral expression ability and self-confidence. In addition, colleges and universities can also set up training rooms, in practice classroom teaching through a variety of teaching methods, such as role-playing, scenario simulation, and oral dialogue, so that students can perceive the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and practice their English skills in real situations to improve their oral communication ability.
- (3) In today's employment environment, there will be more competitors in the industry, which will bring more social pressure to English majors. In this regard, colleges and universities should reinforce the importance of internships and set aside enough time for students to practice<sup>[11]</sup>. For example, colleges and universities can cooperate with well-known local enterprises and units to lead students to visit and study in enterprises and encourage students to communicate with relevant talents in enterprises. Through communication with talents in enterprises, students can find their problems and improve them, which will promote the improvement of English skills and oral English<sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **4.3. Change the teaching mode and improve the comprehensive ability**

In the new era, application-oriented talents are more in line with the needs of society and the industry. In the modern education system, college English has gradually ceased to be judged by students' test-taking ability and is more about cultivating students' comprehensive ability and thinking development. Under this background, colleges and universities should take training applied talents as the general direction and carry out English teaching activities. On the one hand, college teachers should change their status from the "leader" of the curriculum to the "guide" of students' learning. They should return the classroom to students, guide them to give full play to their subjective initiative and encourage them to express their ideas and opinions positively



and confidently <sup>[13]</sup>. Teachers need to take students' development as the center, pay attention to their needs, interests and future development needs, and organize and carry out diversified teaching activities to stimulate their learning motivation. For example, teachers can choose some social hot spots, controversial events, or inspiring issues, and let students analyze and discuss them independently, to cultivate their critical thinking and inquiry ability, so that they can further understand the culture and value contained in English knowledge, and then improve their English literacy. On the other hand, with the rapid development of information technology, Internet platforms have brought great convenience to English teaching in colleges and universities <sup>[14]</sup>. The Internet platform has brought abundant teaching resources for teachers and students. Teachers can download some teaching materials from the network platform to enrich the teaching content, expand students' knowledge horizons, and improve their cross-cultural communication ability. On the other hand, students can browse and search for some extra-curricular knowledge independently from the Internet. While improving their English knowledge, they can also imitate the intonation and pronunciation of English in online videos, which will help students improve their oral English ability and communication ability. College teachers can introduce some news, film and television works, international conference speeches and other materials into the class to enhance the practicality and interest of the course. For example, in classroom teaching, teachers can choose a specific topic, hold an "English speech contest", and guide students to look up materials, understand the background and culture contained in them, form English thinking, and then express it through summary. This can not only improve students' oral expression ability but also promote their comprehensive development.

In addition, in English classroom teaching, the evaluation methods should be diversified. College teachers should not only pay attention to the evaluation of students' usual scores and final oral exams, but also carry out periodic tests in daily study, and incorporate discipline competitions and practice into the course assessment to comprehensively examine students' English knowledge and oral ability <sup>[15]</sup>. By establishing the evaluation mechanism, teachers can observe students' daily performance and problems more clearly, and can better help students solve problems. The establishment of diversified evaluation mechanisms by teachers is not only conducive to carrying out targeted teaching but also can improve teaching quality and promote the comprehensive development of students.

## **5. Conclusion**

In short, under the background of the new era, English majors in colleges and universities must combine the needs of social and industrial development, based on students' cognitive characteristics and professional teaching, optimize curriculum settings, constantly innovate talent training models, improve students' English knowledge and English skills, and promote students' employment and development. At the same time, college teachers should take the comprehensive development of students as the goal, guide students to master and understand different cultures, improve their English expression and communication skills, and promote their development in the direction of diversification.

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