

# Teaching Mode of College English based on Simulative Workplace Context

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**Abstract:** The English teaching mode based on simulative workplace can not only make students grasp the basic major-related knowledge, but also let them acquire the English related to their major. With the teaching around their future workplace, the students may think English is practical and useful, and they can be more interested in English class. While implementing the workplace-based English teaching mode, the teacher should pay special attention to cultivate the students' speaking and listening abilities, because these two abilities are most frequently used after they graduate, thus to make them be more competent in the future work which needs to be accomplished with the use of English.

**Keywords:** College English; Workplace context; Situational teaching

## 1. Introduction

With international communication becoming more and more frequent, especially in the 21st century, college students should be equipped with much higher English proficiency to meet the requirement of modern society. China has now been the second economy in the world, and with China's opening and reform deepening, the trade and economic relations between China and the world become more and more close, which means foreign language (mainly English) will be used as the communicative tool to bridge China and world. College students should first grasp their own major, and then use English to help them communicate with the world. To communicate with foreign countries, college students should especially be equipped with the abilities like speaking and writing related with their own major. The companies are sure to welcome the graduates who have grasped both their major and foreign language, thus the companies need not hire a translator to help them do foreign trades. Therefore, the colleges should cultivate major-plus-English graduates for the society.

## 2. Situational Teaching Approach

The theory of constructivism was put forward by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget and Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. They advocate that knowledge acquisition should be obtained in the real situation, which will make a deep impression on the learners and enable them to understand profoundly about the knowledge. The advocates of constructivism think that the traditional teaching method excludes the learning situation and makes learning process without learning context. Therefore, they deem that the learning content should be concerned with real tasks, because the purpose of learning is to help the

learners deal with problems that they may meet with in their later work and life.

Based on the theory of constructivism, situational teaching approach came into being. Situational teaching approach asks the English teacher not to regard language acquisition as the only aim of English teaching. The teacher should change the teaching strategy according to the students' majors, and should try to create major-related situations for students to learn more efficiently and make them familiar in advance with the working situations and more competent with their future jobs.

The characteristic of situational teaching approach is that the teacher selects concrete and typical situations to implement teaching process. In situational teaching approach, different from the traditional teaching method, the students take the initiative to study, not the teacher acting as the main speaker of the class. Under such circumstances, the students' learning interests and passion can be greatly aroused, because the students can actively take part in the teaching process and acquire knowledge through the real situation related to their later working situation. As for English teaching, if English teachers teach English under the situation related to the students' major, on the one hand, the students can be more prepared for the later work situations; on the other hand, the students can practice their English communicative capacity through English learning.

## 3. Problems of Present College English Teaching

Presently, nearly all colleges in China have regarded English as a compulsory course, the purpose of which is to make the college students grasp English and let English serve as a tool for their future work and life. Nevertheless, the teaching contents of English in many colleges

have deviated from the reality of students future working context, because many English teachers still emphasize too much on the basic linguistic knowledge, especially the vocabulary and grammar, and they have neglected the listening and speaking instruction, while speaking and listening are the two most important skills college students will use after graduation. Some colleges regard passing College English Test in China as the criterion for students' graduation, making the English teacher's teaching objective exam-oriented, i.e. all the teaching contents are closely connected with CET.

The teaching methods above neglect the context of language usage, and do not regard English as a practical and applicable tool for language communication; therefore, the students are studying English passively, not actively. College students have been studying English for nearly ten years. Before college, they have to study English passively, because they must take part in the College Entrance Examination of China. But after they have entered college, the English teaching objective should change from reading and writing to speaking and listening. If the college English teaching still employs the same teaching method as in middle school, both the teaching and learning efficiency must be low. By and by, many college students may drop English study because English is not their major, and they think the English acquired in college is useless for their future work. Besides, the employers do not want to employ such college students, because have to pay for further training the graduates about work-related English.

According the above problems, these years, Chinese government is reforming the mode of cultivating college students and asks colleges to establish new course systems to cultivate the students' practical abilities. As for the course of English, the English teachers should cultivate the students' ability for international communication related to their major; besides, they should grasp the ability to write English articles related to their major.

To tackle with the above problems in English teaching, it is high time that the English teachers applied the workplace-based teaching mode in class, in order to make English teaching more efficient and practical.

#### **4. Teaching Mode of College English based on Simulative Workplace**

The English teaching mode based on simulative workplace means that the English teacher simulates the workplace context in the class, and assign the students work-related tasks to accomplish in English. Through completing work-related tasks in English, not only can the students practice their English abilities like listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating, they can also be cultivated their basic major-related knowledge. At the same time, the students can master professional English which is of great help to their future work of international

communication and academic studies. The research of this essay is exemplified by the major of inorganic non-metal materials.

##### **4.1. Preparation for the workplace-based teaching before class**

The teacher, working as the director and guide of the teaching, should take the role of organizing the whole teaching process, and he should be well prepared for every part of the class session. First of all, the teacher should be well prepared for the teaching content which includes both the English linguistic knowledge and information related to their major (inorganic non-metal materials). Through all kinds of means, the teacher should obtain workplace-related pictures, images, sound and video documents, PowerPoint slides, tools, etc. before class, so as to make each class smooth.

As for the arrangement of workplace, if there is the real workplace inside or outside the college for facilitating English class, it will be perfect for carrying out workplace-based English teaching. But unfortunately many colleges are not equipped with such real workplaces, so it is the teacher's responsibility to devise simulative workplaces for the English class. Although the workplace is simulative, the teacher should try to make the workplace as real as possible. Some teaching tools can also be taken into the classroom for teaching; if the tool is too big to be taken into the classroom, the teacher can use the PowerPoint slides to show it instead.

The first part of the workplace-based teaching mode is to create a workplace context for each class. The teacher can divide the whole part of teaching into several units, and prepare different workplaces, linguistic knowledge, and major-related information for the students. For example, if the teacher wants to teach the English about "ceramic workshop for construction" which is related with the later work for majors of inorganic non-metal materials, the teacher can divide the class task into different sections, such as weighing, ingredient throwing, ingredient mixing, dehydrating, pressing, forming, glazing, printing, firing, product testing. Then, in the class, the teacher lets the students simulate the working process in English.

While the teacher acting as the organizer of the class, the students should play the main part of English teaching. Compared with traditional classes, in which the teacher acts as the main actor of the class and imparts linguistic knowledge to the students, the workplace-based English teacher should hand out beforehand some class-related linguistic knowledge like words, sentence patterns, grammar, writing skills for the students to study; at the same time, the students should collect some class-related knowledge like inorganic non-metal materials, so as to make the English study process efficient.

In addition, as for teaching the major of inorganic non-metal materials, the teacher should divide the class into several groups before class. And within each group, the task of each member should be made clear. For example, one student takes the role of weighman; one student takes the role of mixing; one student takes the responsibility of molding; one student takes the responsibility of product testing. In order to make the workplace more real, the students can prepare the related costumes, and if necessary, they can write words on the costumes to make the other students comprehend their roles.

#### **4.2. The implementation of workplace-based teaching in class**

Before the class, the teacher arranges well the scene of the workplace, makes the students familiar with their own roles, and asks each student to take part in the class session actively and enthusiastically.

With the preparation of the teacher and students, the workplace-based English teaching can be carried out. During the teaching process, the teacher plays the role of director or host, guiding the students to implement the task in English. The teaching process is mainly carried out by the students, while the teacher plays only as the aid of students' learning. Different from traditional English teaching which is mainly concerned with imparting the students linguistic knowledge, the workplace-based teaching regards the task which is related with the students major of inorganic non-metal materials as the main learning objective, and the English linguistic knowledge only serves as the tool for the progress of the teaching session. While the class is in session, the teacher should pay special attention to the students' performance. If the students perform well in the class, the teacher should praise and encourage them, and then the students may be more interested in English study. If some students don't perform well, the teacher should point out and correct their mistakes, and tell them to perform well next time; or they will be punished and they may lose some credits of English course.

Before the implement of the teaching, the teacher can spend several minutes stating or showing the teaching procedure by PowerPoint slides to the class, and at the same time, teach the students the related linguistic knowledge such as the words and sentence patterns. For example, if to teach the working process of "kiln burning", the teacher should first teach students the related words like kiln, forge, refractory, deformation, temperature, cooler, and their usages. Besides, the teacher should teach them the sentence patterns for students to express the working process: such as the passive-voice sentences frequently used in scientific English; the sentence patterns with "it" as the formal subject; attributive clauses; postposition attributives; participles. Then, the students begin to carry out the simulative work in class. While the

students are simulating the working procedure, the teacher should urge the students to apply the formerly taught words, sentence patterns and grammar in the process. Only in this way can the students acquire new linguistic knowledge and major-related information through the simulative working context.

English language acquisition through simulative workplace is a process of accumulation, needing repeated practice so as to achieve the desired effect. While implementing the teaching, the teacher should be patient and provide appropriate guidance for the students, until the students can carry out the working procedure in English by their own and grasp both the linguistic knowledge and the major-related information.

#### **4.3. The after-class summary for teachers and students**

After the implementation of workplace-based English teaching class, both the teacher and the students should summarize the learning process. The teacher should sum up the teaching experience. If the teacher finds some weaknesses in the teaching process and method, he should try to overcome them in later teaching and make the workplace-based English teaching mode more and more perfect. The students should also write a summary report to express what they have acquired with the workplace-based teaching mode. The students can also point out the deficiencies of the teaching process, for the teacher to improve his later teaching. In addition, the students must write the report in English, on the one hand, it can make the students more familiar with the linguistic knowledge just learned, on the other hand, the students can practice their writing ability.

#### **4.4. The evaluation system of workplace-based teaching mode**

The evaluation system for workplace-based teaching mode should employ both stage evaluation and summative evaluation. It is suggested that stage evaluation takes up fifty percent and summative evaluation takes up the other fifty percent of the whole evaluation for the English course. As for stage evaluation, it includes students' pre-class preparation, class performance, team work, summary report, etc. As for summative evaluation, when the course draws to a close, the teacher tests the students by examination papers which include questions of words, sentence patterns, grammar, translation, writing, etc. Through both stage evaluation and summative evaluation, the teacher can assess the students comprehensively.

### **5. Conclusion**

Workplace-based teaching mode, by employing the working context to teach English, can embody the practical function of English language. Through experiencing the simulative working context, the students can both

acquire English language and be familiar with some basic major-related knowledge. All in all, workplace-based English teaching is a kind of student-oriented teaching mode. Through this mode, not only have the students experienced the working context before they graduate, they have also adapted to the future work with the help of English language in advance. This is of fundamental help for their future English-related work; therefore, the colleges can cultivate compound talents for the country.

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