

# Research on the College English Writing Teaching Based on CDIO Concept

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**Abstract.** With the advancement of China's educational reform, college English teachers should actively change their teaching concept, integrate the CDIO concept into college English writing classroom teaching, guide college students to find the joy of English writing, stimulate their enthusiasm for writing to meet their future work and learning needs. In this context, the work first introduced the connotation of CDIO concept, and then discussed the CDIO concept teaching strategies for college English writing, so as to improve the quality of college English writing classroom teaching.

## Introduction

For a long time, the phenomenon of "students being afraid of writing" has been prevalent in college English teaching. How to strengthen students' writing ability has been the key and difficult point in college English teaching. The introduction of CDIO concept has brought a new light to the reform of college English writing teaching. Its practice-based educational concept coincides with the essence of English writing teaching [1]. Constructing effective writing teaching links with high interactivity and effectiveness can promote the English writing teaching. Therefore, it is an important measure to establish students' practical English ability and to discuss the specific ideas and methods of college English writing teaching reform from the four aspects of CDIO concept [2-3].

## Connotation of CDIO Concept

The CDIO education mode is the latest achievement of international engineering education reform in recent years, and it advocates a new concept of engineering education. It refers to Conceive, Design, Implement and Operate, which takes the life cycle from product research and development to product operation as the carrier and enables students to study engineering in an active and practical way. The CDIO training outline divides the abilities of engineering graduates into four levels: engineering basic knowledge mastering ability, personal ability, interpersonal team ability and engineering system ability. The outline requires students to achieve the preset goals at these four levels in a comprehensive way.

CDIO education mode stresses on the students' comprehensive ability, quality, innovation ability and the cultivation of team spirit and so on. It plays a guiding role in the cause of higher engineering education in China. Therefore, since the Engineering College of Shantou University took the lead in successfully implementing the CDIO engineering education mode in 2005, many colleges and universities in China have successively introduced the CDIO mode and carried out bold and drastic reforms in engineering teaching. However, few colleges and universities have applied the CDIO mode in the liberal arts field, especially in the field of professional English education [4]. In fact, the educational concept and mode advocated by CDIO are also applicable to the teaching of professional English. With the development of modern society, it has become an urgent goal for colleges and universities to cultivate inter-disciplinary talents and to meet the needs of the society. Meanwhile, the training objectives of foreign language talents also need to be adjusted timely. In the past, students' listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating abilities should be trained to a higher level. In addition to the basic language ability, students should also be

trained in innovation ability, organizational communication ability and coordination ability, self-learning ability, team spirit and leadership and good professional ethics.

### **Concrete Ideas of College English Writing Teaching Based on the CDIO Concept**

The CDIO concept is materially different from the traditional teaching concept and method, and it emphasizes the logicity and systematicness of teaching. The consciousness of "learning by doing" is integrated into the teaching process through the distinctive practical link, so as to ensure the full play of practical teaching and maximize the efficiency of teaching. Specifically, the introduction of CDIO concept into college English writing teaching is reflected in the following four aspects:

**Cultivate students' interest in writing.** The reform of college English writing teaching under the guidance of CDIO concept should carry out the basic theme of "cultivating students' writing practice ability", and release the instrumental attribute of English as a language by improving students' writing ability. At present, a large part of students' English learning is in a passive state, and the purpose of English writing is to cope with all kinds of examinations. The fundamental premise of the implementation of CDIO concept is to construct students' necessary needs for English writing teaching, help them in forming their internal interest and driving force for English learning, change passive learning into active learning, and thus effectively complete learning tasks [5].

Under the CDIO concept, college English writing teaching should actively reform the traditional exam-oriented teaching content and structure, and distinguish writing teaching themes and contents according to students' professional characteristics, so as to create a kind of comprehensive and practical writing teaching environment for students and gradually develop their interest in writing teaching. In college English writing teaching, teachers should break through the constraints of traditional concepts and constantly improve their comprehensive teaching ability. The content of writing teaching can be based on current events, language and culture, and even words and expressions in daily life. It can also improve the difficulty level and can be based on students' professional background knowledge, such as materials, architecture, transportation, etc. In a word, to break through the limitation of the textbook and to activate the writing teaching content is an important foothold to cultivate the interest of contemporary college students in English writing.

**Strengthen the guidance of writing teaching.** Under the CDIO concept, the purpose of college English writing teaching is not to cultivate "theoretical" English "master", but to cultivate real all-round talents with practical ability. Specifically speaking, writing ability is one of the indispensable and important language abilities for students in their future social activity and career. It ensures that students can use instrumental language other than their mother tongue to better achieve career goals and life values. The CDIO concept requires teachers to refine and optimize the steps of English writing teaching, so that to formulate project goals with strong operability under the premise of implementing the final goal; at the same time, teachers are required to deeply understand and make good use of the project teaching method, and design project goals with hierarchy, so that to help students in realizing the steady improvement of writing ability [6].

The design of English writing content under the CDIO concept puts forward higher requirements for the comprehensive language ability of college English teachers, which requires teachers to design writing content with strong practicality according to students' majors. Taking students majoring in architecture as an example, the design of writing teaching project can be carried out from the following three levels. The first level aims at cultivating students' basic writing ability and enriching students' vocabulary reserve, with the development history and culture of architecture as the main writing content. The second level aims at enriching students' professional vocabulary and language bank, and takes architectural type characteristics and basic architectural methods as writing content, which has been improved in difficulty to a certain extent. The third level takes the architectural project design or engineering construction as the main writing content to effectively develop its workplace skills and practical skills.

**Strengthen students' writing practice.** Under the CDIO concept, teachers should implement "practice" in writing teaching all the time, and cultivate students' awareness and ability of "learning by doing". "Students being afraid of writing" is a common problem in English writing of many college students. The reasons are as follows: first, it is difficult for college students to find their favorite writing topics; second, there is a lack of language materials for college students, which can be solved through practice [7-8]. As mentioned above, teachers should not only do a good job in classroom teaching, but also extend writing teaching in students' spare time to cultivate students' ability in finding materials independently, so as to ensure the in-depth promotion of writing implementation.

Specifically, teachers can ask students to find some real writing tasks and promote students to map students' needs into writing for real purposes. This kind of writing, which is closely related to students' campus life and future development, can bring students into the implementation of writing to the greatest extent. For students' wonderful articles, teachers can explain and demonstrate in class and guide students to learn from each other to create all favorable implementation atmosphere and conditions.

**Reform writing teaching evaluation methods.** In order to ensure the smooth implementation of CDIO concept in college English writing teaching, "operation" plays a very important role as the last link. To be specific, we should start from the evaluation of English writing teaching, and abandon the current unreasonable evaluation method, which is the urgent task of college English teaching reform [9]. The operating procedures of CDIO concept clearly point out the one-sidedness and underdevelopment of the existing English teaching evaluation mechanism. First, the subject of evaluation should be equal and comprehensive; namely, students are also included in the evaluation system, so that to provide students with the right to speak [10-11]. The formulation of the evaluation content should respect the students' opinions and consider the students' choice so that the teaching evaluation can reflect the students' writing practice and progress more truthfully. Second, the content of the evaluation should not overemphasize the results, but should adopt the multi-content evaluation system, which emphasizes both the process and the result, and the skill and knowledge, so that the students can truly feel the importance of the writing practice. Thus, this can guide them to actively engage in writing practice.

## Summary

The CDIO concept is an innovative teaching concept created by the American engineering education circle and the concept is gradually recognized and promoted worldwide. The core of its education and teaching work is to comprehensively cultivate and improve students' practical ability, so that college education can better serve social development. The organic combination of CDIO concept and college English writing teaching can construct a set of effective teaching methods for college English and promote the improvement of English teachers' teaching level and students' writing ability. Under the guidance of the CDIO concept, college English writing teaching is guided by cultivating students' interest, which can improve the effectiveness of English writing teaching.

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