

# *Employment-oriented English Curriculum and Teaching Reform in Secondary Vocational Schools*

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**Abstract:** This paper makes an in-depth study on the employment-oriented English curriculum and teaching reform in secondary vocational schools. Through case analysis, empirical investigation and comprehensive analysis, this paper discusses the influence of this kind of curriculum reform on students' career development, the challenges faced in its implementation and the coping strategies. It is found that the employment-oriented English curriculum and teaching reform in secondary vocational schools can effectively improve students' English language ability and professional quality, and practical teaching methods are of great significance. Blended teaching combines English teaching with relevant industry knowledge, which can make students better adapt to future career needs. However, problems such as students' lack of learning motivation still exist, and personalized learning and support measures need to be taken to effectively deal with them. Continuous evaluation and improvement is also crucial to the implementation of curriculum reform. Therefore, this study puts forward a series of suggestions aimed at further optimizing the employment-oriented English curriculum and teaching reform in secondary vocational schools, and providing more effective support and guidance for students' career development.

## **1. Introduction**

Secondary vocational education plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating skilled talents and meeting social employment needs. However, with the rapid development of economy and the adjustment of industrial structure, higher requirements are put forward for the English ability of secondary vocational school students. English is no longer a simple subject, but as a basic skill, it permeates all industries and becomes one of the important factors for secondary vocational school students to compete in the job market [1]. Therefore, the employment-oriented English curriculum and teaching reform in secondary vocational schools is particularly urgent and important.

The purpose of this paper is to explore how to adjust the English curriculum in secondary vocational schools according to the demand of the job market, and put forward the corresponding teaching reform plan, so as to better cultivate English talents to meet the needs of modern career development. This paper will put forward the specific content and teaching reform scheme of employment-oriented English curriculum, and verify its effectiveness by combining case analysis and empirical research. Finally, the possible challenges are discussed and the corresponding

solutions are put forward to provide reference for the development of English education in secondary vocational schools. Through the research and discussion in this paper, we hope to provide new ideas and methods for the reform and development of English education in secondary vocational schools, promote the improvement of English ability of secondary vocational students, and provide strong support for them to better integrate into society and realize their own values.

## **2. Limitations of traditional English courses in secondary vocational schools**

Traditional English courses in secondary vocational schools often pay too much attention to the accumulation of grammar knowledge and vocabulary, while ignoring the practical skills needed in the actual workplace. Students have learned a lot of grammar rules and words, but they lack the ability of oral expression, written communication and workplace communication related to practical work [2]. The traditional English curriculum design in secondary vocational schools lacks pertinence and cannot effectively meet the specific needs of different industries and posts for English ability. The course content is out of line with students' future career development path, which leads to difficulties for students in actual employment. Traditional English courses in secondary vocational schools often ignore the cultivation of students' professional quality and professional knowledge, and only pay attention to the training of language skills, while ignoring the background and requirements of students in specific professional fields [3]. Traditional English education in secondary vocational schools failed to make full use of modern scientific and technological means, such as online learning resources and language learning applications, failed to meet students' demand for diversified and convenient learning methods, and failed to cultivate students' ability to use technical means to learn English and communicate in the workplace.

Traditional English courses in secondary vocational schools have some limitations, such as being out of touch with the demand of the job market, lacking practical skills training, ignoring professional quality and professional knowledge, etc. It is urgent to improve the quality of education through reform and innovation, so as to better serve students' employment and career development.

## **3. Employment-oriented English curriculum**

### **3.1. Set course objectives**

One of the objectives of the curriculum is to cultivate the skills that students need in the workplace [4]. This includes that students need to be able to express their ideas and opinions fluently and accurately, and communicate effectively with colleagues and customers. Students should have the ability to write e-mails, reports, resumes and other business documents, and be able to express their meaning clearly and normatively. Students need to understand the workplace culture and etiquette, and learn to communicate well with colleagues, bosses and customers.

In addition to workplace skills, the course also needs to focus on improving students' English language ability. This includes that students should be able to understand oral communication in various workplace situations, including meetings, telephone conversations, interviews, etc. Students need to be able to understand all kinds of business documents, contracts, reports and other English documents, and obtain the required information from them. Students should have the ability to write business emails, reports, work memos and other documents, including accurate grammar and clear expression.

Curriculum objectives should also take into account the future career development direction of students and the characteristics of their industries [5-6]. According to the needs of different industries, the course content should be integrated with the professional knowledge and terminology

of related industries to help students better adapt to the working environment and requirements of specific industries. By setting such a curriculum goal, the employment-oriented English curriculum will be closer to the actual workplace needs, providing a more practical and targeted English learning environment for secondary vocational school students, and helping them to successfully find jobs and succeed in the workplace.

### 3.2. Content design

In order to make the employment-oriented English course more in line with the actual needs of the workplace, the content design needs to comprehensively consider the cultivation of students' professional quality, industry knowledge and practical work skills, including students' need to understand the professional ethics and ethics in the workplace, clarify their career development goals and establish a correct professional attitude [7]. Students should cultivate a sense of teamwork, learn to cooperate and communicate with colleagues, solve problems and accomplish tasks together. The educational program aims to help students understand their career interests and advantages, make career plans, and master effective time management and self-development skills. It guides students to understand the development course, present situation, and future trend of their industry, and provides them with background knowledge of career development. The program incorporates professional terms and norms of related industries into the course content, so that students can skillfully use industry terms and understand the internal norms and requirements of the industry. Combined with practical cases and industry experience, students can understand the actual operation and problem-solving methods in the industry and cultivate their ability to solve problems and meet challenges.

The course will cultivate students' oral and written communication skills in different workplace situations, including meeting discussions, telephone communication, business letters, etc. It will help students understand the characteristics and skills that leaders should have, and cultivate their ability to lead teams and make decisions. The course will guide students to analyze and solve problems encountered in practical work and cultivate their innovative thinking and ability to solve complex problems [8]. Through such content design, the employment-oriented English course will be closer to the actual needs of students' future career development, help them comprehensively improve their professional quality, industry cognition and practical work skills, and lay a solid foundation for their smooth employment and career development.

### 3.3. Teaching material selection

In order to better meet the teaching needs of employment-oriented English courses, it is necessary to choose teaching materials that meet the actual needs of students in the workplace, including the application of workplace English teaching materials and practical teaching materials. Workplace English teaching materials focus on providing language skills and expressions related to the workplace, including language expression skills and etiquette norms in different scenarios such as business meetings, business negotiations and business emails. Including career planning, resume writing, interview skills and other topics directly related to students' career development. The teacher should provide practical workplace cases, let students solve problems through analysis, and cultivate their ability to solve challenges in practical work.

Practical textbooks focus on providing language skills and knowledge closely related to students' daily life and career development, and have the following characteristics: professional literacy training, including time management, teamwork, leadership and other aspects, to help students cultivate good professional literacy [9]. The course provides an introduction of industry knowledge. According to the characteristics of students' industry, the course selects relevant practical teaching

materials and introduces the industry background, development trend, and professional terms. Additionally, the course focuses on practical skills in the workplace, providing practical skills closely related to students' future career development, such as business writing, speech skills, project management, etc.

## **4. Teaching methods and strategies**

### **4.1. Practical teaching**

Practical teaching is an indispensable part of employment-oriented English course. Through case analysis, role-playing and mock interview, students can apply their knowledge and skills to practical situations. Teachers can select real or virtual cases related to students' fields of study for students to analyze and discuss. For example, the market challenges faced by an enterprise, conflict resolution in teamwork, decision-making by management, etc. Students need to use their English language skills and professional qualities to propose solutions to problems and share them with their classmates.

Teachers can design different workplace scenes, so that students can play corresponding roles for simulated dialogue and communication. For example, students can play the roles of manager, salesman and customer by simulating business meetings, customer negotiations and team discussions, and exercise their oral expression ability, teamwork ability and workplace communication skills through role-playing. Teachers can organize simulated interview activities, so that students can play the roles of job seekers and interviewers and conduct simulated interviews in real situations. In this way, students can experience the interview process in advance, understand the common interview questions and how to answer them, and improve their self-confidence and coping ability [10].

Through practical teaching, students can not only apply their knowledge and skills to practical situations, but also cultivate their problem-solving ability, teamwork spirit and workplace coping ability, laying a solid foundation for their smooth entry into the workplace.

### **4.2. Integrated teaching**

Integrated teaching organically combines English teaching with relevant industry knowledge to improve students' practical application ability and professional competitiveness. The curriculum committee designed a course named Hotel English and Management Practice, which aims to cultivate students' English ability and management practical skills needed for working in the hotel industry.

English language skills training includes common English conversations in daily work such as hotel reception, room reservation and restaurant ordering, as well as related business English writing skills. Introduction of industry knowledge, students learn the basic concepts, service processes and development trends of the hotel industry, and understand all aspects of hotel management. Practical case analysis provides real hotel management cases, allowing students to analyze and solve problems and put forward solutions by using the English and management knowledge they have learned. To simulate business practice, instructors arrange for students to carry out simulated hotel business practice activities in groups. These activities include designing hotel service processes, formulating service standards, and creating marketing strategies. Additionally, students are required to communicate and display their work in English.

The course will divide students into groups and learn English and related knowledge by participating in actual hotel management projects, such as organizing campus hotel activities, visiting on-site hotels, and planning hotel promotion activities. The course will also invite

professionals in the hotel industry as instructors to provide students with guidance and suggestions, helping them better understand and adapt to the industry's requirements. Through integrated teaching, students can not only master English language skills, but also deeply understand the professional knowledge and actual working situation of their industry, and provide comprehensive support for their future employment and career development in the field of hotel management.

### 4.3. Introduce technical means

Teachers can guide students to practice oral English by using online resources. For example, students can communicate with foreigners through online voice platforms such as Tandem and HelloTalk to improve their oral expression and listening comprehension. Students can learn authentic spoken English, including daily language and workplace language, through websites such as BBC Learning English and VOA Learning English.

Teachers can recommend students to use various language learning applications. For example, students can use applications such as Duolingo and Rosetta Stone to practice oral English, correct pronunciation errors through voice recognition and provide real-time feedback. Students can learn courses specifically for workplace English through platforms such as Coursera and edX, and learn about English application and related skills in different industries.

Teachers can recommend different online resources and applications according to students' learning progress and needs to realize personalized learning. To foster a collaborative learning environment, teachers should encourage students to share their useful resources and applications with each other in the learning process, and promote interaction and cooperation among students. By introducing online resources and language learning applications, students can learn English more flexibly, practice oral English and practice listening anytime and anywhere, and improve the convenience and effectiveness of learning.

## 5. Case analysis

Select a hotel management major class in a secondary vocational school to design an employment-oriented English curriculum reform plan, including the following components:

Set course objectives. Combined with students' future career needs in the field of hotel management, it aims to cultivate students' English communication skills and workplace literacy.

Content design. Students should integrate English language skills and industry knowledge related to hotel management, such as hotel reception, room reservation, restaurant service, etc.

Teaching methods. Practical teaching methods, such as case analysis, role-playing, simulated management, are adopted to enable students to practice English in a simulated hotel environment.

Selection of teaching materials. We, as educators or language instructors, introduce workplace English teaching materials and practical teaching materials, and combine online resources and language learning applications to provide diverse learning content and resources.

Teachers carry out teaching according to the designed curriculum reform plan, including classroom teaching and practical activities organization. Students participate in various practical teaching activities, such as simulated hotel reception, room reservation, restaurant service and so on. We regularly evaluate and provide feedback on the students' learning achievements and employment situation. This includes monitoring the improvement of students' English ability, fostering the cultivation of professional qualities, and enhancing the employment rate.

It is obvious from Figure 1 that all students' English scores have improved significantly after the reform. This shows that the changes made to the course (such as integrating language skills and industry knowledge related to hotel management) have effectively improved students' language ability.

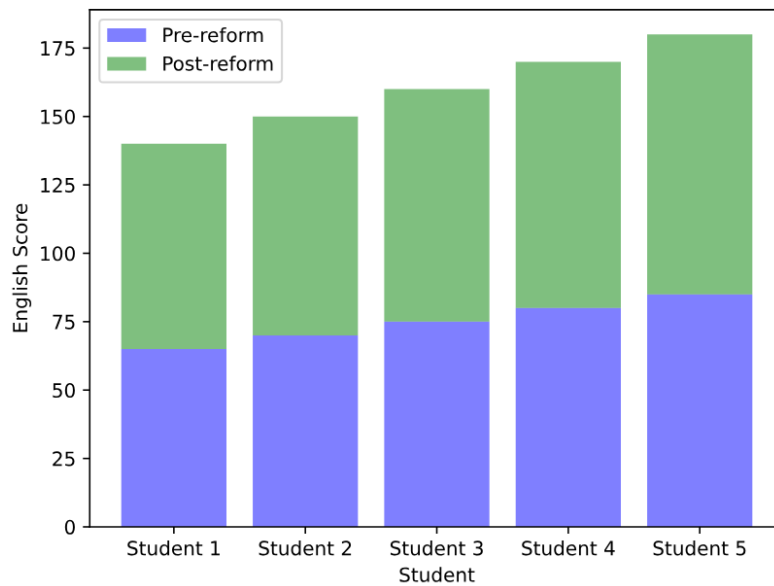


Figure 1: The improvement of students' English ability

Most of them are "very satisfied" and "satisfied", which shows that most students hold a positive attitude towards the new curriculum. However, "average", "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" are relatively small, indicating that some students are relatively low in satisfaction with the new curriculum. This distribution reflects students' overall acceptance and satisfaction with the new curriculum (Figure 2).

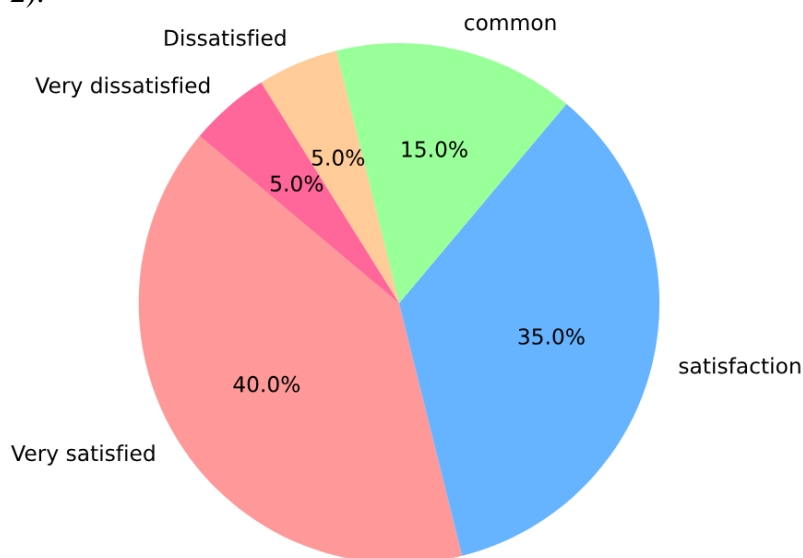


Figure 2: Student satisfaction

In the implementation of employment-oriented English courses, we may encounter various challenges, and we need to put forward countermeasures against these challenges. Some students may lack interest in English learning and motivation, resulting in poor learning results. Therefore, it is necessary to increase interest and design interesting teaching activities and tasks to attract students' attention and stimulate their interest in learning. Practical teaching, the introduction of practical teaching activities, so that students can apply what they have learned in practical situations and enhance their learning motivation. Personalized counseling provides personalized counseling and support to students with insufficient learning motivation to help them overcome their learning

difficulties and regain their learning motivation. Incentive mechanism, the establishment of learning incentive mechanism, to encourage students to actively participate in course learning, improve learning motivation.

Track the changes of students' learning motivation and observe the improvement of learning participation and enthusiasm. The school administration will collect students' feedback on new teaching activities and support measures to understand their learning experience and feelings. They will evaluate the learning effect every semester and compare the changes in students' learning motivation and the improvement of their academic performance. Through the implementation of the above coping strategies, the problem of students' lack of learning motivation can be effectively solved, their learning enthusiasm and learning effect can be improved, and the teaching goal of employment-oriented English course can be better realized.

## 6. Conclusion

Employment-oriented English curriculum and teaching reform in secondary vocational schools can effectively improve students' English language ability and professional quality, and provide necessary support for them to enter the workplace smoothly and engage in specific industries. Practical teaching methods such as case analysis, role-playing and simulated interview can effectively enhance students' practical application ability and workplace adaptability, and lay a solid foundation for their future career development. Combining English teaching with relevant industry knowledge can help students better understand and apply English, improve the pertinence and practicability of learning, and thus better adapt to future career needs. In view of students' lack of motivation, it is necessary to implement personalized learning and support measures, which can effectively improve students' learning enthusiasm and learning effect. It is very important to continuously evaluate and improve the implementation effect of curriculum reform. Only by constantly adjusting and optimizing curriculum and teaching methods can students' learning needs and career development needs be better met.

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