

The Innovative Development of English Teaching Approaches for English Pedagogical Students

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Abstract In the new era of reform and opening-up in China, English Pedagogical Students are confronted with the continuous innovation and practical application of English teaching approaches. This study adopts the teaching case method, randomly selecting 42 English Pedagogical Students from two classes of School of Foreign Languages in Xinyang Normal University. All participants were autonomously divided into 11 groups, agreed on the teaching content, formulated teaching designs/plans and courseware, and selected representatives to present the lessons, demonstrating different teaching methods, contents and core competencies. It concludes that all the participants generally recognize that innovative English teaching approaches are crucial to continuously optimize in-class teaching and learning with technology-driven intentional adoption of diverse approaches and with focusing on core competences for English majors.

Keywords: English Pedagogical Student, teaching approach, core competence, educational reform

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1. Introduction

Concern about English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Tool (ET) in China have become central issues in foreign language education policy-making, and as a result many efforts in recent decades have concentrated upon both input and output of English teaching and learning. The development of education for all the citizens in China has laid the foundation for the continuous improvement of the national school education system and policies. At the same time, driven by the shortage of talents needed to meet the requirements of social development, the cultivation of high-quality teaching facilities has become an important task for schools in various regions, thus forming a macro situation for the development of education in different places.

In the new era of reform and opening-up, many foreign languages are introduced into China with compulsory courses for various majors in school education. English, as the most important international language, has been attracting more and more students to learn so that the cultivation of pre-service English students/teachers has become an irresistible trend. Over the past forty years, English teaching theories have been constantly updated and innovated, and the era has endowed English students/teachers with core competencies with new cultivation paths. As China's education has fully developed onto a new stage of high-quality development. Pre-service English teacher education, as an important

way to cultivate current and future English teachers, is crucial for the improvement of the quality of basic education and foreign language education. More attention is paid to effective strategies and methods of English teaching in cultivating the core competencies of English students/teachers through an in-depth analysis in Normal Universities.

This study is under construction upon classroom teaching investigation with sampling and analysis of teaching cases with various EFL approaches.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Historical Situation of Chinese Education

Since the middle time of last century, many primary and secondary schools were founded to vigorously popularize fundamental education nation-widely for literacy of the citizens. At the same time, vocational and technical educations were carried out to meet the national demands of economic construction for all kinds of technical workers and professional talents. With the society developing, all the peoples were aware of the importance of national policy that education is the foundation of 100-year developing plans, so that all the parents overemphasized the education of children and nine-year compulsory education was implemented all over China. Instantly higher education began to boom with more enrollments and more universities at the end of

1970s, and particularly at the turn of last century. With such a currency of educational development, there appeared one issue of shortage of teachers. Therefore, to meet the need of more qualified teachers, some countermeasures were taken out from educational institutions and professional occupations where the local intellectuals, professional teachers and supervisors, who took the lead in their career, taught more pupils in various occupations by passing knowledge and experience through guidance and mentorship. Simultaneously, more skilled overseas-returns switched their role into social and educational development, after completing their studies with the strong belief of serving the country through science [1]. Those talents from studying abroad in colleges and universities were characterized with high knowledge level, great influence and strong speech right [2]. After decades more students got pedagogical and academic training and became the teachers who have been devoted themselves to the cause of cultivating more teaching facilities for all levels of schooling system.

In the recent years, a greater importance has been attached to education from Chinese central government to the local educational departments throughout of China, which is located in a prominent strategic position of priority development. A grand blueprint is drawn up in the National Education Conference to build a leading country in education. At present, China has achieved remarkable results in many aspects of education. In terms of fostering virtue through education, the country adheres to integrating it into all aspects and fields of education, fully implements the educational projects of Spirit-Building Project for New-Era Talents and improves the education mechanism [3]. In terms of teaching faculty construction, a series of policies have been implemented to improve the quantity and quality of the teachers in the huge education system with programs of talent cultivation and scientific research innovation so that basic equilibrium in compulsory education has been achieved, and the allocation of regional educational resources has been continuously optimized.

2.2. Related English Pedagogical Education in China

2.2.1. Historical Process of English Education

English studies in China has a long history. It's well-known that English began to spread in China with the arrival of Western missionaries in China during the time of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasty (1645-1911). English knowledge was imparted to some Chinese intellectuals for missionary work and communication purposes. However, at that time, English learning was not yet widely popularized but was mainly confined to a few people who contacted with the missionaries. English, with the other foreign languages, was regarded as a tool to translate many works of masterpieces among China and the western countries. After the Opium War in 1840, the opening of treaty ports and cities gradually increased the demand for English. During the final years of Qing Dynasty, in order to learn advanced Western technologies and culture, English education began to develop in new-style schools different from Chinese traditional academies/

schools. Many students began to accept modern education. Even some were chosen to send to foreign countries. A group of English talents were cultivated. Subsequently, English education gradually became popular in some major cities' schools.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), English education received further development. Especially since the national policy of reform and opening-up was promulgated, English, as an important language for international communication, has attracted increasing attention. Although English is not an official language, it has become an important main course equivalent to Chinese and Maths in all levels of schools with a systematic teaching system from primary school to university. Additionally, there is a compulsory examination of English for official employees to pass for work qualification, professional titles and promotions. English learning has gradually become popular among the general citizens.

Meanwhile, the result of learning English is not efficient as planned for tens of millions of students who pick up learning English as a foreign language solely for classroom studies and examinations to better schools and universities, which leads to the birth of Dumb English during classroom teaching with grammar-translation method (GTM) [4,5]. In China, English is a foreign language so that students have few opportunities to come into contact with foreigners in the real language environment in their daily lives and lack the chance to communicate with native English speakers, making it difficult to cultivate language sense and oral expression ability. In the classroom, the emphasis of traditional English teaching is placed on imparting written knowledge of grammar and vocabulary while oral training is neglected. Students lack sufficient opportunities for oral practice and teachers seldom emphasize the importance of oral expression. There are improper teaching/learning methods with which the students adopt rote learning methods, focusing only on memorizing the spelling of words and grammar rules, without improving their oral English through a large number of listening and speaking exercises. Consequently students have averagely performed more poorly in listening and speaking of English compared to writing and reading though they have spent much time and energy into learning English for more than ten years.

From the beginning of the 21st century, with the acceleration of the globalization process and the increasingly frequent international exchanges, China's basic foreign language education has ushered in an important opportunity for its transformation. Since 2001, China's basic education of foreign languages has entered the first stage of reform which is centered on the significant transformation of curriculum objectives aiming to break the limitations of the traditional education model and promote the development of foreign language teaching in a direction that better meets the needs of the contemporary societal development. Before 2001, basic foreign language education had aimed mainly at imparting basic knowledge and skills for a long time. In classroom teaching, teachers focused on the explanation and memorization of vocabulary and grammar while students mastered knowledge through a large number of written

exercises. Although students cultivated by this model have a certain knowledge reserve, they have obvious deficiencies in practical language application ability. With the deepening of international exchanges, society's demand for foreign language talents with comprehensive language application abilities has become increasingly urgent. Under this background, the basic foreign language education reform initiated in 2001 shifted the curriculum goals from basic knowledge and skills to comprehensive language application abilities, emphasizing that students should not only grasp language knowledge, but more importantly, be capable of flexibly using language for communication, exchange and expression in actual situations with communicative language teaching [6,7].

2.2.2. English Teaching Reform

To achieve the goal of foreign language education reform, the new curriculum standards have been adjusted to teaching content and approaches which are deeply intertwined with switches in linguistic theories and social development. Teaching content is no longer limited to a single vocabulary and grammar, but incorporates more materials related to real life and cultural background to broaden students' horizons. In terms of teaching approaches, diverse teaching models such as task-based teaching and cooperative learning are advocated, and students are encouraged to enhance their language application ability through practical activities. In the classroom, teachers need set up task scenarios varying from simulated shopping to travel consultation for enabling students to exercise their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities during the process of completing the tasks. This transformation has played a positive role in promoting the development of basic foreign language education in China.

However, during the process of this reform, many problems gradually emerged unavoidably. First of all, the insufficient transformation of traditional teaching concepts is a key issue. Many teachers have developed outdated thinking and patterns of teaching in long-term teaching practice and have a relatively lower acceptance of new teaching concepts and methods. They are habituated to the full-class-lecturing teaching method and find it difficult to truly hand over the initiative of the classroom to the students. In task-based teaching, some teachers merely mechanically set tasks without providing students with sufficient guidance and support, resulting in the tasks becoming mere formalities and failing to effectively enhance students' comprehensive language application abilities [8,9]. Secondly, the problem of fragmented teaching is serious. Although the course objectives emphasize comprehensive language application skills, in actual teaching, teachers still divide the teaching content into isolated knowledge points for explanation in order to cope with exams, lacking a systematic integration of language knowledge. As a result, students find it difficult to form a complete language knowledge system and cannot integrate the knowledge they have learned. In actual communication, they still perform poorly.

The existence of problems restricts the effectiveness of the reform to a certain extent. Therefore, the second phase of basic foreign language education in China is waging on to continuously explore more scientific and effective

development paths from 2016. This reform is switched to the core literacy of English learned as a subject, with the aim to further enhance the quality of foreign language education through more in-depth and systematic teaching innovations and to cultivate talents with more comprehensive qualities and the international perspective [10]. The core literacy of EFL includes four dimensions: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability. It emphasizes that education should not only focus on the accumulation and application of students' language knowledge, but also lays emphasis on fostering their critical thinking ability and shaping their sound values.

2.2.3. The Development of English Teaching Approaches

English teaching approaches (ETA) have been developing with reforms for many waves based upon the societal development deeply influenced by science and technology. To meet modern talent demands home and abroad, a series of new teaching concepts and approaches have been introduced and reformed, including grammar-oriented approach, student-orientation teaching, task-orientation teaching, unit-based holistic teaching, need-based teaching, ideological-political teaching, and so on.

Literally speaking, student-orientation teaching comes into application taking students as the center of educational and teaching activities, placing their learning needs, interests, abilities and development as the starting point and ultimate goal. Its teaching conception is opposite to teacher-based teaching, the traditional teaching that teachers dominate the class, one-direction way to passing knowledge to students with many problems [11,12]. In the teaching process, teachers are no longer the sole disseminators of knowledge, but rather the guides, organizers and facilitators of learning [13,14], and focuses upon on the learners, encouraging active participation and fostering essential skills [15]. Therefore, students are no longer passive recipients but active learners, actively participating in the process of exploring, constructing and applying knowledge [16,17].

With the development of student-centered teaching in China, task-orientation teaching approach is adapted by designing real or near-real situational tasks for students to learn the language, use it for meaningful communication, and enhance their comprehensive English language skills and application ability during task completion [18]. It is emphasized that teachers should grasp the relationship between elements such as meaning and form, knowledge input and context creation, improve the evaluation and support system, adopt educational technology to assist teaching, and construct a favorable ecosystem for the task-based teaching method of English [19,20]. According to the task in teaching, there are three steps: before the task, in the task and after the task. Teachers need to adjust the difficulty of the task according to students' language proficiency and conduct reflection and summary after the task is completed based on their development, learning and efficiency [18,21].

Additionally, there is another teaching approach, that is, unit-based holistic teaching, which breaks the fragmented teaching mode in traditional teaching that takes individual lessons as units. It requires teachers to start from the

whole, take each unit as the basic teaching module, and integrate teaching content, teaching objectives and teaching activities within the unit [22]. By analyzing the unit's theme, teachers determine the overall teaching objectives of the unit, and then break them down into each class to form an organic connection among different class periods [23]. With the changes in societal needs for English learning, English teaching approaches are constantly adapting to new needs, which leads to need-orientation teaching, which requires that teaching content and activities are designed based on students' actual needs, making learning more personalized and practical. This teaching approach focuses on cultivating students' cross-cultural communication skills and practical application abilities, helping them better cope with social demands.

Based upon Chinese EFL teaching with nation-wide changes hugging the outer world, more and more advocates of English learning activities announce that students achieve in-depth processing and internalization of language knowledge through progressive activities such as learning and understanding, application practice, and transfer innovation. In learning and comprehension activities, students obtain textual information through methods such as listening and reading, and understand language knowledge and cultural connotations. Practical application activities guide students to apply the knowledge they have learned to new situations and conduct language practice through activities such as speaking and writing. Lingual transfer and innovative activities encourage students to analyze, evaluate and create more based on the knowledge they have learned, and form their own viewpoints and solutions to problems. Such learning activities can not only enhance students' language application ability, but also cultivate their sense of social responsibility and correct values in practice.

In addition, the second phase of the reform has also made adjustments in teaching evaluation, placing greater emphasis on process evaluation and multi-faceted evaluation. It attaches importance to students' performance and progress during the learning process and comprehensively assesses their core literacy in the English subject through various evaluation methods. Teachers can record students' participation and performance in group activities through classroom observations, collect their homework, works, etc. through learning portfolios, and comprehensively evaluate their learning outcomes and ability development. The second phase of basic foreign language education reform has injected new vitality into China's basic foreign language education through a series of innovative measures such as unit-based holistic teaching and the view of English learning activities. These reform measures have effectively addressed the problems existing in the first stage of the reform, promoting students to transform from passive recipients of knowledge to active developers of abilities. They are of great significance for cultivating new era talents with a global perspective, innovative thinking and a sense of social responsibility.

Therefore, English teaching approaches have been evolving from the grammar-translation approach to audio-lingual one, communicative one and/or the task-orientation approach [23], which signify the transformation of teaching, furthermore leading to the

continuous evolving results of educational concept, lingual viewpoint and learning perspective. The evolution of English teaching approaches in China reflects a consistent switch from traditional instruction to contemporary practice requiring aligning methods within key factors including learner goals, context and theoretical rigor. With English continuing to evolve as an international language, teaching approaches prioritize not just linguistic proficiency but also intercultural competence and lifelong study skills. For EFL teachers and students, emerging trends of ETA need stay informed while grounding instruction in evidence-oriented principles of communicative learning. Recently the transformation of teaching methods has changing from approach-orientation approach to learner-orientation one, which highlights its adaptability and flexibility [24,25]. While English teaching methodologies have been influenced deeply for a long time in China, it's gradually recognized that their direct transplantation are unsuitable to Chinese educational atmosphere and need to be localized [26,27]. A localized English teaching approach was put forward to emphasize the integration of commonalities between Mandarin and English teaching to explore appropriate methods for Chinese students [28]. Moreover, English teaching is integrated with Chinese characteristics as the hardcore principle of student-oriented education, learning rather than acquisition and equal emphasis of language and culture [29].

With the promotion of educational informatization, digital and intelligent technologies have exerted an increasingly profound impact on English teaching approaches [30,31]. The contemporary era demands a comprehensive transformation of English teaching courses in terms of teaching objectives, content, and assessment, with the aim of constructing a new data-driven teaching model [32]. The application of models such as blended learning, flipped classroom, and online-offline integration in English teaching [33,34], emphasizing the advantages of technology in stimulating students' initiative and catering to personalized learning.

It's concluded that the development of English teaching approaches in China is now at a critical stage of transformation from method transplantation to local construction, from technical assistance to deep integration, and from knowledge transmission to education-oriented development. The practice of English teaching approaches have to attach greater importance to the theories of EFL systematically, the adaptability of practice, the ethics of technology, and the fundamental role of fostering character and virtue, so as to promote the construction of English teaching approaches with Chinese characteristics.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Questions and Hypothesis

This current research was conducted under this environment in which Chinese pedagogical students learn and teach English as a foreign language in classroom with the aims to find out the following research questions:

Q1: What are the main problems existing in the teaching philosophy, content, models, and evaluation of

English teaching approaches for English pedagogical students?

Q2: Under the background of digitalization and intelligence, how to construct an innovative teaching models of English teaching approach integrating localization conceptions?

Q3: What impact do the innovative teaching models have on English pedagogical students' teaching competence (teaching design, classroom practice, and education-oriented ability)?

Q4: English teaching approaches are efficient? What advantages and disadvantages emerge in reality?

Based upon research questions, come with research hypotheses:

H1: Traditional teaching approaches linger among English pedagogical students in China.

H2: Blended teaching based on digital and intelligent technologies can significantly improve normal students' teaching design and practical abilities.

H3: Teaching courses integrated with localized cases and education-oriented goals are conducive to enhancing normal students' subject-based education ability.

3.2. Procedures

The whole procedures were delicately designed and precisely committed as following steps:

Step 1. The research problems were proposed from the reality and bottleneck of classroom teaching in EFL education.

Step 2. Based upon the precedent research problems, the field investigation was carried out in two classes, which were randomly selected from five classes in School of Foreign Languages of Xinyang Normal University. There were 42 participants in total, who were 2023 English Pedagogical Students (EPS) with pre-service teaching education as to become teachers in the future.

Step 3. For the case analysis, the classroom teaching approach was adopted from the division of all the participants in the classes into several groups organized voluntarily to teaching demonstrations. Each group discussed the teaching content on their own according to EFL textbooks from the middle school to the college. Furthermore, each group members discussed the chosen content with formulated teaching plan and method(s) based on the proposed research problems, and selected one representative to present the teaching content in the classroom. During the process of their preparation of the teaching plan, they had to study and get familiarized with the features of teaching plan and the good teaching qualifications, plus the teaching methods properly applied in class.

Step 4. The titles of each group were shared and the

teaching contents were presented in classroom with domestic professors guiding and examining along the way.

3.3. Results

According to Table 1 The Statements of All the Presentations, there are 11 teams grouped with the members varying from 3 to 5 from 42 participants.

The shared contents were chosen from the textbooks applied in the classroom teaching. The current English textbooks adopted in Senior High Schools of Henan Province (2025) belong to the series of Chinese Compulsory Educational Textbooks while those in college fall into the domain of National Planning Textbooks for Higher Education in the 11th Five-Year Plan Period. There are two versions: one from People's Education Press (PEP) while the other from Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, which are selected and used by different regions across Hunan Province [35]. Compiled in accordance with the new National Curriculum Standard, they cover the compulsory and optional compulsory learning stages. The participants chose the PEP version, which features life-close themes and a gentle progression of language foundation, making it suitable for consolidating basic knowledge. It contains three books: Book 1 of the compulsory volume contains 6 units, while Books 2 and 3 each 5 units. Each unit consists of listening and speaking, reading, grammar, writing, and extended reading modules. Focusing upon cultural awareness, thinking quality and learning ability, It integrates Chinese cultural elements such as traditional festivals and cultural heritage, and is well-supported by complete digital resources including audio, videos and courseware. The three compulsory volumes are finished in Grade 1 of senior high school, with a total of about 10 to 11 units, connecting with junior high school knowledge and consolidating students' foundational English proficiency. All textbooks follow three unified thematic contexts: self and personal growth, individuals and society, and humanity and nature, covering topics such as teenage life, travel, environmental protection, science and technology, and culture.

All of them are officially and widely utilized with authority. The demonstrated titles are listed as the followings: *Making new friends*; *Our school life*; *The seasons and the weather*; *I'm going to play basketball*; *What's your hobby? Bicycle riding is good exercise*; *We will have a class fashion show*; *Our country has developed rapidly*; *Pollution has caused too many problems*; *English is widely spoken throughout the world*. There are two more titles from college textbooks: *Social media: How much is too much* from New Horizon College English and *Borrowed words* from English Lexicology.

Table 1. The Statements of All the Presentations

Team	Participants	Grade	Textbook	Title	Teaching Method(s)
1	4	7	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	Making new friends	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Talent show; Sweet voice imitation
2	4	7	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	Our school life	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Reality demonstration
3	3	7	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	The seasons and the weather	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Picture show;
4	5	8	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	I'm going to play basket ball.	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Object show;

5	5	8	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	What's your hobby?	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; talent show;
6	3	8	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	Bicycle riding is good exercise.	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; toy show
7	3	8	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	We will have a class fashion show.	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; object show
8	4	9	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	Our country has developed rapidly.	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Comparison and contrast
9	5	9	English (Compulsory Education Textbook)	English is widely spoken throughout the world.	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; World-map presentation; Student-oriented approach
10	3	1 in College	New Horizon College English (National Planning Textbook for Higher Education)	Social media: How much is too much	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Survey; Classroom activity
11	3	3 in College	English Lexicology (National Planning Textbook for Higher Education in the 11th Five-Year Plan Period)	Borrowed words.	Computer-assisted teaching (CAT); PPT; Exemplification; Brainstorm; Game playing;

3.4. Discussion

Among the 11 teams, there are 3 teams choosing the topics in Grade 7, 4 teams in Grade 8, 2 teams in Grade 9, 1 team in Grade 1 of College English, plus 1 team in Grade 3 of English Major. Furthermore, all the teams make the PPT presentations with well-designed slides according to the corresponding contents.

First of all, about current problems of English teaching approaches with response to Q1 & H1, there are prominent ones which were summarized from four dimensions: teaching philosophy, teaching content, teaching models and teaching evaluation. In terms of teaching philosophy, Hypothesis 1 is verified in this research. Traditional teaching approaches are deeply rooted among English pedagogical students in China. All 11 teams adopted teacher-led teaching logic as the mainstream, and only Team 9 explicitly mentioned the student-oriented approach, indicating that most students still stick to the traditional teaching philosophy centered on knowledge indoctrination and pay less attention to their main learning status in the classroom. The transformation of modern student-centered educational concepts is insufficiently implemented fully.

In terms of teaching models, the homogeneity of teaching methods is still serious. All participating teams utilized PPT demonstration, which meant the participants relied on computer-assisted Teaching (CAT) and PPT as the basic teaching tools, and the auxiliary teaching forms were limited to simple situational displays including picture shows, object shows, media/video clippings and talent shows. Single and rigid teaching models fail to adapt to differentiated teaching demands of different grade stages and textbook themes. For teaching content, the teaching materials are limited to official compulsory education textbooks and conventional national higher education planning textbooks. The teaching content lacks localized innovative cases closely combined with regional educational characteristics and real local classroom teaching scenarios, resulting in disconnected teaching content from actual domestic basic education.

In terms of teaching evaluation, there is no diversified evaluation reflection in all presentation schemes. The samples only focus on the design of teaching implementation links, without involving formative evaluation, student feedback evaluation and post-class

teaching optimization evaluation mechanisms. The imperfect evaluation system cannot form a closed circle of teaching implementation and effect feedback.

Secondly, it comes to the feasibility of digital and intelligent innovative teaching models with response to Q2, all the data demonstrate the basic application foundation of digital teaching tools among English pedagogical students for the computer-assisted teaching method is familiarized to modern college students with the fluent application of computer hardware and software under the background of digitalization and intelligence in contemporary era. All teams take CAT and PPT as core teaching carriers, which proves English pedagogical students have mastered basic digital teaching skills and laid a foundation for constructing intelligent innovative teaching models. Nevertheless, the current digital application is superficial: most students only use electronic courseware for knowledge presentation, lacking the flexible application of intelligent teaching platforms, big data and online interactive tools.

Combined with the localization construction requirement in Q2, it is found out that the existing teaching cases are universal official textbook cases without localized characteristic teaching design, even though ideological education is required to carry out. To optimize the teaching model, it is necessary to integrate localized educational conceptions, combine local middle school teaching characteristics, regional cultural elements and domestic English curriculum standards, and embed localized teaching cases into the courses. On the basis of retaining basic digital auxiliary teaching means, diversified intelligent teaching links such as online surveys, brainstorming and situational games should be popularized in basic education teaching design. A blended teaching model can be constructed to break the homogeneity dilemma of traditional teaching models.

Thirdly, on the influences of innovative teaching models on pedagogical students' teaching competence in response to Q3, H2 & H3, this research tended to check teaching competence from three dimensions: teaching design ability, classroom practice ability and education-oriented ability, and verifies H2 and H3 through comparative analysis of team presentations. For teaching design ability, teams with diversified digital auxiliary forms show better design performance. For example, Team 8 used comparison and contrast method, Team 10

adopted survey method, and Team 11 applied brainstorming and game teaching methods. These diversified digital designs enable students to flexibly arrange teaching links according to textbook themes, which effectively improves their logical thinking and structural design ability of teaching schemes. Simple single-form teaching design is obviously inferior to multi-dimensional blended teaching design, proving that digital and intelligent blended teaching can significantly optimize pedagogical students' teaching design ability.

In terms of classroom practice ability, diversified interactive forms such as talent shows, object displays and map displays adopted by those teams enhance the vividness of classroom teaching. Surveys and games are used to strengthen teacher-student interaction, which helps students master in-class teaching pace and interactive guidance skills in practice. Digital teaching tools simplify the difficulty of scene restoration, enabling pedagogical students to proficiently apply technical means to assist classroom teaching and improve practical teaching ability.

For education-oriented ability, most teams only complete teaching designs of language knowledge while the teams combining localized educational goals and educational values have better performance in mining educational connotation, such as Team 9 involving global language culture and Team 8 focusing on national development. The integration of localized cultural concepts and educational orientation goals helps pedagogical students establish the awareness of moral education and cultural infiltration in English teaching, thereby improving their subject-based education ability, which fully confirms H3.

Last but not least, in response to Q4, according to the presentation results of 11 teams, the current mainstream English teaching approaches have obvious practical advantages and disadvantages. In terms of advantages, firstly, computer-assisted teaching is highly universal and easy to operate, which reduces the difficulty of teaching presentation and is suitable for novice pedagogical students. Secondly, diversified auxiliary teaching forms such as picture shows and situational displays can visualize abstract language knowledge, stimulate students' learning interest, and conform to the cognitive characteristics of middle school students. Thirdly, the selection of official authoritative textbooks ensures the standardization and rationality of teaching content, which is convenient for the standardized pre-service training of pedagogical students' basic teaching skills.

In terms of disadvantages, the primary problem is the solidification of teaching methods. Excessive dependence on PPT and single digital tools leads to rigid teaching processes and lack of flexible adaptive adjustment. Secondly, the teaching method design is greatly affected by textbook themes. Teams with simple and daily themes have single teaching forms, while teams with comprehensive themes have richer designs, resulting in unstable teaching quality. Thirdly, the lack of localized personalized design makes the teaching content divorced from local educational actualities, and the homogeneous teaching model cannot meet the differentiated training needs of pedagogical students. In addition, most teams ignore post-class evaluation and teaching reflection links, forming an incomplete teaching closed circle and

restricting the long-term improvement of teaching quality. The participants' strengths are not limited to these features mentioned above; there are also many good details that deserve attention as well. Their sufficient preparations present all the participants practice the demonstration with inventive designs to meet the teaching standards varying from curriculum designs to student situation with clear awareness of teamwork and adaptability in lectures. The following advantage comes from the representative addressees for the team to deliver the lecture, who perform with a higher qualification and English competence including fluent expressions and efficient communications in English. The last merit comes from the fact that they can create a situational teaching with active atmosphere to arouse the intensified study enthusiasm in learning English to cooperate throughout of the whole span of lesson demonstration. Student-oriented teaching approach is deeply appreciated and widely applied among the participants. More importantly, they are not confined to one teaching approach but turn to flexible teaching approaches according to textbook contents, curriculum designs and teaching efficiencies.

Traditional teaching approaches are inevitably taken for teaching foundational contents including vocabulary teaching, professional knowledge lecturing. At the same time, it is noticeable that there are also 3 teams carrying out the flexible methods to teach words and professional knowledge, which are proven by the student-oriented approach, classroom activity and brainstorm with game playing to get rid of teacher-oriented teaching approach without students' active interaction. As a result, the innovation of English teaching in classroom teaching is deeply rooted in the hearts of teachers and students.

The strengths of participants well prove that English teaching approaches are picked up by pedagogical students with teaching courses designed for them in Chinese normal universities as a crucial supplement to the national first-class undergraduate major construction site, providing strong support for the development of EFL. These courses aim to cultivate pedagogical students to become education talents with solidified professional foundation and excellent teaching skills. Conversely, while their strengths are prominent, their weaknesses have also emerged accordingly. The first weakness is shown out from their time control. In their practice, nearly all the teams exceed the allotted time. The next disadvantage goes from unclear language guidelines in lectures due to lower voice or poorer vocabulary. Sometimes the lecturers repeat the orders whileas the listeners are not involved in the interaction simultaneously and satisfactorily. There is another demerit worthy of attention which is some students settled in the last pews are not given enough attention to because they are not asked to take part in the activities or bury their heads in their own business. Therefore, the corresponding countermeasures need to be tackled with innovative English teaching approaches later on.

4. Conclusion

The major findings are yielded as following:

First, multiple drawbacks exist in the current English teaching approaches for English pedagogical students.

Traditional teacher-centered teaching philosophies are still prevalent, verified by H1. The teaching content is limited to official textbooks. The teaching models are highly homogeneous and overly dependent on basic digital tools. Besides, the teaching evaluation system is incomplete without diversified feedback mechanisms.

Second, it is feasible to construct a localized innovative blended teaching models under digital and intelligent background. Pedagogical students have basic digital teaching operation capabilities, and the diversified interactive teaching methods adopted in individual teams can be popularized. Integrating local educational characteristics, domestic curriculum standards and localized cultural cases into the teaching model can effectively make up for the deficiency of universal teaching content.

Third, the innovative teaching model has a significant positive impact on normal students' comprehensive teaching competence, which verifies H2 and H3. Digital intelligent blended teaching optimizes students' teaching design logic and enriches classroom practice forms, thus improving their teaching design and practical abilities. Moreover, the teaching model integrated with localization and education-oriented goals strengthens students' cultural education awareness and subject-based education ability.

Fourth, the current mainstream English teaching approaches have both merits and demerits. The standardized textbook system and simple digital auxiliary teaching methods reduce the training threshold for pedagogical students. However, the solidified teaching logic, single teaching form, lack of localized design and imperfect evaluation mechanism restrict the further improvement of teaching efficiency.

Based upon the above conclusions, there are some practical optimization suggestions for the teaching reform of English teaching approaches. The first lies in EFL classroom where teaching approaches are variable from traditional teaching approaches to innovated modern ones, which are all intertwined with each other. Since traditional teaching approaches have reached a dead end, and both teachers and students at large have realized that the innovation of English teaching approaches is becoming increasingly important to constantly optimize English teaching and learning in classroom instruction to meet the needs of English teaching in the new era. Teachers' colleges should abandon the single traditional teaching philosophy, strengthen the penetration of student-oriented educational concepts, and break the solidified thinking of pedagogical students.

The second shows that any participant tends to carry out different approaches in EFL teaching activities intentionally with the wide application of modern science and technology varying from computer-assisted teaching to student-oriented teaching for removing the lower efficiency of EFL with much time and energy. It is urgent to optimize the teaching content, add localized teaching cases combining regional education characteristics and domestic examination syllabus, and realize the localization adaptation of teaching materials.

In addition, a diversified teaching evaluation system should be established, including formative evaluation, peer evaluation and teaching reflection evaluation, to form a complete teaching improvement closed loop, build an

intelligent blended teaching model, and expand the application scope of intelligent teaching tools such as big data surveys and interactive games, and avoid excessive dependence on single PPT presentation. For pedagogical students, it is necessary to break the limitation of fixed teaching modes, flexibly select teaching methods according to teaching themes, and integrate cultural education and localized thinking into daily teaching design to achieve all-round improvement of comprehensive teaching competence. EFL teaching focuses upon both the language itself and the extensively-potential competences, which requires English pedagogical students follow the social trend to improve teaching competence and language professional knowledge with innovative teaching approaches in multilingual global communications.

The last underlies that the innovation of EFL teaching approaches need proceed with harmonious and close relationship between teachers and students. On the basis of possessing excellent professional skills, teachers need demonstrate outstanding qualities in the classroom, such as being humorous and good at stimulating students' interest, which contribute to the innovation of English teaching methods.

5. Limitations and Future Prospects

There are some limitations in this research. On the one hand, the research sample is small. The participants in this survey were confined only to the targeted pedagogical students in ONE university, which needs to be performed in as many universities as possible for a long-term tracking investigation of students' teaching ability changes. On the other hand, the research only analyzes the teaching presentation schemes, without actual classroom teaching effect verification and long-term teaching practice data.

It is also well-known that the teaching efficiency of different approaches depends upon many influential aspects, including professional knowledge, core competence, administrative power and communicative ability, which are given proper attention.

Therefore, In the future, the sample size can be expanded, and long-term tracking can be carried out for pedagogical students. It is necessary to quantify the improvement degree of students' teaching competence, and provide more accurate data support for the reform of English teaching courses for English-teaching majors on the optimization path of localized EFL teaching.

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