

Research on the Innovation of Higher Vocational English Teaching Modes under Workplace Demands

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ABSTRACT

Against the macro background of high-quality development of vocational education, the workplace has put forward more precise and diverse requirements for the English application ability of vocational college graduates. Higher vocational English teaching undertakes the important function of cultivating students' core professional competencies, but its traditional teaching mode can no longer respond to the dynamic adjustment and in-depth changes of workplace demands. With workplace demands as the core orientation, based on the typological characteristics and development orientation of higher vocational education, this article systematically sorts out the current situation and reform foundation of higher vocational English teaching, and deeply explores the construction paths of new teaching modes such as vocational ability orientation, school-enterprise collaborative education, and digital technology empowerment, aiming to provide reference for optimizing the quality of higher vocational English teaching and improving students' practical application ability of workplace English.

KEYWORDS

Workplace demands; Higher vocational English; Teaching mode

1 Introduction

The "National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan" clearly states that "in accordance with the requirements of aligning major establishment with industrial demands, curriculum content with vocational standards, and teaching processes with production processes, the teaching standards for secondary and higher vocational schools should be improved." This policy has pointed out the direction for the reform and development of higher vocational education and put forward new requirements for higher vocational English teaching. Higher vocational English teaching should not only impart basic language knowledge, but also systematically integrate language competence and vocational skills closely centering on the practical application needs of students in the future workplace. With the accelerated industrial upgrading process and the continuous updating of post competence requirements, the demand for scenario-based application and professional adaptation of English in the workplace is continuously increasing. However, the traditional teaching mode of higher vocational English focusing on theoretical indoctrination has been no longer able to match the realistic goals of talent cultivation. Therefore, exploring the innovation of higher vocational English teaching modes adapted to workplace demands is an important issue that the reform of higher vocational English education must confront directly.

2 The Orientation Function of Workplace Demands in Higher Vocational English Teaching

Workplace demands are the core orientation of the higher vocational English teaching reform, which is in line with the essential attribute of higher vocational education with employment as the core. The influence of workplace demands covers the entire chain of higher vocational English teaching. In terms of teaching objectives, workplace demands promote higher vocational English to break free from the constraints of the traditional subject-oriented framework, focuses on the cultivation of practical English competence in vocational scenarios, and establish a hierarchical and classified objective system based on the post demands corresponding to different majors. In terms of teaching content, they force teaching resources to shift from the accumulation of general English grammar and vocabulary to the systematic reconstruction of vocational English modules, and require to integrate essential professional terms, scene communication skills, and practical text writing specifications for various professional positions into the course content, in order to achieve a precise connection between language knowledge and workplace application. In terms of teaching methods, they encourage teachers to eliminate the one-way teaching mode and widely apply teaching forms that are in line with workplace practice, such as scenario simulation and project-driven teaching. This multi-dimensional orientation function effectively solves the long-standing problem of the disconnection between learning and practice in higher vocational English teaching, and continuously enhances teaching effectiveness and students' professional competitiveness.

3 Basic Conditions for the Innovation of Higher Vocational English Teaching Modes under Workplace Demands

3.1 In Terms of Policies

In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the reform and development of vocational education, and issued a series of supporting policies to lay a solid foundation for the adaption of higher vocational English teaching modes to workplace demands. In addition to the “National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan”, the revised version of “Vocational Education Law of the People’s Republic of China” clearly states that “vocational schools and vocational training institutions should focus on the integration of industry and education and implement school-enterprise cooperation when implementing vocational education”, which provides a legal basis for the innovation of the school-enterprise collaborative education model in higher vocational English. The “Curriculum Standards for English Courses in Higher Vocational Education (Junior College)” issued by the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China emphasizes the need to “cultivate students’ ability to communicate effectively in English in the workplace environment, and focus on developing their foreign communication skills and intercultural communication competence in the workplace, which points out a specific direction for the reform of teaching content and methods of higher vocational English. Local education departments across the country have actively responded to national policies, introduced measures to support higher vocational colleges to carry out English teaching reform pilots, and encouraged higher vocational colleges to cooperate with enterprises to develop vocational English courses and build practical training bases. These policies not only create a favorable external environment, but also guide higher vocational colleges to establish a teaching concept guided by workplace demands. Meanwhile, they promote the in-depth development of teaching reform, and facilitate the integration and optimization of teaching resources to provide resource guarantees for the innovation of teaching modes.

3.2 In Term of Schools and Enterprises

School-enterprise cooperation is the core feature of vocational education and also an important platform for the higher vocational English teaching mode to adapt to workplace demands. In recent years, higher vocational colleges have generally enhanced their cooperation with industry enterprises, and achieved a deep integration of teaching and production through forms such as jointly building industrial colleges, training bases, and ordered classes, providing practical support for the innovation of higher vocational English teaching modes. As the direct carrier of workplace demands, enterprises provide factual job demand information, vocational scenario resources and professional technical guidance. They also dispatch industry experts to participate in the development and design of higher vocational English courses, and put forward suggestions for adjusting teaching content based on the actual needs of positions. At the same time, they provide internship and training positions for students to enable them to exercise their English application ability in a real workplace environment. Additionally, they also jointly build workplace English training bases with higher vocational colleges, which introduce real enterprise projects and business processes. Meanwhile, the school-enterprise cooperation has promoted the construction of the higher vocational English teaching staff. Through taking a temporary post in enterprises and participating in enterprise projects, teachers gain a deep understanding of the actual application of English in the workplace, enhance their abilities in vocational English teaching and practical guidance, and facilitate the organic integration of theoretical and practical teaching in higher vocational English teaching.

4 Practical Paths for the Innovation of Higher Vocational English Teaching Modes under Workplace Demands

4.1 Construct a Hierarchical, Classified and Vocational-oriented Curriculum System

As an important foundation of the teaching mode, it is necessary to establish a hierarchical, classified and vocational-oriented curriculum system for the innovation of higher vocational English teaching modes under the guidance of workplace demands, so as to achieve a precise connection between curriculum content and workplace demands.

Hierarchical teaching should be divided based on students’ English proficiency levels, specifically into three gradients: the basic level, the advanced level and the elite level. The basic level focuses on students with weak English foundations, and its core task is to strengthen the input of general English basic knowledge and the repeated training of basic skills. Through systematic curriculum design, it helps students build a solid foundation in English and enable them to meet the minimum threshold for the application of workplace English. The advanced level is designed for students with a solid English foundation. On the basis of consolidating their existing language skills, it incorporates introductory vocational English content to gradually cultivate students’ ability to apply English in regular workplace scenarios. The elite level

targets students with outstanding English proficiency and a clear career development direction. It emphasizes the in-depth cultivation of specialized vocational English training and intercultural communication skills to meet the high-level English proficiency requirements of high-end positions.

Classified teaching is based on the vocational post requirements corresponding to different majors, and divides the courses into the general vocational English module and the specialized vocational English module. The general vocational English module covers universal workplace English content such as business communication, workplace etiquette, and practical writing, meeting the common needs of students from all majors. The specialized vocational English module closely align with the characteristics of each major, such as the business English module for the international trade major, the tourism English module for the tourism management major, and the technical English module for the mechanical manufacturing major, to carry out targeted teaching activities.

The construction of the curriculum system cannot neglect the connection logic and integration path among various courses. Teachers must organically integrate English courses with professional courses to achieve the simultaneous promotion of language ability improvement and professional skills acquisition. Specifically, relevant English knowledge points can be embedded in professional course teaching to enable students to naturally strengthen their English application ability in the process of absorbing professional knowledge. Meanwhile, professional-related vocational scenarios and real cases can be introduced into English course teaching to enhance the professional attribute and practical value of English teaching.

4.2 Build a Teaching Mode of School-Enterprise Collaboration and Digital Empowerment

On the one hand, it is necessary to establish a long-term mechanism of deep integration in the aspect of school-enterprise collaboration. Higher vocational colleges should proactively connect with leading enterprises in the regional industry to jointly establish an English teaching steering committee. Enterprise experts participate in the whole process of curriculum system design, teaching content development and teaching effect evaluation, and provide real application cases of vocational English and post task standards according to the language application scenarios and ability requirements of front-line positions. School teachers, in light of the cognitive laws of vocational college students, transform the industry-end resources into modular classroom teaching content to ensure that teaching objectives are accurately matched with workplace demands. The joint construction of diversified practical teaching bases serves as an implementation carrier for the collaboration between schools and enterprises. The on-campus simulation training bases need to introduce real business processes and project data from enterprises, and be equipped with digital devices such as intelligent translation terminals and multi-modal language interaction systems, enabling students to complete English application training in simulated cross-border communication and business negotiation scenarios. Off-campus internship bases can open up real job positions to make students participate in actual business under the one-on-one guidance of enterprise mentors, and transform the skills they have learned in class, such as writing English emails and introducing products in English, into practical workplace abilities.

On the other hand, it is necessary to promote the deep integration of technology and teaching and build an online and offline interactive teaching system. Online, relying on the smart teaching platform, it integrates resources from both schools and enterprises to build a learning module including vocational English micro-courses, post scenario exercises, and a database of real enterprise cases, so that students can carry out fragmented autonomous learning according to their own progress. Offline classrooms abandon the one-way teaching mode and mainly adopt the forms of group collaboration to complete project tasks, simulating workplace scenarios for language practice, and analyzing real enterprise cases to enhance students' immediate language application ability. At the same time, digital technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality should be utilized to further enrich teaching scenarios. Institutions can build simulated business negotiation and international exhibition promotion scenarios with the help of virtual reality system, and students can complete the full-process English communication practice through role-playing and improve their language adaptability through repeated practice. In addition, augmented reality technology can be used to achieve the linkage between professional English and physical equipment, allowing students to scan production equipment to obtain English operation instructions and term explanations, thereby deepening their understanding and application of English in the professional field.

4.3 Establish a Competence-Oriented and Multi-Stakeholder Participation Evaluation System

Firstly, the evaluation content should closely align with the core demands of vocational posts corresponding to different majors, and be broken down into specific, quantifiable and observable competence indicators. For instance, for students majoring in business and trade, the focus of assessment should be on the English adaptation ability for operating cross-border e-commerce platforms, the standardization and professionalism of writing business correspondence, and the context control ability in intercultural business communication. For students majoring in

manufacturing, it need to focus on assessing their ability to accurately interpret the English manuals of equipment and their efficiency and accuracy in responding to technical consultations from overseas customers in English.

Secondly, the evaluation method must deeply integrate formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation should cover the quality of language output in students' classroom interactions, the accuracy of completing after-class assignments, the English communication performance in group collaboration tasks, and the practical application effect in the school-enterprise practice link. Summative evaluation can be implemented through concrete practical skills assessment, requiring students to accomplish complete vocational English practice tasks such as simulated cross-border e-commerce live streaming and English business negotiations, thus comprehensively evaluating students' English application level from multiple dimensions.

Thirdly, in terms of the evaluation subjects, it is necessary to form an evaluation mechanism that integrates the efforts of college teachers, enterprises, student self-assessment and student peer assessment. College teachers are responsible for the dynamic evaluation in daily teaching scenarios, and provide periodic scores based on classroom performance and homework completion. The enterprise evaluation is carried out by part-time teachers from the cooperative enterprises or the heads of internship enterprises, which can provides evaluations in line with the workplace reality based on the students' English communication effectiveness with customers during the internship and their ability to use English tools when handling business. Student self-assessment requires them to regularly review their own learning trajectories and the extent of English ability improvement to clearly identify their strengths and weaknesses. Student peer evaluation is carried out in scenarios such as group cooperative learning, allowing students to assess each other's learning engagement, collaboration and coordination, as well as the effectiveness of English application in mutual review, in order to cultivate students' reflective awareness and evaluation ability.

5 Conclusion

The innovation of higher vocational English teaching modes oriented by workplace demands is not only an inevitable choice in the stage of the high-quality development of vocational education, but also an important means to enhance the vocational competitiveness of higher vocational graduates. Based on the guiding value of workplace demands, this paper clarifies the underlying logic of the adaptation between teaching modes and workplace demands, and further proposes specific practical directions such as the construction of a curriculum system combining hierarchical classification and vocational orientation, the creation of a teaching mode integrating school-enterprise collaboration and digital empowerment, and the improvement of an evaluation system linking competence orientation and multi-stakeholder participation. The innovation of higher vocational English teaching modes is a systematic project, which requires the collaborative efforts of multiple parties such as higher vocational colleges, enterprises, and education departments. In the future, educational institutions need to deepen the dynamic research on workplace demands, continuously iterate teaching content and methods, rely on digital technology to break through teaching bottlenecks, constantly improve the adaptability and implementation effect of modes, and cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents with solid workplace English application ability, thus laying a solid talent foundation for industrial upgrading and economic and social development.

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