



# A Study on College English Effective Teaching and Learning

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**Abstract:** College English plays a crucial role in the comprehensive development of Chinese university students. Effective teaching practices are essential in college English education, directly influencing students' language acquisition and proficiency. This paper examines research on effective teaching strategies in college English, focusing on instructional strategies, teacher-student interaction, and assessment methods. Communicative approaches, technology integration, supportive environments, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and constructive feedback contribute to enhancing students' language learning outcomes. However, challenges such as weak listening and speaking skills and the need to redefine teaching effectiveness exist. The paper highlights the importance of incorporating humanistic elements in college English teaching and addresses current issues in teaching and learning. Emphasizing the role of teachers, evidence-based strategies are proposed to create engaging and dynamic learning environments that foster language development.

**Key words:** College English, Teaching and learning, Effectiveness, Study

## Introduction

College English holds great significance in promoting the holistic development of knowledge, skills, and qualities among university students in China. Serving as a compulsory course for many non-English majors at the undergraduate level, it plays a crucial role in nurturing competent individuals. Effective teaching practices are essential in college English education as they directly influence students' language acquisition and overall language proficiency. Thus, the purpose of this literature review is to examine the existing research on effective teaching strategies in the context of college English. By doing so, it aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the significant findings in this field.

## Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined various aspects of effective teaching in college English. Firstly, instructional strategies have been a focal point of research. Zhao and Qiao emphasize the significance of employing communicative approaches, such as task-based learning and project-based learning, to foster students' active participation and language use<sup>[1]</sup>. Additionally, Jones and Smith highlight the effectiveness of incorporating technology, such as online resources and interactive multimedia, to enhance students' engagement and motivation in language learning<sup>[2]</sup>.

Secondly, teacher-student interaction has emerged as a critical factor in effective teaching. Smith and Johnson argue that creating a positive and supportive classroom environment promotes effective communication and language development. They stress the importance of building rapport, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging student autonomy<sup>[3]</sup>. Moreover, Wang and Liu emphasize the benefits of differentiated instruction, catering to the diverse needs and learning styles of students<sup>[4]</sup>.

Thirdly, assessment methods and feedback have been examined to enhance effective teaching in college English. Brown and Davis suggest the use of formative assessment strategies, such as self-assessment and peer assessment, to promote students' reflective thinking and self-regulation. They also highlight the value of timely and specific feedback to guide students' language development<sup>[5]</sup>.

The literature review demonstrates that effective teaching in college English encompasses various instructional strategies, teacher-student interaction, and assessment methods. Communicative approaches, technology integration, supportive classroom environments, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and constructive feedback all contribute to enhancing students' language acquisition and proficiency. However, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of these strategies in different contexts and with diverse student populations.

Overall, the studies before provides a foundation for understanding the key components of effective teaching in college English and offers insights for educators to improve their instructional practices. By implementing evidence-based strategies, teachers can create engaging and dynamic learning environments that facilitate students' language learning and development.

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### **The Mission of College English Teaching in the New Era**

College English course is an important part of general education in colleges and universities, which is both instrumental and humanistic. Its instrumentality is mainly reflected in two aspects: First, college English courses are the promotion and expansion of English teaching at the stage of basic education. The main purpose of college English courses is to further improve students' comprehensive language application ability of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating on the basis of high school English teaching. The second College English course enables students to learn academic English or professional English related to their major through specialized application teaching, so as to acquire relevant abilities for international communication in academic or vocational fields. Its humanity is also mainly reflected in two aspects: First, one of the important tasks of college English courses is to carry out cross-cultural education. Language is the carrier and component of culture. Through English learning, students can learn about foreign cultures, improve their understanding of different cultures, strengthen their understanding of the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and cultivate their cross-cultural communication ability. Second, college English courses can cultivate students' ability to understand and interpret Chinese culture and serve the external communication of Chinese culture. The core of humanism is people-oriented, carrying forward the value of people, and paying attention to the cultivation and all-round development of people's comprehensive quality. Socialist core values should be organically integrated into college English teaching content. The instrumentality of college English curriculum is the basis and carrier of humanism, and humanism is the sublimation of instrumentality.

College English should not only help students master good language skills and cross-cultural communication skills, improve students' critical thinking and cultivate students' international perspective, but also help students establish lifelong learning goals so as to cope with future challenges. Therefore, college English needs to fully tap its ideological and emotional resources in the course construction, textbook compilation, teaching implementation and other links, enrich its humanistic connotation, and realize the organic unity of instrumental and humanistic<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **Current Situation and Problems in College English Teaching and Learning**

In college English teaching, students' listening and speaking ability is still weak, and it is difficult to communicate freely. College English teaching should have a sense of urgency, seize the time to find the root cause, and effectively solve the problem. College English teaching needs to redefine its "effective" connotation. In the past, if college English courses focused on teaching language knowledge and skills, and the teaching effect of such courses can be verified through CET-4, CET-6, or even large-scale examinations such as the Graduate English Test, then the current definition of college English teaching effect should be longer and more comprehensive, because college English is a course closely related to social needs and national situation<sup>[8]</sup>. College English teaching is not only a matter of language ability, but also includes how to face and solve the new things in cross-cultural communication attitudes and methods. Schools should not only ensure that students have the most basic professional knowledge and skills, but also teach students to have critical thinking, cross culture ability and the most core learning and problem-solving abilities<sup>[9]</sup>.

Since the beginning of this century, the Ministry of Education has initiated the reform of college English teaching and issued the Requirements for College English Teaching in 2007. The main feature of this reform is to change the traditional teaching mode and implement the teaching mode of computer-aided classroom. Universities are equipped with computers and network equipment one after another. Although the introduction of various multimedia technology, the traditional teaching mode is still not rid of. The teaching method has changed from chalk and blackboard to computer and big screen projection. The only change is from the teachers' oral instillation to the technical multimedia instillation.

The traditional college English classroom teaching model is to review what has been learned, take new lessons, do homework, learn new words, learn texts and do exercises. The whole English classroom teaching is carried out with teachers as the center. Teachers are mainly responsible for the content, process and method of English teaching. In the teaching process, the relationship between teachers and students is the relationship between imparting knowledge and receiving knowledge. Students must learn according to the requirements of teachers. With the rapid development of information technology, teachers are not the only source of information. If teachers still continue the traditional teaching methods, the above phenomenon is inevitable.

At present, some college English teaching in China is faced with difficulties such as low teaching quality and lack of attractiveness to students. The phenomenon of students skipping class often occurs, and even students in class may not be fully engaged in learning. In 2013, Guangming Daily published an article titled "Why is College Classroom Not Attractive Enough?". "It seems that playing games, chatting and sleeping in class are not uncommon in college classrooms," the article noted<sup>[6]</sup>. According to the newspaper, nearly half of the students surveyed are confused and in a daze about college, and the reasons for their sluggish study can be attributed to students' personal attitude on the one hand, and the poor quality of university teaching and unattractive classes on the other. Why the quality of university teaching is not high? The report attributed the shortage of teachers to the expansion of enrollment, the increase of new courses and majors, the high threshold for universities to recruit teachers. The second reason is the lack of effective teaching evaluation and supervision mechanism. How to improve the quality of university teaching and make university classes more attractive is a hot topic among experts and scholars at the time. While the media is still

wondering what's wrong with the university classroom? College English circles directly express their concerns about college English teaching by referring to the crisis of college English classroom, the crisis of college English survival and the crisis of college English teaching quality, and actively seek countermeasures. Some scholars pointed out that the main reasons for college English classroom crisis included that the Internet and media have replaced the knowledge authority of teachers. Students have more expectations on the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers' teaching methods are backward, and teachers and students lack sustainable learning motivation and comprehensive ability cultivation. They proposed a task-based team cooperation model to deal with the crisis. Some people think that the traditional classroom teaching model is no longer suitable for the post-00s students, this generation has grown up with the Internet, their daily life is inseparable from the Internet, the way of acquiring knowledge is inseparable from the Internet. Therefore, modern information technology and education should be combined.

MOOCs are a good example. 2012 is known as the first year of MOOCs, but its rise caused a storm in the higher education field only for one year. In 2013, MOOCs suffered from a large number of withdrawals and a low completion rate, which once caused widespread controversy. The study of foreign researchers on MOOCs found that only 7.2% of the total number of learners who could complete all the courses of MOOCs and obtain certificates. The factors that fail to persist in learning include lack of relevant practice, necessary background knowledge and ability of the course, enough motivation to learn, etc.

The sudden rise and fall of MOOCs tells us that technology does not automatically play a role, and that the role of teachers is crucial. As former US Secretary of Education Ruffalo said improving the quality of education means that we should invest in improved curricula, school safety, increased use of technology, but the most important investment is high-quality, dedicated teachers. No education reform can succeed without good teachers. Any educational reform ultimately needs to be implemented through teachers' teaching behavior. Whether teachers' teaching behavior is effective or not is directly related to the effect of learning. Technology is not the key factor to solve the problem of effective teaching. The key to effective teaching lies in teachers and students. No matter what course, from college English in China and the MOOCs, the final consideration should be given to how to make teaching more effective. Ineffective teaching cannot attract students, and teaching without student participation is obviously ineffective. To this end, exploring the problem of effective teaching is not only a concern of college English, it is actually a problem that the whole modern higher education urgently needs to solve. In the case of a sharp decline in the number of class hours and the state of impetuous mentality of students, it is urgent and necessary to make full use of modern technology to effectively improve the effectiveness of college English teaching toward a developed curriculum.

### **The Factors in Effective Teaching and Learning**

Teachers, students, textbooks and environment are the main components of teaching, and the factors affecting effective teaching are bound to be related to these factors. They are the main influencing factors of effective teaching. There are many achievements in the research on effective teaching factors at home and abroad. For example, it is believed that instructional design, teachers' teaching philosophy, teaching behavior, teaching methods and strategies, class size, time investment, resource allocation, students' learning motivation, learning style, and teacher-student relationship will more or less affect the teaching effect. Among them, The teacher's teaching behavior is more directly related to the teaching effect. This paper mainly focuses on the two most active factors in teaching activities teachers and students.

Teachers are the key factors to achieve effective teaching. Therefore, there is a wealth of research on excellent teachers at home and abroad, and there is a large number of review literature summarizing earlier studies. For the sake of brevity, only a few literatures are listed here to reflect the relevant research results. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development pointed out that teaching quality should be a comprehensive concept. At least the following five factors should be taken into consideration for a teacher's effective teaching, which are the knowledge of the actual curriculum field and the knowledge of the teaching content; Teachers' teaching ability includes the awareness and ability to use effective teaching strategies; Teachers' teaching reflection ability and self-criticism ability as well as teachers' professional quality; Teachers' ability to empathize and respect others' characters; And the ability of teachers' teaching management.

Frederick Stephenson in the United States studied the papers on teaching quality written by 36 excellent teachers and found more than 300 characteristics of effective teaching. The author condensed these characteristics into 6, which are enthusiasm for teaching; mastering teaching content and methods, that is, what to teach, how to teach and how to improve; Be good at creating classroom atmosphere, because an active classroom atmosphere can attract students' attention; Good at communication; Can encourage students to tap their potential; Good teaching effect, always won the praise of colleagues and students. For example, some students think that the teacher's teaching has changed their life, changed the way of learning, opened up their mind, helped them find the direction of life, prepared for their future career and so on .

Teachers influence students through their teaching behaviors. Therefore, there are many researches on effective teaching behaviors in the research of effective teaching, and most of them are empirical researches. American Gary D. Borich, based on his 40 years of research on effective teaching activities, divides effective teaching behaviors into 5 kinds of key teaching behaviors and 5 kinds of auxiliary behaviors. The five key behaviors of effective teaching include: the clarity of the teaching content presented by the teacher (including many specific behaviors); Variety of

lectures; The time teachers devote to teaching the course content; The amount of time students devote to or participate in learning; And the student's success rate in mastering the content. According to the authors, these 5 behaviors are a good basis for defining effective teaching and are fundamental to the development of teachers. The five auxiliary behaviors that complement the main teaching behaviors include: using the ideas and opinions put forward by the students in ways such as acknowledging, modifying, applying, comparing, summarizing, or even extending the ideas of the students, making further reasoning, using the students' ideas to solve problems, and promoting independent thinking. structuring the teaching process, including building the teaching scaffolding, activating the background knowledge or knowledge already learned, building the bridge between the old knowledge and the new knowledge to prepare for the learning of new knowledge; Summary after class, that is, strengthening the learning content and the relationship with other learning content, emphasizing the key points, etc.; Use of language markers and advance organizers, etc. Ask effective questions, which can be classified in a variety of ways, such as closed questions and open questions, content questions and process questions, etc. Inquiry, that is, the teacher encourages the students to explain, for example, for the answers given by the students, ask the students to further clarify the answers, provide other information, or ask the students to answer the questions from another Angle. Teachers' emotion. This is the foundation for building a warm and rewarding teacher-student relationship. Although it is impossible to measure teacher emotion with instruments, students can clearly perceive it through teachers' teaching behavior. The enthusiasm of teachers can be reflected in the spiritual vitality, the degree of devotion, the state of excitement, the interest in teaching and the willingness to share emotions with classmates. These can be observed from the explicit behavior of the teacher, such as the teacher in the classroom tone changes, eye contact, walking range, etc., which can transfer the teacher's energy, investment, interest and concern for students.

About the student factor of effective teaching, American Richard I. Arends believes that the ultimate goal of teaching is to help students become independent and learn on their own self-regulated learners<sup>[10]</sup>. This main purpose is based on two premises. One is the contemporary notion that knowledge is not always fixed and transferable, but rather personal. Knowledge is actively constructed by both students and adults through personal and social experiences. Second, the most important thing for students is to learn how to learn. George et al. put forward that effective teaching can not only depend on teachers, but also on students. Students have the responsibility of learning. It is necessary for teachers to clearly inform students of their responsibilities, the purpose of teaching, and to check whether the purpose is achievable, or whether it has been completed. It has been proved by many studies that teachers' teaching behavior can affect the teaching effect. However, teachers' teaching cannot directly determine the learning effect and efficiency. Only by acting on the learning behavior can the learning effect and efficiency be affected. In other words, there is a direct correlation and correspondence between learning behavior and learning outcome and efficiency. Effective students' learning behavior has the following characteristics. Initiative of learning behavior, that is, students can actively participate in the learning process and actively process internal information; The pertinence of the behavior, that is, the students' behavior and the goal, content, learning situation, conditions are matched; The diversity of behavior, that is, students adopt a variety of behaviors adapted to various learning tasks; Behavioral selectivity, that is, students can choose behaviors according to their own learning situation. A clear understanding of the value of effective learning behavior is to provide direction for the design of teaching activities. Teachers in instructional design should take into account that what learning behavior the designed activities intended to cause students; If the teaching activity does not induce effective learning behavior, the activity should be modified. Effective teaching also provides a real-time opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. Teachers can judge students' participation by observing their learning behaviors, so as to adjust teaching in time; At the same time, it also provides an important basis for other classroom observers, that is, to observe the students' behavior and the teaching effect. For a long time, in the classroom observation, education supervisors, experts, peers and so on mainly focus on the teaching of teachers, mainly pay attention to the teaching state of teachers, teachers' language expression, etc., which more or less encourages the performance component of open class, demonstration class and teaching competition. If the eyes properly turn to the classroom behavior of students, it can be more effective to liberate the attention of teachers from focusing on themselves to focus on the development of students, which is one of the most important contributions of the effective teaching and learning movement.

## **Conclusion**

In order to improve the efficiency of college English teaching and learning, schools should first provide good teaching hardware and software conditions. Policy support, incentive mechanism and good conditions are the premise and guarantee of effective college English teaching. In addition, schools should have practical teacher training plans to provide teachers with a variety of services and constantly promote the professional development of teachers. As the designer, organizer, supervisor, analyst and helper of the classroom, teachers should also constantly learn and improve themselves, and constantly reflect on teaching. Only through the cycle of practice and reflection can they improve their teaching ability and improve teaching efficiency and quality.

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