

### A Survey Report on the Teaching Reform of Ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents" of Vocational General English Course Based on Core Literacy

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**Abstract.** According to the core literacy of English subject in higher vocational colleges, this paper discusses the teaching reform measures of the ideas of " Educating People and Cultivating Talents " for Vocational General English course based on core literacy. Teaching reform of the ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents " of the curriculum has been implemented in the graded teaching class of Grade 23 students for one semester. Through investigation and research, it is found that more than 90% of students are generally satisfied with the teaching reform of the ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents". The order of students' self-assessed improvement in core literacy from high to low is autonomous learning perfection, linguistic thinking enhancement, multicultural communication and foreign-related communication in the workplace. Students have a high degree of recognition of the Smart Teaching Platform Test and course evaluation methods. Students' English language learning is influenced by non-intellectual affective factors. However, on one hand, teachers should make full use of the Smart Teaching Platform in higher vocational English teaching to enhance students' cognition of blended teaching. On the other hand, teachers should strengthen the integration of English subject knowledge into professional or vocational application scenarios to improve students' foreign-related communication literacy in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Core Literacy; Vocational General English; Educating People and Cultivating Talents; Survey Report

#### 1 Introduction

Under the guideline of "service-oriented and employment-oriented" and the training model of "combining work with study" of higher vocational education, as a compulsory or limited elective public basic course for general education in higher vocational education, General Vocational English Course must be based on moral education to cultivate people and guided by the "English Curriculum Standards for Higher Vocational Education" (2021 edition). The Core Literacy education of vocational English course runs through the whole teaching and learning process, highlighting the cultivation of students' vocational spirit, professionalism, and craftsmanship as well as integrating

ideological and political elements such as the core values of socialism, confidence in Chinese culture and mutual learning of multiculturalism, awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind, scientific attitude, scientific thinking and scientist spirit, self-discipline and self-reliance etc. into the whole process of curriculum teaching design, which aims to meet the needs of cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents with "China's core". Based on the above ideas of " Educating People and Cultivating Talents " of curriculum reform and guided by the goal of the core literacy of English in higher vocational colleges, this paper explores the teaching reform measures of the ideas of " Educating People and Cultivating Talents" of Vocational General English course based on the core literacy. Through the method of investigation and research, this paper probes into students' feedback on the teaching curriculum reform of the ideas of " Educating People and Cultivating Talents" based on core literacy, and makes corresponding analyses and discussions, so as to continuously improve the teaching in the future, improve the quality of curriculum teaching of the ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents", and finally achieve the goal of enhancing the core literacy of English subjects of higher vocational college students.

# 2 The teaching reform measures of "educating people and cultivating talents" of vocational general English course based on core literacy

Core literacy, in short, is the necessary character and key competencies that students need to adapt to lifelong development and social development. In April 2014, the concept of "core literacy" was put forward in the Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform and Implementing the Fundamental Task of Cultivating People with Morality issued by the Ministry of Education [1], Therefore, cultivating students' core literacy is an important starting point for implementing the fundamental task of Cultivating People with Morality. A research team led by Professor Lin Chongde (2016) of Beijing Normal University proposed that the core literacy of Chinese students should be centered on cultivation of "well-round person", including cultural foundation, autonomous development and social participation [2]. For this reason, Chinese foreign language scholars pay attention to the research on the core literacy of students at various educational stages. Cheng Xiaotang (2016) emphasized the educational value of English in the basic education stage, and pointed out that the connotation of the core literacy of English included language ability, cultural character, thinking quality and learning ability [3]. Wen Qiufang and Zhang Hong (2021) took the core literacy cultivation as the fundamental guideline for the formulation of the English Curriculum Standard for Higher Vocational Education (2021 Edition), explaining that the connotation of the core literacy of the English discipline in higher vocational education consisted of four parts: foreign-related communication in the workplace, multicultural communication, linguistic thinking enhancement, and autonomous learning perfection [4]. According to the requirements of the core quality of English curriculum in higher vocational colleges, the curriculum group proposes the curriculum teaching reform of the ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents". The so-called ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents" are not only to pay attention to training students how to become talented, but also to pay attention to training students how to be a man, in a word, to teach students to understand the truth of being a man, and make students learn to do things. In order to achieve this goal, just like CAI Qingtian (2017) pointed out, "core literacy should have a coherent and integrated relationship with the curricula and subjects of each school" [5]. Accordingly, it is imperative to carry out the ideas of "Educating People and Cultivating Talents "for teaching reform of the Vocational General English course based on core literacy.

## 2.1 Updating teaching concepts and reshaping the objectives of teaching competencies centered on the workplace to provide the ability guarantee for cultivating talents

"If you want to do a good job, you must first sharpen your tools." Only by changing the teaching philosophy can the curriculum reform be justified, regulated and targeted. To make the transition from "teaching for the sole purpose of test-taking" to "teaching for the cultivation of the application skills in the workplace" in accordance with the "vocational" characteristics of higher vocational education. According to the characteristics of vocational education and the law of language cognition, with the support of industrial transformation and the orientation of employment, teachers should focus on cultivating students' ability to use English to deal with business related to students' future occupations and professions, and highlight their comprehensive language expression ability in the workplace environment. Therefore, we need to shift the students' pure competence development centered on language listening and speaking skills to the communication competence development of using English to deal with related business in the workplace environment, and make it an important goal of teaching competence during the period of industrial transformation.

# 2.2 Focusing on the goals of core literacy training, reconstructing the main chains of curriculum ideology and politics, drawing a blueprint for educating people, and providing ideological protection for nurturing people

Guided by the four core literacies of English subjects in higher vocational colleges, the course of General Vocational English has formulated curriculum standards, which take the condensed professional spirit (professional ideal, professional ethics, professional responsibility and professional attitude) [6], professional spirit (professional norms, high quality requirements and innovative spirit), craftsman spirit (perseverance, concentration, striving for perfection, meticulousness, pursuit of excellence) [7] as the essence of the teaching contents. Based on the thematic categories, topics and themes of the teaching materials, appropriate contents are selected to organically integrate the core values of socialism, especially the embedding of core elements such as patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendliness, so as to help students establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values. Through the comparison of Chinese and foreign cultures, students can enhance their confidence in Chinese culture and their mindset of

multi-cultural integration and mutual understanding and raise the awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind. In language and culture learning, students are gradually trained to have a scientific attitude to deal with things, develop good scientific thinking, promote the spirit of great scientists and enhance scientific literacy. By means of digital empowerment, teachers cultivate students' self-disciplined and self-reliant spirit of autonomous learning, laying a solid foundation for students' future lifelong learning and sustainable development.

## 2.3 Digital empowerment as a means to improve blended teaching of course and provide technical support for the reform of the ideas of "educating people and cultivating talents" in the course

Course teaching breaks through the shackles of a single traditional teaching mode, conforming to the requirements of the digital and intelligent era, and deeply integrating modern educational technology theory, information technology means, artificial intelligence into the teaching practice of Vocational General English course so as to construct blended teaching with offline classroom teaching and online rain classroom, intelligent vocational education cloud platform etc. Teachers should realize the combination of students' online personalized autonomous learning before and after class with teachers' guidance of students' learning through perception, experience, practice, participation, inquiry and cooperation in class [8], stimulating students' deep learning potential and arousing students' initiative and enthusiasm in class participation. On various smart teaching platforms, especially through progressive practice activities designed by teachers focusing on learning and understanding, application and practice, transfer and innovation[9], students are promoted to improve their career-oriented language expression ability, build their multicultural communication ability, enhance the development of students' higher-order thinking ability with logical thinking, critical thinking and innovative thinking as the core, and gradually strengthen the lifelong learning ability to meet the needs of sustainable development.

# 2.4 Adoption of intelligent evaluation, optimization of multifaceted evaluation of the curriculum, and provision of evaluation guarantee for the effectiveness of the reform of the ideas of " educating people and cultivating talents " in the course

Based on the intelligent teaching platform, the curriculum evaluation system is optimized, and the evaluation scheme consisting of process evaluation (60%) and summative evaluation (40%) is improved. In the process of evaluation, different assessment categories are set for language knowledge mastery, language ability application, oral expression, cooperative learning and inquiry, and autonomous learning, highlighting the assessment of students' special language ability and strengthening the evaluation of the degree of students' online autonomous learning, including the completion of homework and interactive exchanges. All process assessments are presented on Rain Classroom, Smart Vocational Education Cloud Platform etc, so that teachers and students can track the results of process assessments in real time and understand their

process learning effects. The summative assessment is conducted on itest platform developed by FLTRP, including two types of listening test and comprehensive test, which comprehensively examines the achievement of the academic objectives of the vocational college students aiming at the four core literacies. Intelligent course evaluation achieves openness, fairness and objectivity of course evaluation, and the evaluation results of students' learning outcomes are recorded on the intelligent teaching platform to ensure the integrity of the evaluation record of students' learning process.

#### A survey on the teaching reform of the ideas of "educating people and cultivating talents" of vocational general English course based on core literacy

#### 3.1 Questionnaire respondents

The 23-level graded teaching class has implemented the teaching reform of the ideas of "Educating people and cultivating talents" of "Vocational General English" course based on core literacy for one semester. During the reform period, the curriculum team formulated the curriculum standards of "General Vocational English" and assessment scheme according to the "College English Curriculum Standards for Higher Vocational Education" (2021edition), and promoted the implementation of the reform measures one by one. At the end of this semester, the curriculum team conducted a questionnaire survey on the ideas of "Educating people and cultivating talents" of teaching reform of Vocational General English course for the students of 23 graded classes through the platform of "Questionnaire Star", and 915 questionnaires were collected. The questionnaire survey aims to help teachers understand the feedback of vocational students on the teaching reform of the ideas of "Educating people and cultivating talents" in this semester, and serve as a reference for continuous improvement of the teaching of "General Vocational English" course in the future, so as to improve the quality of course teaching and achieve the goals of improving the core literacy of English subjects for vocational college students.

#### 3.2 Main contents of the questionnaire

The questionnaire developed by the curriculum team for this survey includes students' overall satisfaction with teaching reform, students' self-evaluation of the improvement of core literacy in English, students' recognition of classroom teaching mode, adaptability of online teaching platform test, course evaluation satisfaction, and emotional factors affecting students' learning (including interest, motivation, academic performance-teacher relationship, teachers in students' minds, etc.).

#### 3.3 Results of the questionnaire

In the process of teaching reform investigation, the following results can be obtained from the data collection of the questionnaire survey mentioned above.

#### Survey on satisfaction with course instruction.

Among the 915 students surveyed, 93.99% of them are satisfied or very satisfied with the current teaching of "General Vocational English" course. This survey data indicates that students are generally satisfied with the teacher's curriculum teaching reform.

#### Self-evaluation survey on the improvement of core literacy in English.

915 students interviewed in the survey think that the students' self-assessment of English core literacy improvement in descending order is autonomous learning, linguistic thinking, multicultural communication and foreign-related communication in the workplace. However, in the survey, it is found that the lowest number of students who think that the foreign-related communication in the workplace has improved. In the investigation concerning the key abilities in the workplace, it is found that the highest number of students rated their improvement in reading skills, but the lowest number rated their improvement in writing skills. For the process of self-evaluation of knowledge mastery, the highest number of students self-assesses their mastery of knowledge of vocabulary, but the lowest number of those who think they have knowledge of grammar, discourse, phrases and pragmatics. Particularly, in terms of value in the foreign-related communication in the workplace, 91.36% of the students believe that through this course, they have strengthened their ideals and beliefs, and established a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values. According to the survey on key abilities and values in multicultural communication, 80.33% of the students believe that their awareness of the world's multi-cultural mutual learning and expression ability has been improved, and 65.14% of the students believe that their ability to tell Chinese stories in English and spread excellent Chinese culture has been improved to some extent. In addition, 87.98% of the students believe that through this course, they have strengthened China's position and self-confidence in national culture, expanded their international vision, and established a sense of a community with a shared future for mankind. In a survey of key abilities in language thinking, 76.94% of the students believe that they have gradually mastered and applied such thinking methods as abstraction and generalization, analysis and synthesis, comparison and classification, etc. Mastering this logical thinking method plays a key role in improving students' language thinking ability. In the survey on the key abilities and values of autonomous learning ability, it is found that 85.68% of the students think that the awareness, habits and abilities of active learning, autonomous learning and personalized learning have been strengthened and 89.4% of the students has recognized the importance of the meaning of learning, establishing a correct view of learning, and recognizing that personal learning ability is a driving force for personal self-reliance, social progress and development, and national modernization.

### Survey on adaptation of instructional platform, satisfaction of course evaluation and recognition of instructional model.

In terms of the surveys on test adaptation of teaching platforms, it can be seen that of the 915 students surveyed, 92.02% of the students say they are comfortable with online

tests on various teaching platforms, which shows that these so-called "digital natives" students have strong adaptability to the functions of smart classroom teaching in the digital, intelligent and networked era so as to facilitate students' personalized needs of synchronous learning, online real-time learning and detection. Simultaneously, in terms of satisfaction with course evaluations, 82.29% of the students have a positive and affirmative attitude towards the current course evaluation, but, of course, further revisions and improvements are needed to completely dispel the doubts of 14.64% of the students who have an uncertain attitude towards the course assessment and evaluation program. In addition, in the survey, it is also found that 46.89% of the students recognize the blended classroom teaching mode of online autonomous learning before and after class, and lecturing and interaction during class, and the recognition of the blended classroom teaching mode is not more than half, which shows that the classroom teaching mode of teachers and the way of learning of students still have the inertia of relying on the traditional classroom teaching mode and learning mode.

#### Survey on affective factors influencing students' learning.

Among the 915 students surveyed, 76.84% have high or relatively high interest in English learning. Interest is the internal driving force of learning. If students are interested in knowledge, they have the possibility to learn well, therefore, to keep students' interest in learning is the key to open the door to the effectiveness of learning. In the survey, it is also found that students' motivation to learn English basically originates from external factors, such as specializing in undergraduate studies, finding a job in the future, and completing credits for graduation. These external needs reflect that the students' learning purpose is mainly practical, highlighting the urgent need of higher vocational college students' study for further study and occupation. In terms of the correlation between teachers and students' learning performance, 78.36% of the students believe that the relationship between English learning performance and teachers' teaching is large or relatively large, indicating that the English learning of vocational college students requires teachers to be careful, patient and diligent in teaching and guidance, and the teaching of teachers plays the role of scaffolding linking the previous and the next, relying solely on students' independent learning. But without teachers' correct and scientific guidance, it is difficult to have substantial effect on the quality of students' learning. More importantly, in this survey, it is also found that the teachers most admired by students should have the characteristics of high education, responsibility, and a sense of humor, which can be seen that students need not only responsible teachers who treat teaching seriously and responsibly, but also teachers who integrate emotion and wisdom.

#### 4 Analysis of discussions

#### 4.1 The analysis of satisfaction with the teaching reform in course.

Students are very satisfied or satisfied with the teaching reform of this semester's course, and teachers' efforts in teaching are recognized by the majority of students. Of

course, teachers should also carefully study the teaching design of the course and integrate new concepts, standards, methods and ecology into the teaching of the course, so as to improve the quality of teaching and meet the different needs of diversified students.

#### 4.2 The analysis of students' self-assessment of core literacy in English.

Firstly, 71.37% of the students believe that autonomous learning literacy is the fastest degree of improvement compared with other core literacies. This shows that after students enter the university, although they lack the learning supervision and constraints of their parents, high school or middle school teachers, university teachers undertake their management and responsibility to guide students to learn effectively in a positive and proactive way, so students' learning concepts have been changed, the significance of learning has been clarified and learning attitudes have been corrected. They have scientifically planned their own learning programs, and they are willing to spend time devoting themselves to the study of English, and the students have gradually developed a sense of autonomous learning, habits and abilities, which lays a solid foundation for their future sustainable development. Secondly, the learning of language carries the transformation of thinking and multicultural knowledge learning. In this survey, it is found that 70.28% of students think that their English thinking quality has reached a strong or relatively strong level, which is mainly reflected in the application of thinking methods such as abstraction and generalization, analysis and synthesis, comparison and classification. During the process of discourse analysis, the teachers also need to strengthen this aspect of students' thinking training by designing discursive learning tasks to enhance students' logical thinking, critical thinking, and innovative thinking abilities. Thirdly, compared with the first two core literacies of English for higher vocational education, only 62.62% of the students think that their multicultural communication has reached a strong or relatively strong level. Therefore, teachers should also strengthen the teaching of comparison between Chinese and foreign excellent cultures, cultural appreciation, cultural tolerance, cultural empathy, etc. Through experiential teaching, students can feel that the language learning is intertwined with the cultural learning, so that they can consolidate their language knowledge on the basis of language learning and enhance their awareness of multicultural communication, understanding, communication skills. Last but not the least, however, only 47.76% of the students think that the foreign-related communication in the workplace has been improved, and the degree of improvement ranks last among the four core literacies, indicating that the course teaching needs to be improved in the following two aspects. On one hand, teachers should combine English language knowledge learning with vocational application scenarios, reasonably integrate teaching contents according to students' professional scenarios, and guide students to learn, understand and use language knowledge in an authentic workplace environment so as to reflect the vocational characteristics of English teaching in higher vocational colleges. On the other hand, the explanation and training of grammatical knowledge, phrase knowledge, discourse knowledge and pragmatic knowledge should be strengthened to improve students' language expression ability, especially the quality of written expression ability.

## 4.3 The analysis of intelligent teaching test platform adaptability, curriculum teaching evaluation satisfaction and blended teaching recognition.

First of all, in this survey it is found that students has improved their adaptability to the intelligent teaching test platform. From the second semester of 2022-2023 to the present, the final examination of Grade 22 and 23 students (including listening test and comprehensive language test) relies on the itest test platform developed by FLTRP, and has undergone two rounds of paperless large-scale final examination. This examination method has gradually become the normal form of the examination of the school's General Vocational English course, and is embedded in students' examination behaviors and habits, making students gradually adapt to and accept this intelligent examination form. The originally cumbersome final examination has become more convenient, and the digital examination data facilitates teachers' summary and reflection on teaching effects.

Secondly, nearly 80% or more of the students believe that course evaluations tests the effectiveness of student learning in the course. In order to effectively test students' achievement of academic goals around core literacy this semester, the process evaluation of this course highlights the evaluation of learning promotion process and students' metacognitive development including the test of basic language knowledge, the test of language expression ability, the test of cooperative inquiry ability and the test of autonomous learning ability. The process evaluation accounts for 60% of the total score while summative assessment is carried out on itest platform, which accounts for 40% of the total assessment grade. This is designed to test students' ability to synthesize and apply their linguistic knowledge. For example, in the first semester of 2023-2024, the overall passing rate on the final assessment for the graded 23 classes (Classes A and B) is 96.8%, and instructional practice proved that the rate of attainment of the academic goals of the courses around core literacy is still very high and that instruction has achieved remarkable results. However, the curriculum evaluation needs to be revised and improved, and the value-added evaluation of students' progress, effort, participation, active learning and attendance should be increased, so as to investigate the cultivation of core English literacy of vocational college students in a more comprehensive and three-dimensional manner. At the same time, it is found in this survey that only 46.89% of students recognize the blended teaching mode, which should arouse teachers' great concern. In the context of today's digital empowerment era, teachers should make full use of intelligent teaching means, adopt intelligent teaching platforms such as Rain Classroom and Vocational Education Cloud to create a new ecology of blended classroom teaching for teachers to teach and students to learn, and guide students to actively and positively adapt to the changes and requirements of the new ecology of classroom teaching.

### 4.4 A significant impact of affective factors in language learning on student's learning outcomes.

Both encouragement and praise from teachers will have a positive effect on stimulating students' learning interest. In this survey, students mentioned that teachers should give students appropriate encouragement, which will help students overcome their learning difficulties, enhance their learning self-confidence and improve their learning interest. In this survey, it is found that 76.84% of the students are interested in learning English, but there are still 23.16% of the students who stray away from their interest, however, the key to increase the students' interest in learning lies in the attractiveness of the teacher's instructional design to the students. Under the diversified requirements of students' English learning goals, teachers should respect students' individual differences, tailor teaching to students' needs, construct learning situations, promote interactive exchanges between teachers and students, students and students by designing interesting progressive series of language teaching practice activities, adopting group cooperative learning, classroom discussions, etc. In the interactive pro-learning thinking activities [10], teachers can take effective measures to enhance students' in-depth understanding and thinking of what they have learned, stimulate their learning interest and internal driving force, improve their classroom participation, and promote their learning effect. Therefore, this further verifies 78.36% of students' cognition that there is a large or relatively large relationship between students' academic performance and teacher instruction.

#### 5 Conclusions

The data from the survey on the ideas of "Educating people and Cultivating talents" of teaching reform for "Vocational General English" course based on core literacy show that more than 90% of higher vocational students are generally satisfied with the curriculum teaching reform centered on cultivating core literacy. Students think that the improvement degree of core literacy from high to low is autonomous learning, linguistic thinking, multicultural communication, and foreign-related communication in the workplace. The students' overall recognition of the intelligent teaching platform test and course evaluation is relatively high. Students' English learning is influenced by interest and external motivation. In addition, students generally believe that there is a great relationship between academic performance and teachers' teaching. More importantly, teachers with high quality, responsibility and humor are generally popular with students. However, students' cognition of blended teaching needs to be improved. Among the four core literacies, students' self-assessed foreign-related communication skills in the workplace have the least improvement. Therefore, teachers in the future English teaching, on the one hand, focus on the integration of English subject knowledge into students' professional or vocational application scenarios, highlighting the vocational characteristics, serving students' professions, and enhancing students' competitive strength in job markets. On the other hand, teachers focus on promoting digital empowerment, relying on the intelligent teaching platform, building blended teaching, opening up a new teaching ecology for students' to preview and review before and after class, as well as have interactive and communicative learning in class, so as to enable students to empower the core literacies in English in a comprehensive and balanced way.

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