

# Perspectives on the construction of Golden Courses in College English Teaching

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**Abstract:** The Ministry of Education proposed that “water courses” be eliminated to create golden courses with innovation and challenge, which has triggered a heated discussion in college English teaching. This essay analyzes the current situation of college English teaching, explores the necessity and feasibility of implementing golden courses and proposes some specific principles and suggestions for the construction of golden courses in college English teaching.

## 1. Introduction

In June 2018, Minister of Education Chen Baosheng first proposed the concept of “Golden Course” in the speech of the Undergraduate Education Work Conference of National Higher Education in the New Era, he said, “in the stage of undergraduate education in China, it is reasonable to increase the difficulty and depth of the course, eliminating the “water class” existing in undergraduate colleges to create a “golden course” with deep, difficult and challenging skills, and effectively improve the quality of classroom teaching. On November 24, 2018, Wu Yan, Director of the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, published a report entitled “Building China’s Golden Course” at the Chinese University Teaching Forum in Guangzhou, stating that the curriculum is the core element of talent training. The curriculum is the most microscopic part of education, but it solves the most fundamental problem of education <sup>[1]</sup>. In this context, how to create a “golden course” has become a hot topic and improving the effectiveness of classroom teaching has become the key point.

## 2. The Necessity of Building Golden Course in College English Teaching

The concept of “Golden Course” is based on the accurate and objective judgment of the current situation of undergraduate course teaching in colleges and universities, which plays an important role in the future first-class undergraduate education.

### 2.1 The Current Situation of College English Teaching

With the rapid development of the economy and society, the demand for foreign language talents in the society has undergone profound changes since the beginning of the new century. The current college English classroom teaching model needs to be improved urgently. Through the investigation, the current problems in ELT are as follows:

(1) Teachers still follow the books and students listen passively. This is one of the important reasons that lead students to be tired of learning, lack motivation and have low efficiency in study. In addition, some teachers use too many PPT teaching materials without interaction in the class, which causes students to lose interest in exploring more.

(2) The content of the textbook is separated from the individual and social needs. Most obviously, the materials selected in the text are far from the real life of the students. They cannot feel the same, and have no interest in learning. More importantly, the content of learning is, to some extent, not relevant to the applied English that may be involved in further study, career development, and practical work in the future. Also, intensive reading is the main course of college English teaching

at current colleges and universities, which is affected by the examination system. Its primary teaching purpose is to teach language knowledge instead of cultivating students' language application ability. Even if it involves application, it is very limited.

(3) The class is too large, and "student-centered" teaching model has become a slogan. It is widely observed that English is mainly taught in large classes in many universities, with 60 students or even more. This teacher-centered classroom teaching model makes the effective interaction and classroom organization very difficult and challenging. It is true that Sichuan University's inquiry-based small-class English teaching has set an example for us, but it is difficult for most colleges to achieve.

(4) There is a serious shortage of time and practice in learning. In recent years, influenced by the theory that "English learning is time-consuming, laborious, and even useless", the college English class has a tendency to shrink and becomes increasingly intense. Under these circumstances, limited classroom teaching cannot implement the process of learning to use, teacher-student interaction, and communication between peers [2].

## **2.2 The Connotation of "Golden Course"**

Regarding the connotation of the "Golden Course", the basic principles included in the document are the high-level, innovation and challenge [3]. Among them, high-level refers to the integration of teaching students' knowledge and cultivating their ability as well as improving their overall quality instead of only transmitting knowledge. Only the combination of these three aspects can reflect the effectiveness of higher undergraduate education. This strives to cultivate students' comprehensive ability and advanced thinking to solve complex problems. The innovation is mainly reflected in three aspects: First, The content of the course is cutting-edge and contemporary; second, the teaching form must be advanced and interactive rather than cramming. The students change from passive listening to active learning and are able to interact with teachers in the classroom; third, the learning results are exploratory and individualized. Teachers are no longer the masters of the answers. Instead, they discover and explore the learning outcomes through students' independent inquiry. In this process, not only can students' personality be found, but also their potential can be tapped and explored. Challenge means that the course must have certain difficulty and cannot be completed by self-study. It requires the guidance and proper explanation of the teacher to obtain more substantial knowledge. This requires more preparation of teachers, a more reasonable curriculum structure and appropriate teaching rhythm. At the same time, it is also challenging for students, which is mainly reflected in their preview, positive thinking in the class and the reflection after class.

## **2.3. The Core of Building Golden Course in ELT**

The curriculum resources are essential for building a college English golden course, it is a challenge and test for English teachers to make the students actively participate in classroom activities. The golden course can be reflected in three aspects: teacher-student interaction, attention process, and strict requirements [4]. Classroom is no longer a teacher's speaking hall, teachers and students interact frequently in the classroom and often engage in intense thinking collisions, which helps students raise critical questions and debate with teachers; the process of attention emphasizes the learning process and distributed assessment. The examination result is no longer dependent on the final exam, but students' performance and efforts before, during and after class, which promotes good study habits; strict requirements require teachers to thoroughly evaluate each student from the interaction and learning process, ensuring the final score is fair, objective and comprehensive.

## **3. Measures and Suggestions for Building College English Gold Courses**

The preparation for English teaching should not only be limited to textbooks and PPT. This will make students unable to gain motivation, which also mirrors teachers' irresponsibility. It makes

sense to think about how to combine modern wisdom classrooms with college English teaching, how to integrate various types of English learning mobile applications into the student learning process and how to guide students to speak more and participate in the classroom. Teachers need to rationally develop and utilize curriculum resources in order to transform the “water class” into a “golden class”.

### **3.1 Utilize Textbooks Creatively to Focus on the Language Application Ability**

English teachers should not only focus on the textbook, but use the teaching materials creatively, boldly reform, expand and supplement the content to create question involved critical thinking, promoting students' expansion and application of knowledge. The content taught in each class requires teachers to design, adjust, enrich, and improve in advance, making the teaching content more realistic, meaningful, and challenging. For example, English news can be integrated into daily teaching. This is because English news is everywhere in our lives, and it is widely available through radio, television, internet, and specialized news software. Teachers can flexibly choose the news materials according to their own students' conditions. It is advisable to select those which keep pace with the times or the social focus, which is beneficial to expand the knowledge of students, reduce the sense of boredom, and stimulate their interest in exploring something new. However, teachers should choose materials with reliable source, certain influence and authority, such as CCTV English news, VOA, BBC, Guardian, etc., to ensure the authenticity of the news and English expression. Teachers should also pay attention to the difficulty of selecting materials. Too simple, unfamiliar, or too difficult news materials will make students lose interest in learning.

When integrating English news into university teaching, teachers should adopt a variety of teaching methods. For example, before listening to the news, the teacher can arrange a task for students to prepare the vocabulary related to the topic. Students can use the news software such as Scallops to read news anytime and anywhere. When they don't know the vocabulary, they click on and the software will display the Chinese meaning, and add the vocabulary to follow the learning. The students can avoid the inconvenience of checking the dictionary, which is very time consuming [5]. In addition, the teacher can encourage students to briefly retell the news content or express their views on the broadcast event. After a period of study, students have a certain foundation, allowing them to learn to write press releases and simulate news broadcasts. Through flexible use of various teaching methods, students are willing to learn news and promote their comprehensive development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

### **3.2 Correct Students' Learning Motivation to Inspire Interest**

In the era of knowledge explosion, it is impossible to pass on all human knowledge to learners. Students must have self-learning ability to better adapt to the rapid development of science and technology and the renewal of knowledge. Therefore, classroom teaching should pay attention to cultivating students' interest and confidence in learning foreign languages and correcting the motivation of learning. Teachers can develop students' self-learning ability by stimulating their interest in learning, constructing an independent learning atmosphere, and assigning reasonable learning tasks.

Group work is one of the effective ways to improve the teaching effect. It can stimulate students' interest in teaching. By allowing students to form a collaborative learning group, it is beneficial for students to find a sense of belonging, identity and respect, enhancing their participation and cultivating confidence. Therefore, on the one hand, teachers should cultivate students' awareness of collaboration, clarify the division of labor, and encourage students to participate actively. On the other hand, they can create atmosphere and carry out various forms of collaborative activities, such as competition, debate, role-playing, etc to promote discussion and cooperation. In this way, group activities are the basic form of teaching, with the cooperation as the basic driving force. Group performance is used as the evaluation standard, and competition between individuals is replaced by

competition among groups, which is very helpful and greatly enhances the students' enthusiasm for learning [6]. When completing the tasks, the team members can learn from each other, encourage and supervise one another to create a good learning atmosphere, which will give full play to the collective wisdom, stimulate individual enthusiasm for learning English, and better solve the problems in learning. Various problems will maximize the initiatives of students, so that the teaching effect will be significantly improved, and students will change from "passive learning" to "active learning".

### **3.3 Evaluate Teaching Scientifically and Reflect on Effects Timely**

Teaching evaluation is an important part of college English teaching. It is not only an important basis for teachers to obtain feedback, improve management, and guarantee quality, but also an effective means for students to adjust learning strategies and improve efficiency. Teachers should reflect on the teaching objectives, content, methods, and effects in a timely manner to achieve effective teaching.

Applying task-driven teaching methods to the classroom is the key to measuring teaching effectiveness. The tasks should be designed reasonably according to the teaching materials and syllabus and with reference to the students' actual ability. If the students can complete some difficult tasks without any conflicting emotions, they can gain a sense of accomplishment in learning and enhance the confidence. At the same time, the task-driven teaching method also facilitates the evaluation of students for the end of the semester. Teachers can use the performance of each task as one of the indicators of the process evaluation to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the evaluation results.

### **3.4 Use Network Resources and Information Platform**

Nowadays, rich network resources have become one of the curriculum resources that must be developed in the process of college English teaching. Teachers not only need to have high English literacy and teaching skills, but also must learn to use computer technology to achieve teaching and management tasks, especially using computer software to design test questions and courseware, editing teaching audio and video, and organizing on the network [7]. Besides, they should learn to manage student learning, publish and correct electronic version of homework, track student progress, analyze, evaluate student learning, receive feedback from students during the learning process, and use computers or other personal mobile communication devices to communication and solve students' problems in English in a timely manner.

In addition to the use of network resources, the information platform of the teaching materials is also an essential resource. For example, the school where the author is located uses the New Horizon College English series of teaching materials, and the supporting platform is U Campus. This platform is more conducive to the interaction between teachers and students, which can better contribute to the effectiveness of the classroom. Since it is a supporting platform for teaching materials, students can directly complete the class and after-school exercises online, which is conducive to learning anytime and anywhere. In addition, for the textbook itself, the platform will also extend the practice, consolidate key points, supplement exercises, which can broaden students' horizons and expand reading.

## **4. Conclusion**

In summary, whether it is the "golden" course" or the "water course" depends on the teacher. If a teacher hangs on the knowledge and methods taught by their teacher; if a teacher is not willing to update the knowledge structure and teaching methods; if a teacher expects the new text not too long and too specialized; if a teacher asks for no change to the textbooks and requires all prepared courseware; if a teacher only offers courses according to their own interests rather than the needs of the students; if a teacher is unwilling to actively develop new courses according to the needs of

national, social and disciplinary development, then you cannot expect their courses to become a “golden course”.

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