

# **An Analysis on the Reform of Application-oriented English Talent Training Mode in Preschool Education Major**

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**Abstract:** The rapid development of preschool education in China and the trend that the age of learning English group is lower, have led to a large number of English teachers in preschool education stage to meet the growing needs of young children's learning English. However, the traditional college course and education model which are lack of personalized content makes it difficult for the graduates majored in pre-school education to meet the requirements of actual work. Meanwhile, the transformation and development of the local universities has begun. Taking this opportunity and depending on serious investigation on the English training mode of pre-school education major of the local university named Chifeng College, this paper would analyze the necessity and main measures of establishing application-oriented personnel training model, which is centered in professional ability in preschool education major.

## **1. Introduction**

Pre-school education is the initiation education for preschool children aged 0-6 years and it is also the beginning stage of lifelong education. Therefore, the talent cultivation of pre-school education is not only related to the healthy growth of children, but also to the future of the country and the hope of the nation. The 12th Five-year Plan of China clearly states: "the preschool education should be developed actively and the annual gross admission rate of the kindergarten should be increased to 85%." Besides, there is a trend that the language learners of English are becoming younger and younger. On the one hand, the pre-school education needs a large number of English teachers to meet the growing needs of young children to learn English. On the other hand, the content of traditional college English teaching and education model which are lack of individualization cannot satisfy the need of English ability training of the students who are majoring in the pre-school education in colleges, which makes it difficult for them to achieve the English level and ability required by actual work. Therefore, it is imperative and urgent to reform the teaching content and mode of college English courses for pre-school education majors.

## **2. The Background and Reasons for the Reform**

### **2.1 The Historical Background of the Transformation and Development**

At present, China is in a critical period of economic transformation and building a well-off society in an all-round way. In this special period, the whole nation needs a large number of applied talents who master modern science and technology and have excellent-trained skills. Therefore, the responsibility of the education of the college stage is to train such talents to serve the modern production. However, in reality, the goals and subject structure of local universities and colleges in China tend to be similar. In addition, most majors of the Chinese local universities and colleges don't match the local social and economic development, that is to say, their abilities of serving local areas is not sufficient. In this context, China's Ministry of Education proposed the strategic plan about the transformation and development of local universities on the basis of the reality, thus providing a lot of opportunities for the Chinese local universities and colleges to transform from traditional academic universities to applied technical universities. In February 2014, Li Keqiang, the

Premier of China, deployed tasks and measures to accelerate the development of modern career education at the executive meeting of the state council. One of the strategies clearly pointed out “guiding a batch of ordinary undergraduate colleges to transform into applied technology universities”(Zhang,2016).In April of the same year, the deputy minister of China’s Education Ministry Lu Xin emphasized that the transformation and development of local universities are a profound change in the area of higher education, which is with far-reaching significance on the International Forum of Industry-education Integration Development Strategy held by Huang-huai college. On this forum, *Zhu Madian Consensus* was released to jointly explore the two important issues of “the transformation and development of some local universities” and “the construction ways of universities of applied technology with Chinese characteristics”(Zhang,2016).

In response to the transformation and development of local universities, English course teaching in local universities should also undergo adaptive changes in personnel training orientation, teaching content, teaching mode, course design and evaluation.

## **2.2 The Current Situation of English Teaching in Local Universities**

### **2.2.1 The teaching condition of the college**

In the past, Chifeng College where the author taught, as a local university in Chifeng city located in Inner Mogolia province of China, mechanically copied the Chinese established and famous universities in terms of their orientation of running and professional curriculum, which is lack of features and individuality. The study of university-based teaching materials and the teaching content with regional characteristics lags behind. Therefore, the employment situation and employment quality of students are not ideal. However, with the national guidance and promotion of the transformation of local ordinary universities to application-oriented universities, the way of “integration of production and education, cooperation between universities and enterprises” has become the only one for the transformation and development. To this end, Chifeng college, relying on the governments at all levels and school resources advantage, constantly promote the connection between university and local governments, the primary and secondary schools (kindergarten), which provides better practice platform for graduating students.

### **2.2.2 Student source structure**

According to the investigation by the author, Chifeng college as a local university, is affected by many factors, such as teaching condition, social influence, enrollment area, the overall English level of the students is low. The spoken English ability and English skills application ability is far behind the students in key universities. Pre-school education majors mostly come from limited areas of Inner Mongolia autonomous region in China and are mainly enrolled through two admission methods:

(a) the National College Entrance Examination: the freshmen are recruited from high school graduates who basically achieve the standard of the second batches admission scores in the National College Entrance Examination. (b) Counterpart Recruitment: the source of admission is from kindergarten normal schools and secondary normal schools (including secondary vocational technical school). However, the past experience has proved that the enrollment quality of counterpart recruitment is relatively low. Besides, the English levels of students are uneven and the polarization is serious. Most students have little interest in learning English and lack the motivation to study. Therefore, the students of this source majoring in pre-school education have poor language application skills. In addition, their English pronunciation is not standard.

### **2.2.3 The quality of the teachers**

In recent years, Chifeng college has more new English teachers, among which young teachers with overseas education background and master degree are the majority; However, some English teachers suggest that they are only good at English professional knowledge, but know little about the professional knowledge of each subject. For example, the public English teacher of pre-school education major has no knowledge of pre-school education fields such as children psychology and

children education. This phenomenon is not conducive for teachers to fully understand the development direction of the students and their future careers, not to mention to cultivate inter-disciplinary and applied talents that meet the needs of social development. Obviously, it runs counter to the university's original intention and development purpose.

### **2.3 The Significance of Pre-school Education Major**

Pre-school education is the starting stage of lifelong education and the stage of initiation education, the training object of which is the pre-school children aged from 0 to 6. Therefore, the cultivation of high-quality talents for pre-school education is related to the smooth growth and positive development of the children and the competitive power of the whole nation in the world. At present, China's preschool education career is developing rapidly. Besides, there is a trend that the language learners of English are becoming younger and younger. On the one hand, pre-school education needs a large number of English teachers to meet the growing needs of young children to learn English. On the other hand, the content of traditional college English teaching and education model which are lack of individualization cannot satisfied the need of English ability training of the students who are majoring pre-school education in colleges, which makes it difficult for them to achieve the English level and ability required by actual work. As far as the author knows, the pre-school education major in the university where the author teaches does not have relevant professional English in the senior grades. The above reasons lead to: first of all, the students from pre-school education major mostly regard college English courses as useless one. Secondly, the preschool education institutions in the society do not appreciate the comprehensive English application ability of the graduates who are sent by pre-school education major in the university. Finally, it is well known that childhood is the best time for a person to learn a language. The children in the stage of Pre-school own outstanding pronunciation, intonation sensitivity and language imitation ability. Therefore, the English teachers of the pre-school education stage should pay special attention to the standardization of the language demonstration. However, the actual situation shows that most students majoring in pre-school education have uneven English proficiency. Therefore, it is difficult to guarantee the accuracy of the pronunciation and intonation of the language teaching of English.

To sum up, it's not difficult to find that the college English course reform of the pre-school education major is imperative and imminent.

## **3. The Reform of the Curriculum System**

### **3.1 The Refined and Deepened Teaching Content**

The English education expert Wen Qiufang put forward: "It is necessary for us to break the requirement of cultivating the all-rounders of the foreign language, because all careers' demands of the foreign language level of college graduates are diversified. In the current society, the positions which require the balanced development in the five skills, such as: listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating at the same time are rare" (Wen, 2012.) Therefore, in the new era, college English teaching should abandon the unified teaching materials and contents and choose teaching materials and contents flexibly. At the same time, the university or college should reduce the teaching contents and learning hours of basic English and general English, and increase the teaching contents and hours of ESP or EOP. For the pre-school education professional English teaching, the content of the textbook should be mainly practical and applicable. First of all, students of pre-school education major must understand what kind of English teaching content conforms to children's cognitive level, learning characteristics, interests, hobbies and practical needs, which should be involved in the teaching content of the college English course. Adhering to the idea that "to give students a glass of water, the teacher should have a bucket of water", the college English teachers should master the common themes of pre-school English education including oral communication activities of daily life scenes, language grammar learning activities, children's English songs and English story performance activities. Second, the college English teacher should guide the students

to observe the classical English teaching cases of the kindergarten , which mostly conform to the scientific principles of children's psychology and absorb the frontier education knowledge. Finally, the system of elective English courses should be implemented, which allows the students to choose different types of college English courses independently according to their own English learning foundation , personal interests, and future career development planning. For example, English phonetics optional courses can be set for students to understand advanced phonetic knowledge such as international phonetic symbols and sentence stress, intonation, linking, weak reading and loss of explosion.

### **3.2 The Diversified Teaching Form**

Pre-school education, as the initial education, is targeted at pre-school children, which requires the front-line kindergarten teachers to have childlike interest. Therefore, college English courses should also pay attention to subtly cultivate this quality of the students of the pre-school education major. For example, some English nursery rhymes are melodious and specific, which also express the interesting plots of stories. Therefore, the college English teachers should introduce students to learn the English nursery rhymes and guide their practice. For example, the college English teachers can assign tasks, which require the students of the pre-school education major to exert their imagination and try to create an interesting scene for children's English nursery songs. The evaluation criteria of the tasks are whether the scene designed for children creates a relaxed and free atmosphere, whether it can stimulate children's interest in learning, and whether it can promote children's creation and transfer of learning content. For example, there is a famous English nursery rhyme *Old Macdonlad Had a Farm* , which mainly introduces the English names and sounds of farm animals. In this teaching activity design, the college English teacher can guide the students majoring in pre-school Education to make masks of various farm animals, and design the dance action. From this activity, the students could learn how to teach English nursery rhymes to the children.

### **3.3 The Diversified Teaching Subjects**

Classroom teaching should adhere to the principles of autonomy, inquiry, cooperation and interactivity. The main body of teaching should break the traditional teaching process in which the teacher is the “leading role” and monopolizes the teaching stage. Besides, the teaching subjects should not only be limited to teachers, but also be taken up by learners or experienced principals and key teachers in kindergartens. Learners and teachers can discuss specific teaching scenarios and share their experiences(Li&Luo,2015). This teaching mode can not only meet learners' personalized learning needs, but also set learning examples and examples for learners and improve their practical ability and scientific research ability.

### **3.4 The Contextualised Teaching Scenario**

The teaching environment of college English courses for pre-school education majors should not be limited to the traditional classroom, but should be extended to the actual kindergarten, the simulated kindergarten teaching and research room and even into the community. On one hand, leading the learners to participate in the real teaching environment will break through the inflexibility of the traditional teaching mode. On the other hand, situational learning can bring a stronger sense of social experience to the learners. The students can not only learn theoretical knowledge, but also develop their ability to deal with problems in the field so as to improve students' practical ability which will combine the ideal with reality.

## **4. The Reform of the Teaching Faculty**

In response to the requirements of the reform and transition period, the local colleges and universities should cultivate more “double-professional” teachers and strengthen the ties among the colleges. The most important thing is to give preference to “double-qualified” teachers in terms of evaluation and title evaluation.

Secondly, the local colleges should reform the talent introduction mechanism and have the courage to employ a batch of skilled foreign language talents from the civilian population who are engaged in front-line teaching as the part-time or full-time teaching staff for a long time.

Last but not least, the college English teachers should be selected and sent to study abroad in stages and in batches to learn from and absorb the training mode and advanced experience of foreign applied talents, so as to improve their theoretical level and teaching art level.

## **5. The Extracurricular Activities**

Although the teaching object of pre-school teachers is children, the teaching content of knowledge system is huge. In addition to teaching children basic common sense, teachers should guide children with correct ideas, which require the teachers have a higher knowledge reserve and humanistic quality. The “Humanistic quality” not only includes research ability and knowledge, but also refers to the internalized quality of human-oriented. Therefore, in a sense, as the object of their future career is the children, the seriousness of their working attitude and good sense of responsibility are more important than the knowledge and superb teaching skills (Guan 2016). Therefore, in addition to the mastering of the English language knowledge and skills, the purpose of the English extracurriculum activities is to cultivate the students’ ability of independent learning and to comprehensively enhance their humanistic quality.

For example, the colorful activities such as: the English corner, English speech contest, English debating competition, English classic movies dialogue dubbing competition can show the students the correct use of English pronunciation and intonation .

To sum up, the class teaching activity of college English class lays the foundation and provides conditions for the extracurriculum activities, which further strengthens the effect of the teaching of the English course. The two activities develop in coordination and jointly improve the students' language application skills and comprehensive humanistic quality.

## **6. Evaluation System**

Reasonable evaluation mechanism is not only the end point of teaching activities, but also the starting point of effective teaching activities.

Firstly, the content of evaluation is single and the final score is generally determined by the objective paper score.

Secondly, the proportion of the grades represent the students’ performance is relatively small. Because the sore aim of the students with the negative learning attitudes is to achieve the lowest qualified score and their self-control abilities are low, it is difficult to stimulate their participations in English classroom activities without any reward mechanism.

In view of the above problems, we should reform the evaluation system over the English course of pre-school education major:

### **6.1 Setting up the Correct Evaluation Concepts**

The evaluation system of modern ideas is to guide teachers to pay attention to students' learning state rather than the teachers’ teaching skills and to motivate students to pay attention to experience the process. Through this way, the students could pay attention to the learning process, gain knowledge from it and build confidence(Li&Liu,2001).Therefore, the teachers should set up the correct assessment concept, which means they should not only improve their own professional quality, but also care the daily learning conditions of the students.

### **6.2 Expanding the Content of the Evaluation**

The teachers can increase the content of process evaluation, for example testing the students' ability of organizing English games, writing English stories and children's songs in the learning process. At the same time, the specific evaluation index is set as whether the students have conducted independent thinking, whether the teaching design is innovative, whether it conforms to

the discipline of children's psychology and learning development, and whether it is operable.

### **6.3 Rationalizing the Composition of the Examination Performance**

In order to restrict students' casual behavior and omission behavior, the college should improve the proportion of grade on the usual performance of the students in the daily classes so that they can focus on their study at ordinary times.

## **7. Conclusion**

The national strategies on the transformation of the local universities provide opportunities and direction for the reform of English courses in pre-school education major. Pre-school education, as the initiatory education, is the initial stage of lifelong education so that its status and function cannot be neglected. We will effectively improve the quality of talents trained in local universities and colleges, and better promote local economic, social and cultural development.

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