

A Study on the Role Orientation, Realistic Challenges and Competence Improvement of College English Teachers in the New Era

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Abstract: In the face of the new situation and new requirements of the development of higher education in China, the Guiding Committee of University Foreign Language Teaching revised *The Guide of College English Teaching* (hereinafter referred to as *The Guide 2020 edition*). So far, the reform of university English curriculum has entered the deep-water zone and opened a new era. This paper proposes that under the new requirements of the 2020 edition of the Guide, college English teachers should face the challenges brought by the curriculum system, teaching objectives, teaching methods and teaching evaluation, carry out self-positioning and functional transformation, and comprehensively improve their professional ability. In addition, colleges and universities, functional departments and teachers themselves should perform their respective duties and take various measures to promote the comprehensive improvement of college English teachers' literacy in education, discipline, teaching, information and scientific research.

1. Introduction

College English course is an important part of humanities education in colleges and universities. It aims to help students improve their English communication ability and is of great significance to their future career development. In order to better promote the construction of college English courses, the Guiding Committee of University Foreign Language Teaching of the Ministry of Education has completed the development of *The Guide of College English Teaching (2020 edition)*^[1]. The guide conforms to the new mission, general pattern, new liberal arts, and major foreign languages of higher foreign language education, and puts forward new requirements for the curriculum system, teaching objectives, course content, and teacher development, marking a new era for college English teaching. The release of *The Guide (2020 edition)* puts forward higher requirements for college English teachers, requiring them to actively change their roles and constantly improve their abilities in order to cope with many challenges brought by changes in curriculum system, teaching objectives, teaching content and teaching methods.

2. New Requirements for College English Teaching in *The Guide of College English Teaching*

The Guide of College English Teaching (2020 edition) generally retains the overall framework of the 2015 edition, and has made important revisions in five aspects, putting forward new requirements for college English teaching.

2.1. Curriculum Teaching should Organically Integrate Ideological and Political Elements

The Guide (2020 edition) puts forward clear requirements for curriculum ideology and politics in “curriculum positioning and nature” and “curriculum setting”. On the one hand, it emphasizes the combination of English teaching and excellent traditional Chinese culture to cultivate students' international vision and intercultural communication ability; on the other hand, it emphasizes the combination of English teaching and information technology. To equip students with comprehensive qualities needed in the information age, College English has both instrumental and humanistic characteristics, with “instrumental” focusing on improving ability and “humanistic” focusing on strengthening ideology and politics^[2]. Therefore, in college English courses, we should

highlight the fundamental task of moral education and cultivate students' correct outlook on life, values and ethics.

2.2. Teaching requirements integrated into *The Chinese English Proficiency Scale*

The Guide (2020 edition), as always, attaches great importance to the teaching of basic English language knowledge and emphasizes the ability orientation of applying knowledge to practice. At the same time, the teaching requirements organically integrate with the relevant content of The Chinese English Proficiency Scale. According to the latest theories and practices of language teaching at home and abroad, *The Chinese English Proficiency Scale* is a standard for evaluating the ability of English learners in combination with China's national conditions and language characteristics. Integrating this scale into college English teaching provides a scientific and objective ability assessment standard for the whole teaching process, which can better guide teachers to teach and evaluate students' English ability, making it more scientific, systematic and standardized.

2.3. The Content of Teaching Materials should Incorporate Socialist Core Values

The Guide (2020 edition) clearly states that the guiding ideology for the compilation of college English textbooks should reflect the requirements of the new era, reflect the basic requirements of the Party and the state for education, and serve the reform of higher education teaching and personnel training^[3]. This means that the content of textbooks should conform to national laws, regulations and moral norms, carry forward Chinese cultural traditions and socialist core values, and cultivate students' correct outlook on life, values and ethics. At the same time, the content of the textbook should also be close to the actual life and learning needs of students, and pay attention to the combination of students' ideas, culture, interests and hobbies, so that students can participate in English learning more actively. This can improve students' English level and promote their all-round development.

2.4. Teaching Methods and Means should Reflect Information-based Teaching

With the development of modern information technology such as Internet and artificial intelligence, multimedia information teaching has become an essential skill for every teacher. *The Guide (2020 edition)* points out that "in the era of information technology and artificial intelligence, multimedia technology, big data, virtual reality technology, artificial intelligence technology and other modern information technology have become an important means of foreign language education and teaching". That will greatly promote the reform of college English teaching, highlighting the application of information technology and intelligent technology in college English teaching^[4]. Teachers should make full use of modern information technology to assist teaching and improve teaching quality.

2.5. College English Teachers Should Take the Initiative to Adapt to the New Situation

In the face of the new situation of higher education, *The Guide (2020 edition)* indicates that teacher factors have a profound impact on teaching quality, and puts forward requirements for college English teachers to improve their literacy in five aspects, namely, educating literacy, disciplinary literacy, teaching literacy, scientific research literacy and information literacy^[5]. This means that teachers should understand and abide by relevant teaching norms and standards, pay attention to curriculum ideological and political construction, and actively explore teaching methods and means in line with the development of the times and the needs of students. At the same time, teachers should constantly improve their own teaching level and accomplishment, pay attention to teaching practice and reflection, and constantly improve teaching methods and contents to improve teaching quality and effect^[6]. Only in this way, can we better meet the needs of students, promote the all-round development of students, and better adapt to and promote the development of college English education.

3. Challenges Facing College English Teachers in the New Era

The Guide (2020 edition) puts forward higher requirements for college English teachers, who are faced with more challenges and difficulties (as shown in Table 1) and need to transform and develop. In addition to adapting to the reform of the curriculum system and teaching methods, they also face challenges such as the reconstruction of the relevant knowledge system, the cultivation of practical ability and the change of ideas, which are embodied in the following aspects:

Table 1 Analysis of Challenges and Difficulties faced by College English Teachers

The source of the challenge	Difficulties Involved	Literacy Requirement	Capability Improvement Path
The change of teaching objective is divided into three levels: foundation, improvement and development	If course objectives can be achieved	educating literacy, disciplinary literacy, teaching literacy, scientific research literacy, information literacy	“Society, colleges and individuals” three main body linkage
Curriculum Changes: <i>General English, English for Specific Purposes, Cross-cultural Communication</i>	To solve the “what to teach” problem		
Change in teaching methods: make full use of information technology	To solve the “how to teach” problem		
Curriculum ideological and political requirements: foster character and civic virtue	To solve the “how was the teaching” problem		
Teacher development requirements: “four” good teachers	Training opportunities, visiting opportunities, further study opportunities		

3.1. Challenges Brought by Changes in Teaching Objectives

The Guide (2020 edition) divides college English teaching objectives into three levels, namely, foundation, improvement and development, under the overall principles of curriculum construction, such as moral cultivation, curriculum quality, individuation and diversity, and aims to change the focus from teaching language knowledge and skills to cultivating students’ comprehensive ability. The new teaching objectives have put forward quite high expectations and challenges for college English teachers, which involve the change of teaching methods, the change of teachers’ roles, the change of students’ evaluation methods, etc., and require college English teachers to constantly improve their teaching ability.

3.2. Challenges Brought by the Change of Curriculum System

The essence of the construction of “new liberal arts” is to lead the discipline direction, and the focus is on the exploration and practice of new majors integrating humanities and social sciences such as “foreign language + national politics”, “foreign language + national economics”, “foreign language + law”, and is committed to the training of international talents. *The Guide (2020 edition)* proposes that colleges and universities should build a college English curriculum system covering *General English, English for Specific Purposes* and *Cross-cultural Communication* based on their own realities. *General English* is now called *College English I-IV*. English for Specific Purposes mainly refers to general academic English courses, mainly including Academic English Writing and Academic English Listening and Speaking Courses, which emphasize the general learning skills and practices of all majors, so that students can read and write academic English, listen to lectures and take notes, consult English literature and make academic reports^[7]. The course of Intercultural Communication aims at intercultural education and should reflect the humanistic characteristics of college English as much as possible. In recent years, college English courses in our country have become diversified, specialized and school-based, and various colleges and universities have set up English courses to improve students’ applied English ability, which requires college English teachers to make changes in professional knowledge and professional ability to meet the

transformation of academic English oriented curriculum.

3.3. Challenges Brought by Changes in Teaching Methods

In order to adapt to the ever-changing diversified needs, college English teaching reform has been carried out. With the further promotion of information technology in teaching, *The Guide (2020 edition)* emphasizes that colleges and universities should change the teacher-led teaching method and highlight the application of information technology and intelligent technology in college English teaching. The era of information and intelligence provides a new teaching method for foreign language teaching. College English teachers should follow the rules of foreign language learning, make full use of the network teaching platform, and flexibly adopt various teaching methods such as task-based, cooperative, project-based and inquiry based on the characteristics of teaching content to improve teaching effect and teaching quality ^[8]. In addition, college English teachers should give full play to the important role of modern information technology in English teaching, pay close attention to the latest development of mobile learning theory, and make use of big data analysis technology to analyze learning situation, understand the needs of students, and reconstruct the teaching ecosystem.

3.4. Challenges Brought by Ideological and Political Requirements of the Curriculum

The Guide (2020 edition) clearly puts forward the general requirements of ideology and politics in college English courses, which means higher requirements for English teaching. On the one hand, college English teachers are required to have a solid knowledge of the basic principles of Marxism and ideological and political education theories, and be able to integrate them into English teaching, pay attention to cultivating students' ideological and moral quality and social responsibility, and promote students' all-round development. On the other hand, the content of the textbook should conform to the basic principles of Marxism, pay attention to the cultivation of students' ideological and moral quality and social responsibility, and meet the actual needs of English teaching. In addition, teachers should pay attention to the cultivation of students' ideological and moral quality and social responsibility, and more diversified and flexible teaching methods should be adopted, such as case teaching and discussion teaching.

3.5. Challenges Arising from Teacher Development Requirements

The Guide (2020 edition) puts forward requirements for the improvement of college English teachers' literacy in five aspects, and puts forward guiding opinions for colleges and universities to promote the development of college English teachers. In the face of the new mission, new requirements and new tasks brought by the construction of new liberal arts, college English teachers should constantly improve their own educational literacy, disciplinary literacy, teaching literacy, information literacy and scientific research literacy. They should take the initiative to improve and strengthen their own connotation construction, and become "four" good teachers in the new era with ideals and beliefs, moral sentiments, solid knowledge and benevolence to achieve the talent training goal of college English courses under the construction of new liberal arts ^[9].

4. Ways to Improve the Ability of College English Teachers in the New Era

In order to adapt to the new situation of the development of higher education and the new requirements of college English education and teaching, the three-subject linkage model of "society, university and individual" can be constructed to promote the continuous learning and development of teachers.

4.1. Social Support: Build a Good Ecological Environment

According to the basic theory of ecology of education, the national educational administrative department should cultivate a democratic, harmonious, healthy and upward social ecosystem in accordance with the law of education ecology, and provide support and guarantee for the professional development of teachers ^[10]. On the one hand, it is necessary to establish and improve

the training mechanism, provide systematic and professional training courses for college English teachers, and improve their teaching level and theoretical literacy. On the other hand, a communication platform should be built to provide opportunities for college English teachers to communicate, share and learn from each other, promote cooperation among teachers and improve their professional quality. Moreover, through regular seminars in virtual teaching and research rooms and teacher training meetings, a theoretical and instructive ecological environment for foreign language education can be created to provide ideas and inspiration for the professional development of college English teachers.

4.2. University Level: Improve the Coordinated Development Mechanism

According to the requirements of *The Guide (2020 edition)*, on the one hand, all colleges and universities should attach importance to the construction of college English teachers, strengthen the career planning and guidance of college English teachers, and establish and improve the training system for college English teachers. On the other hand, colleges and universities should conduct classified management and training for teachers of different levels and types to systematically improve the strength and competitiveness of college English teachers. Secondly, a scientific, fair and objective evaluation mechanism should be established to fully consider the characteristics of college English teaching in the daily evaluation and professional title evaluation, and to comprehensively evaluate the teaching, scientific research and management of college English teachers, so as to promote the competition and cooperation among teachers. In addition, colleges and universities should increase the investment in the construction of teachers' ranks and development, attach importance to the construction of teachers' groups, establish and improve the collaborative development and "mentoring" mechanism of college English teachers, and help college English teachers improve their professional abilities.

4.3. Personal Level: Teachers' Own Efforts

According to relevant studies, teachers' teaching ability is an organic whole composed of individual basic ability, general teaching ability, special teaching ability and core teaching ability, and constantly develops and changes in four stages: early, early, middle and late entry of teachers^[11]. Dividing teachers' teaching ability into different growth stages is convenient to accurately analyze and explain the growth mechanism and development mechanism of teachers' teaching ability. Therefore, college English teachers at different levels and stages of development should take the initiative to adapt to the new situation and new requirements of the development of higher education, constantly improve their comprehensive quality, and strive to become "four" good teachers in the new era.

5. Summary

The Guide (2020 edition) provides norms and standards for college English teaching, and makes clear the direction for the reform of college English teaching in the future. Facing the new trend of higher education of new engineering, new medicine, new agriculture and new liberal arts, the transformation of college English teachers is imminent. In the process of transformation, we should adhere to the actual situation, solve the problems of "why to transform", "how transform" and "what is the transformation (what is the result)". At the same time, we should adopt the form of small-scale experimental field, and gradually promote the reform while trying, constantly improve the professional level and teaching ability of teachers, and gradually form a dynamic, open, scientific and reasonable college English teaching system with the characteristics of the university.

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