A Brief Discussion on the Strategies of the Combination between English Education and Profession in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Keywords: Higher Vocational English Education, Combination of Profession

Abstract. Given that the basis of higher vocational English is poor, the thesis puts forward an idea that higher vocational English education should focus on improving students’ practical application level and in order to enhance students’ English level. It extends the English education to professional fields on curriculum setting, teaching material selection, teaching methods and assessment measures according to the requirement of various professions.

Introduction

After our joining the World Trade Organization and because of the requirement of market internationalization, every unit requests employees to be good at expression, communication and application, which makes it more difficult for graduates of higher vocational colleges who are poor in English to find jobs. Meanwhile, most our country’s higher vocational colleges emphasize “competence-based”, whose aim is cultivating manipulative talents and practical personnel, but ignore basic subjects learning [1]. Many higher vocational colleges even compress classes, which result in the graduates’ English level not being improved dramatically.

Considering this, the writer puts forward an idea to combine English classes with profession, highlight professional characteristic and realize the teaching objective that English serves profession to change the reality that English is poor in practicability and its divorce from profession during higher vocational colleges’ English teaching according to the reality that each profession needs different English levels and skills of application.

Starting from four aspects of curriculum setting, teaching material selection, teaching methods and assessment measures, the thesis discusses some strategies of the combination between English education and profession, hoping to provide some references for teaching people engaging in higher vocational education.

1. Curriculum Setting

Under the current vocational education system, mostly non-English majors set courses in freshman year. Take Chongqing College of Electronic Engineering for example, its non-English course is set to be public elective course. Although some professions in the schools open Europe & America class and China & Australia class, having the credit and class increased, which hasn’t shorten the distance between English and posts, the students in the professions just have more time to learn English and better chances to cultivate comprehensive language quality and know about western culture with traditional teaching contents and sole assessment measures.

In order to highlight English characteristic in profession, non-English students may learn English course in the freshman year, which strengthen and solidify students’ English basis. Most students can pass PRETCO and CET-4 with the course setting. Each department can continue to set English course according to own professional characteristic in sophomore year. Based on solid basic English knowledge, the course setting should connect with professional knowledge. English teachers are required to teach abundant professional vocabulary and sentences and even clarify some simple professional basic knowledge. According to this kind of course setting, most students can basically
use English in some simple tasks related to his or her profession. Under the circumstance, students may read some directions of products and manuals of import facility or instrument. The credit and class can be allocated according to the portion English has in the profession.

2. Teaching Material Selection

In present higher vocational English teaching, selected textbooks have common issues of the contents of passages being out-of-date, being not fit for students’ practical need and being divorce from profession. Higher vocational English materials are an indispensable part of teaching, which should conform the trend of the times and ensure that higher vocational core goal will be achieved. The selection and writing of textbooks should insist the strategy that English serves profession. In addition to considering higher vocational students’ English level, we should pay attention to practicability of contents, making efforts to select some passages without long length that can arouse students’ interest and related to professional knowledge fields.

Selecting and composing textbooks for schools are the development direction of higher vocational education, which not only bring English into profession to its professional characteristic, but also make students realize the role of English in their future career. Textbooks are the key to teaching. A set of excellent textbooks may systematize and normalize knowledge as well as inspire students’ interest. During the process of selecting and composing textbooks, higher vocational English personnel should combine teaching with practical experience starting from teaching and students and adhere to the concept, practice-oriented and service for profession, to select and compose more applicable textbooks for the development of higher vocational courses.

3. Teaching Methods

Teaching methods are the medium to finish teaching activity together, which serve teaching activity and teaching task. As to diverse courses, teaching activity, teaching task and students, educational personnel should “make teaching with methods, but not fixed, rely on gaining methods”. When teaching, higher vocational teachers should consider different professional characteristic fully, insisting on a principle, “concentrating on practicality and sufficiency first” and pay more attention to application ability with appropriate teaching methods.

Take the writer’s practical working experience for example, facing students majoring in Tourism Specialty, we should focus on cultivating speaking & talking skills; when teaching students who are studying in Hospitality Management, teachers can introduce “Project Teaching Method”, in which the students should be considered first, then teachers and students work together to finish collecting information, formulating projects, carrying out items and doing the last assessment and summary and in which we can even extend classes to core departments of hotels according to schools’ negotiation with hotels, such as Housekeeping Department, Food & Beverage Department, Front Office and Leisure Centre, which makes the students gain and apply service language, service principle and western etiquette; during the process of teaching Electronics majors, we should lay stress on professional vocabulary. Because these Electronic students will engage in front lines of foreign-capital enterprise and sino-foreign joint venture after graduating, which requires them to apply and know some basic and common professional vocabulary, such as voltage, current and diode, etc. When facing students majoring in Numerical Control and Vehicle Maintenance, we should make efforts to improve their reading skills. Because these graduates will become application talents in front lines, meeting lots of imported equipment, direction of instrument, international general technical standard and original materials of advanced technology and so on, they are required to obtain the skill of reading such materials, which should be brought in teaching content. Therefore, if we want to extend English education to professional area, we should inject live water into English teaching, and let English related to profession and make profession lead teaching. In class, we should also adopt various teaching methods. In addition to sole speaking courses and blackboard-writing, we can also use modern multi-media, speech ciphering equipment and Micro class to teach. According to these rich teaching forms, students’ enthusiasm learning English will be fully initiated.
4. Assessment Measures

The assessment system of teaching effectiveness overwhelmingly restrains the contents and forms of classroom teaching. Presently with written tests and unified final tests as the main forms, the traditional ways of assessment ignore students’ actual needs in the process of learning, hindering their growth and thus failing to guide and inspire in-class teaching reform. With the reform of English Examination for College Entrance, changes have taken place respectively in English teaching, textbooks, courses as well as teaching model. Hence it is high time that assessment system of English education should be improved correspondingly.

In terms of the testing form, the traditional written texts can be enriched and diversified. For example, to test the applied talents specially trained for manufacturing, teachers may transfer the test to factories if possible, asking students to learn and master the bottom of ON/OFF and interpreting the English specifications and manuals. Then factories may evaluate the students’ performances by “integrating evaluation grades and remarks and evaluation remarks as priority”. For instance, to test the English levels of Hotel Management majors, we may choose the core departments of a hotel as the testing cite, and give grades and remarks according to students’ performances in actual work. These novel, integration and diversified means of assessment can not only usher the reform of teaching mode and have vocational English teaching coincide with the practical condition of “combination of learning with working and alternation of each other”, but also give the trainees professional training and test, and thus improve their adaptability of reality and development of integration between modern productive relations and productivity.

To sum up, the assessment mode of vocational English teaching should highlight the professional features of the language, pay attention to students’ learning processed, and evaluate their English grades from diversified aspects. Teachers may give students final grades, integrating such items as in-class learning texts, assignments, role-plays, performing English programs, story telling, activity reports, self-assessments, inter-assessments, questionnaires, parents’ assessments on students’ learning, stage tests, final exams, evaluations given by enterprises, etc.

Commentary:


References


