

Exploration on the Teaching Reform of Higher Vocational English based on the Cultivation of Professional Abilities

-- Taking Media-related Majors as an Example

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Abstract

In today's highly competitive employment environment, higher vocational English teaching is facing new challenges and opportunities. The traditional teaching objectives have been difficult to meet the needs of students' future career development, so the teaching reform based on the cultivation of professional abilities is imperative (Smith, 2018). Taking media-related majors as an example, this paper deeply explores the teaching reform strategies of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities from five aspects: teaching objectives, curriculum setting, teaching methods, teaching evaluation, and the construction of the teaching staff, aiming to improve the quality of higher vocational English teaching and cultivate professional talents who can adapt to social needs.

Keywords

Higher Vocational English Teaching; Professional Ability Cultivation; Teaching Reform.

1. Introduction

With the globalization of the economy and the refinement of professional division of labor, talents with good professional abilities and English application abilities are more competitive in the job market. However, traditional higher vocational English teaching has deficiencies in cultivating students' professional abilities, so conducting teaching reform has important practical significance.

2. Reorientation of Teaching Objectives

2.1. Limitations of Traditional Teaching Objectives

The traditional teaching objectives of higher vocational English usually focus on the imparting of language knowledge, such as grammar and vocabulary, and the cultivation of general English abilities, such as daily communication and reading comprehension. However, this focus has certain limitations. It fails to fully consider the practical application needs of English in students' future career development, resulting in students' difficulty in directly applying the learned English knowledge to the working scenarios after graduation.

2.2. The Connotation of New Teaching Objectives

With the development of economic globalization and industry specialization, the demand for talents with specific professional English abilities in various industries is increasing day by day. Therefore, repositioning the teaching objectives of higher vocational English as cultivating students' ability to effectively communicate and solve practical problems in specific professional fields by using English, specifically covering professional English skills, cross-

cultural communication abilities, and professional qualities, etc., is an inevitable choice to adapt to social development and meet the career development needs of students (Johnson, 2019)[2].

3. Optimization of Curriculum Setting

3.1. Professional English Courses

In the teaching reform of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities, the setting of professional English courses is a crucial link. For example, for the setting of English courses for media-related majors, the following targeted courses can be considered:

- 1) Include core vocabularies in the media field, such as terms like news, broadcasting, film and television.
- 2) Introduce the English expressions of the history of media and important media events and figures to enable students to understand the development process of the media industry.
- 3) News English: Learn the English norms and skills of news writing, including title-making and lead-writing; analyze domestic and foreign news reporting cases to improve students' news reading and comprehension abilities.
- 4) Film and Television English: Cover professional English expressions in all aspects of film and television production, such as shooting, editing, special effects, etc.
- 5) Appreciate the English dialogues in classic film and television works to enhance students' listening and oral expression abilities.
- 6) Advertising English: Teach English knowledge in aspects such as advertising planning, creativity, and copywriting; analyze excellent domestic and foreign advertising cases to learn English strategies for advertising marketing.
- 7) New Media English: Understand English terms and operation models of new media platforms (such as social media, short-video platforms, etc.); learn English skills for new media content creation and dissemination.
- 8) Media Business English: Involve English expressions in aspects such as media market expansion, cooperation negotiation, copyright trading, etc.; cultivate students' English communication and negotiation abilities in media business activities.

These professional English courses are closely combined with the characteristics of each major, deeply explore the application scenarios of English in the professional field, and organically integrate professional knowledge and English language skills (Brown, 2020)[3]. In the teaching process, teachers should not only impart professional-related English knowledge but also pay attention to cultivating students' ability to apply this knowledge and skills in actual working scenarios, so that students can handle professional affairs proficiently and confidently using English in their future career development.

Such a curriculum setting breaks the universality and limitations of traditional English teaching and truly meets the career development needs of students of different majors, laying a solid foundation for them to apply English in their respective professional fields.

3.2. Practical Teaching Links

The practical teaching link aims to break the limitations of traditional theoretical teaching, closely combine English knowledge with actual career scenarios, and allow students to improve their English application ability and professional quality in real or simulated situations. Increase the proportion of practical teaching, such as simulating professional scene dialogues, case analysis, and project practice, to enable students to apply English knowledge to actual career scenarios.

- 1) Increasing the proportion of practical teaching links is crucial. This means providing students with more time and opportunities to participate in practical activities in the teaching

plan. For example, in the original course arrangement, adjust the ratio of theoretical teaching to practical teaching, changing from the previous emphasis on theory to equal emphasis on theory and practice, or even tilting towards practice.

For students majoring in media, English practical ability plays a key role in their future career development. First, in terms of simulated English dialogues in professional scenes, scenarios such as international press conferences, overseas promotion of film and television programs, and cross-cultural advertising planning can be created. Let students play roles such as journalists, hosts, and advertising planners respectively, and conduct interviews, promotions, and discussions in English. For example, in the simulation of an international press conference, students need to ask questions, answer questions in English, and convey information accurately. This not only exercises their oral English expression but also cultivates their adaptability in tense and formal occasions.

2) Case analysis is also one of the important forms of practical teaching. Teachers can select typical cases in actual work, such as representative international media events or successful overseas media project cases. For example, analyze the promotion strategy of a popular film and television work in the international market. Students need to read relevant reports and comments in English and conduct group discussions and summaries in English. Through such case analysis, students can deeply understand the international operation mode of the media industry and improve their English reading comprehension and analysis abilities.

3) In project practice, students can be organized to participate in international exchange activities or online seminars in the media industry, giving them the opportunity to have direct communication and interaction with international peers in English. At the same time, students are encouraged to participate in international media competitions, such as English news writing competitions, English display of advertising creativity, etc. Through competition with students from other institutions, they can improve their English practical ability and innovative thinking.

Through these rich, diverse, and targeted practical teaching activities, students majoring in media can proficiently complete various tasks using English in real or near-real career environments, improve their professional ability and competitiveness, and lay a solid foundation for the future international development in the media field.

3.3. Elective Courses

Set elective courses such as Workplace English Communication Skills, English Interview Skills, and Industry English Literature Reading to meet students' individualized learning needs.

4. Innovation of Teaching Methods

4.1. Task-driven Teaching Method

Task-driven teaching method has been widely recognized in vocational English teaching. Studies have shown that designing tasks closely related to professional scenarios can significantly improve students' learning motivation and performance (Chen, 2021)[4]. In the task-driven teaching approach for media major students, we require them to complete various tasks, such as writing an international news report in English, making an English film and television program planning case, or conducting English social media public opinion analysis.

4.2. Project Teaching Method

Rely on real or simulated media projects to allow students to improve their comprehensive English ability in project implementation. For example, organize students to carry out an international film and television cultural exchange project. Students need to work in groups and communicate and collaborate in English throughout the entire process, from the planning,

preparation to execution and summary of the project. In the project planning stage, students need to conduct market research in English, analyze the needs of the target audience, and write a project plan; in the preparation stage, they need to contact foreign partners, coordinate resources, and communicate by email and phone in English; in the execution stage, students are responsible for on-site organization of activities, guest reception and program hosting, all of which require communication in English; in the summary stage, a project summary report and achievement display need to be written in English. Through such a complete project practice, students can not only improve their English level but also cultivate project management, teamwork and innovation abilities. It is an effective way to enhance students' comprehensive abilities (Zhang, 2022)[5]. Relying on real or simulated media projects, like organizing students to carry out an international film and television cultural exchange project, students can improve their language skills and professional capabilities.

4.3. Situational Teaching Method

The situational teaching method has been proven to be highly effective in language learning (Wang, 2020)[6]. Creating realistic media professional situations, such as an English news live broadcast room, a film and television shooting site, or an advertising creative discussion room, can enhance students' learning interest and practical skills. Create realistic media professional situations, such as an English news live broadcast room, a film and television shooting site, an advertising creative discussion room, etc. Let students experience the professional atmosphere and conduct English learning and practice on the spot. In the news live broadcast room situation, students play the roles of anchors and reporters and conduct news broadcasts and on-site interviews in English; in the film and television shooting site situation, students simulate roles such as directors, actors and crew members and communicate shooting needs and creativity in English; in the advertising creative discussion room situation, students brainstorm in teams in English and propose advertising creativity and plans. This kind of situational teaching can enhance students' learning interest and participation, allowing them to naturally use English to solve problems in real situations.

4.4. Blended Teaching Method

The blended teaching method combines the advantages of online and offline teaching, which has been increasingly adopted in modern education (Liu, 2023)[7]. By providing personalized learning experiences for media major students, it can improve teaching effectiveness and learning efficiency.

Combine the advantages of online and offline teaching and use rich online resources to provide personalized learning experiences for media major students. In the online part, a large amount of English media materials are provided through the teaching platform, such as international news videos, English film and television works, English lectures in the media industry, etc., allowing students to study independently and expand knowledge. At the same time, use online communication tools to organize students to conduct English discussions and group assignments. The offline classroom focuses on the explanation of key knowledge, the organization of practical activities and the evaluation of students' performance. For example, conduct in-depth explanations of difficulties in online learning, organize students to display and evaluate English media works, and carry out group debates and other activities. Through the organic combination of online and offline, improve teaching effectiveness and students' learning efficiency.

Through the above innovations in teaching methods for media majors, it is possible to better stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and initiative, cultivate their practical ability to use English in the media field, and fully prepare for their future career development.

5. Reform of Teaching Evaluation

In the teaching reform of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities, the reform of teaching evaluation is of great significance. It can not only measure students' learning achievements more accurately but also provide a strong basis for the improvement of teaching methods and the enhancement of teaching quality.

5.1. Diversified Evaluation Methods

Diversified evaluation methods are crucial for comprehensive assessment of students' learning achievements (Zhao, 2022)[8]. Adopting a combination of formative and summative evaluation, as well as involving multiple evaluation subjects, can provide a more objective and comprehensive assessment.

For students majoring in media, diversified evaluation methods should be adopted to comprehensively and objectively reflect the development of their English learning and professional abilities. Combine formative evaluation with summative evaluation. During the learning process, through formative evaluation methods such as classroom performance observation, homework completion, and periodic quizzes, understand students' learning progress and existing problems in a timely manner, and give targeted feedback and guidance. At the same time, summative evaluation methods such as final exams and project achievement presentations can conduct a comprehensive assessment of students' overall learning effects. Combine teacher evaluation, student evaluation, and self-evaluation. Teachers give professional evaluations based on students' various performances. Mutual evaluation among classmates can promote students to examine their learning from different perspectives, while self-evaluation helps cultivate students' self-reflection and self-adjustment abilities. In addition, industry expert evaluations can also be introduced. Invite professionals from the media industry to evaluate students' English works or project achievements and provide real feedback and suggestions from the industry.

5.2. Professional Ability Evaluation

Highlighting the consideration of students' professional abilities in the evaluation is of great significance (Li, 2021)[9]. For media major students, evaluating their media professional skills in an English environment helps to better prepare them for future careers.

Highlight the consideration of students' professional abilities in the evaluation. For students majoring in media, focus on evaluating their media professional skills in an English environment, such as the ability to conduct news interviews, write comments, make program scripts, and elaborate on advertising creativity in English. By setting up simulated media work scene tasks, observe students' proficiency in the application of English, mastery of professional knowledge, and ability to solve practical problems in these tasks. For example, require students to conduct a live news report in English and evaluate the accuracy and fluency of their language expression, as well as the structure and content quality of the news report; or ask students to plan and present an advertising solution in groups in English and evaluate their teamwork, creative conception, and English presentation abilities.

5.3. Feedback and Improvement

Provide students with detailed evaluation feedback in a timely manner to enable them to clearly understand their strengths and weaknesses. Feedback includes not only specific scores or grades but also specific descriptions of students' performances and improvement suggestions. For excellent aspects, give affirmation and encouragement to enhance students' self-confidence and learning motivation; for existing problems, clearly point them out and provide specific improvement methods and learning resources to help students adjust their learning strategies and continuously improve their abilities. At the same time, teachers should reflect on the

teaching process based on the evaluation results, discover problems and deficiencies in teaching, and timely adjust teaching content, methods, and progress to improve the pertinence and effectiveness of teaching. For example, if students perform poorly in English interview tasks, teachers can add relevant training and guidance in subsequent teaching and adjust teaching methods to improve students' abilities in this aspect.

Through the above teaching evaluation reforms for media majors, it can more effectively promote the development of students' professional abilities, improve the quality and practicality of higher vocational English teaching, and cultivate more talents with excellent English abilities and professional qualities for the media industry.

6. Construction of the Teaching Staff

In the teaching reform of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities, the construction of the teaching staff is a key factor in ensuring teaching quality and promoting the success of the reform. (Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S., 2014) [10].

6.1. Professional Development of Teachers

Encourage English teachers to actively participate in various types of professional training, including media industry knowledge training, English teaching method discussions, and updates of vocational education concepts. For example, participate in short-term training courses lectured by media industry experts to deeply understand the latest developments, cutting-edge technologies, and trends in the media field, and master professional knowledge and practical skills in the media industry (Nunan, D., 2004) [11]. At the same time, participate in workshops and seminars on English teaching methods, learn the latest teaching concepts and methods, such as project-based learning, contextualized teaching, and blended teaching, and apply them to English teaching for media majors (Willis, J., 1996) [12]. In addition, teachers should also be supported to participate in domestic and international academic conferences and educational exchange activities to broaden their horizons, exchange experiences with peers, and understand the latest research results and practical experiences in English teaching and media education.

6.2. Cultivation of Double-Qualified Teachers

Strengthen the cultivation of double-qualified teachers who have solid English teaching abilities and rich practical experience in the media industry. On the one hand, English teachers can be selected to take temporary positions in media enterprises to personally participate in actual work in the media industry, such as news gathering and editing, program production, and advertising planning, accumulate real work experience, and understand the specific needs of the industry for English abilities (Halliday, M. A. K., 1978) [13]. On the other hand, senior professionals from media enterprises can be hired as part-time teachers. They can bring actual work cases and experiences into the classroom and provide more practical and targeted teaching guidance for students. Part-time teachers can also communicate and cooperate with in-school teachers, jointly develop teaching resources, and improve teaching content and methods.

6.3. Construction of Teaching Teams

Form interdisciplinary teaching teams composed of English teachers and media professional teachers. English teachers have professional knowledge and skills in language teaching and can provide students with systematic English language training; media professional teachers are familiar with professional knowledge and business processes in the media industry and can provide professional guidance for teaching. Team members jointly carry out curriculum construction and deeply study the teaching objectives, curriculum content, teaching methods,

and evaluation methods of English for media majors (Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S., 2014) [10]. For example, cooperate in compiling English textbooks and teaching materials with media characteristics and develop teaching cases and projects closely combined with the media industry. At the same time, conduct teaching research together to explore how to organically integrate English teaching with media professional education and improve teaching effects. In addition, the teaching team also regularly organizes teaching discussion activities, shares teaching experiences and insights, learns from each other, and continuously improves the overall teaching level and quality of the team.

Through the above measures for the construction of the teaching staff for media majors, a high-quality, professional, and innovative teaching team can be built to provide strong talent support for the teaching reform of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities, better meet the learning needs of students majoring in media, and cultivate high-quality talents that meet the needs of the industry.

7. Summary

In today's era of globalization and digitalization, the media industry has an increasingly urgent demand for talents with professional abilities and English literacy. The teaching reform of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities is of great significance and value for students majoring in media.

Through the reorientation of teaching objectives, we have clarified the core objective of cultivating students' ability to effectively communicate and solve practical problems in the media field using English. This makes teaching more targeted and practical and can better meet the actual needs of the media industry.

In terms of the optimization of the curriculum setting, the professional English courses, practical teaching links, and elective courses offered for media majors provide students with systematic and rich learning content. Students can not only master English knowledge and skills related to media but also expand their horizons and abilities through practical and elective courses to better adapt to the diverse needs of future career development.

The innovation of teaching methods is the key to improving teaching effects. The application of task-driven teaching methods, project teaching methods, situational teaching methods, and blended teaching methods has stimulated students' learning interest and initiative and cultivated their teamwork spirit, innovation ability, and problem-solving ability. These methods allow students to improve their English application ability and media professional quality in actual operations and situational experiences.

The reform of teaching evaluation ensures a comprehensive and accurate assessment of students' learning achievements. Diversified evaluation methods, focused evaluation of professional abilities, and timely and effective feedback and improvement mechanisms help students clearly understand their learning status and promote them to continuously adjust and improve themselves. At the same time, it also provides a basis for teachers to improve teaching, forming a virtuous cycle of teaching.

The construction of the teaching staff is the guarantee for the success of teaching reform. The professional development of teachers, the cultivation of double-qualified teachers, and the construction of teaching teams enable teachers to better grasp the development trends of the media industry, impart the latest knowledge and skills to students, and improve teaching quality.

In general, the teaching reform of higher vocational English based on the cultivation of professional abilities is a systematic project that requires continuous efforts and continuous improvement in all aspects. For media majors, this reform helps cultivate high-quality compound talents who are proficient in both English and media business, enhances their

competitiveness in the job market, and injects new vitality into the development of the media industry. However, the advancement of the reform is not achieved overnight and requires the joint participation and support of schools, teachers, students, and related industries. In the future development, we should continuously summarize experiences, draw on advanced teaching concepts and methods, and continuously optimize the various measures of teaching reform to adapt to the constantly changing social needs and educational environment and create a brighter future for higher vocational English teaching of media majors.

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