

ARTICLE

## Exploration of Innovative Practical Teaching Model for English Education Majors under New Education Policies

Junli Zhang Xue Zhao\*

English Language and Literature Department at Teachers' College, Beijing Union University, Beijing, China

ARTICLE INFO

*Article history*

Received: 13 November 2024

Revised: 18 November 2024

Accepted: 25 November 2024

Published Online: 16 December 2024

*Keywords:*

Index Terms—new education policies

English education majors

Practical teaching model

Integration

Immersion

ABSTRACT

The “Double Reduction” policy has been implemented for more than three years, and the 5+2 Model has also been fully implemented for one year. Changes in education policies inevitably affect undergraduate majors related to primary school education in normal universities because the new education policies have put forward higher requirements for prospective English teachers on how to integrate into primary school teaching, research, management and other work more quickly. This paper, based on the Theory of Constructivism, explores innovative practical teaching model for English education majors from two dimensions: integration and immersion. By integrating professional skills courses, knowledge courses, and comprehensive training courses, this practical teaching model aims to achieve integrated development of English education majors by linking in-class and after-class, on-line and off-line, on-campus and off-campus resources. Project-based management and circular progression measures are adopted to cultivate students' practical and innovative abilities.

### 1. Introduction

In 2021, the “Opinions on Further Reducing Homework and Extracurricular Training of Students in Compulsory Education Stage” was issued, which clearly states that “schools should make full use of their resources, effectively carry out various after-school educational activities to meet the diverse learning needs of students... After-class services are generally undertaken by teachers in our schools.” In addition, the 5+2 Model for Compulsory Education has been officially implemented after March 1, 2023. The 5+2 Model means that educational time needs to be extended for at least two hours five days a week. During the 2-hour after-school service time from Monday to Friday, schools are expected to offer various

activities such as reading, cultural corner, and sports to enrich students' extracurricular life. It can be seen that both the “Double Reduction” policy and the 5+2 Model have further enhanced the quality requirements for primary school teachers. Primary school teachers should have not only high -level literacy and teaching abilities, but also the ability to organize and carry out rich and colorful after-school services. For English education majors, in particular, they should not only be good at English listening, speaking, reading, and writing, master a wide range of linguistic, literary, and cultural knowledge, familiarize themselves with teaching theories and methods, but also be capable of organizing and implementing after-school activities.

*\*Corresponding Author:*

Xue Zhao,

female, master degree, associate professor;

Research direction: American literature, English teaching;

Email: 2449801802@qq.com

Reciting and acting out English classical works is an answer to the requirements of the new education policies. Before reciting, students need to choose their favorite novels or plays to read carefully, form interest groups, and achieve mutual learning by solving problems encountered in the process of reading novels or plays with joint efforts. They need to observe carefully how to use language, actions, and expressions to reflect the original content with the help of relevant movies and TV shows. They need to share and discuss their understanding of the characters and themes in the works, and may need to re-create scripts for performance based on the original works. Memorizing classic lines, imitating movie clips, and rehearsal not only enhance students' reading and listening proficiency, but also cultivate their ability to interpret and appreciate English works. It can also exercise their skills, such as script creation and adaptation, use of body language & eye contact & facial expressions, and improve their understanding of cultures of different eras and countries embedded in English works, as well as their ability to evaluate and judge the values and concepts in the classical works. More importantly, after students have personally experienced the whole processes, from reading the original work, listening to audio resources, watching movies, imitating phonetics, to script creation, character development, body movements and oral expressions, they surely can improve their proficiency in English language, text interpretation, critical thinking, organizational capabilities and teamwork spirit. At the same time, after obtaining teaching positions in primary schools, they can quickly transplant their reciting and acting experience to after-school services, providing pupils with rich and lively English activities.

## 2. Integrated Education Model

This model, linking on-campus and off-campus platforms, integrates skill-based courses, knowledge-based courses, and comprehensive training courses, so as to achieve a four-year continuous practice and innovation. In skill-based and knowledge-based courses, corresponding learning tasks are mainly completed in the form of extended assignments, which are consolidated and improved in comprehensive training courses, and finally solidified on both on-campus and off-campus platforms.

### 2.1 Integration of Course Modules

All the courses for English education majors are classified into three modules: skilled-based course module, knowledge-based course module and comprehensive training course module. Skill-based courses, such as "English Listening", "English Reading", "English Writ-

ing" and "English Pronunciation", are designed to develop individual English skills. In these courses, reading classic English works and watching movies and TV shows adapted from classic English works are assigned as extended homework for students to finish after class; groups are formed to rewrite classic works. In knowledge-based courses, like "Selected Readings of English Literature", "Selected Readings of American Literature", and "Selected Readings of English Drama", reciting and acting out of the classic works are assigned to students. Under the guidance of course teachers, students further improve their scripts, dialogues and performance. In comprehensive training courses, such as "English Language Ability Training", "Education Probation" and "Education Internship", students are supposed to revise and rewrite classic works, and complete reciting and acting tasks. Then, students are invited to present recitation and acting out the classic works during Culture Week or on other performance opportunities like celebration parties.

### 2.2 Integration of in-class and after-class Platforms

Teachers are advised to make full use of existing technological means to extend limited training time and venues in reciting and acting practice. By utilizing online platforms such as Tencent Meeting, WeChat, Baidu Cloud, MOOC, NetEase Open Class, and Bilibili, students are mobilized to learn language and cultural knowledge related to reciting and performing works, and carry out online rehearsals to improve their learning efficiency. At the same time, teachers can organize students to conduct online and offline discussions to check their understanding of necessary knowledge, strengthen communication among various members of the team. For example, when students choose Shakespeare's work *Romeo and Juliet*, the supervising teacher will suggest that the project group study "Appreciation of Shakespeare's Plays", a course lectured by Professor Liu Hongtao from Beijing Normal University on the Chinese MOOC platform, watch the movie and TV show of this play, and watch the documentary "Revealing Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*" on NetEase Open Class and the latest version of "Romeo and Juliet" from Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in 2019, which is broadcasted on Bilibili. After all the above-mentioned resources are consulted, students will engage in group discussions to analyze and interpret the theme, characters, historical background, etc. of the work, and then adapt and create their own script under the guidance of the teacher.

#### *A. Integration of on-campus and off-campus Programs*

At present, there are two courses in our undergraduate program that are completed in primary schools, namely "Education Internship" and "Education Probation". "Edu-

education Internship” lasts for 16 weeks, and “Education Probation” lasts for one week. During the internship and probation, students can organize English recitation and acting activities based on what they have practiced on campus in after-school service. After education internship is over, some students choose to stay in primary schools to help organize the after-school activities. Some students took charge of English dubbing, recitation, and performance in after-school English activities and guided pupils to participate in district level competitions, and helped pupils win some prizes.

### **3. Immersive Education Model**

Constructivist Learning Theory holds that knowledge is not acquired through teachers’ lectures, but rather through the construction of meaning by learners in contexts, and with the help of others, learners can make full use of various learning resources. In this acquisition process, context, collaboration, conversation, and meaning construction are four indispensable elements. Immersive education model is adopted to help students better experience the learning process, stimulate their thirst for knowledge and curiosity, make them willing to participate and immerse themselves, and enhance their ability to discover and collaborate on exploration.

#### **3.1 Project-based Management**

From the beginning of enrollment, freshmen voluntarily form project groups by selecting classic English works. And each group is expected to finish reading the classic works, doing the precis-writing, using the audio-visual resources, dubbing, reciting and acting. Each project is task-oriented and tasks are set for each stage by the course teacher. In this way, a task-driven learning mechanism is established, which changes the passive learning of students into active learning. In the whole process, students have a clear understanding of the division of labor & cooperation, the expected goals & achievement methods, and the assessment methods of each stage; they gain a sense of achievement in exploring and completing tasks, thereby generating a stronger desire for knowledge. By means of clear division of specific tasks around each stage, this project-based management can maximize students’ creativity and imagination, and guide them to complete all the tasks through teamwork. In the course of completing the tasks, students need to go through the learning process and form an in-depth understanding of classic works, so that their abilities can be improved in all aspects.

#### **3.2 Circular Progression Arrangement**

In the first semester, students choose literary works and start to read the work, listen to its audio material, and seeing the movies adapted from the work. Students who choose the same work voluntarily form a project group, and the specific division of labor among members is determined within the project group. Pronunciation, listening, reading and writing teachers are involved in offering guidance to project groups. In the second semester, students start writing summaries and reflections of their selected works, and on the basis of their understanding of the selected work, each project group start to rewrite the work to form the basic script for acting out the work. Writing course teachers are supposed to give guidance and supervision to the writings. And pronunciation teachers and spoken English teachers are expected to give suggestions to the recitation. The first recitation should be completed in “English Language Training” class. In the third semester, under the guidance of the writing teacher, the final draft of the script is completed. All project group members are to memorize their lines and prepare for their roles based on the script. In the English language training class, all project groups are invited to act out their chosen literary works. The supervising teacher provide suggestions for the students’ script, lines, pronunciation, recitation, acting, etc.

In the fourth semester, students will choose to read, listen to, and watch literary works again. Students who choose the same work will voluntarily form a project group again, and the specific division of labor for each member will be determined within the project group (the division of labor for each student should be different from that in the first project). They will start writing scripts based on the content of the selected works and complete preliminary writing work in the English language training class. In the fifth semester, all project groups are to complete the final draft of the writing, and all members are expected to memorize their lines and prepare for their roles based on the script. During the educational probation, students can observe extracurricular English activities in primary schools and complete their first recitation in literature class. Based on the students’ script, lines, pronunciation, recitation, etc., literature teachers are to evaluate their performance again and provide suggestions for students to improve again. In the sixth semester, under the guidance of the literature teachers, all project groups continue to improve their scripts, recite new lines for each character, and prepare for the role. Recitation and performance can be given during the Cultural Week in this

semester. In the seventh semester, during the educational internship, students are encouraged to organize pupils to carry out English reciting and acting activities during the after-school service period.

In terms of educational philosophy, this practical innovative model is based on constructivist theory, allowing students to learn through meaning construction by utilizing various learning resources with the help of group members and teachers in the real context created by classic works. In this learning process, students are the center of all learning activities, while teachers play a supportive role. By participating in the practice of reciting and acting out the classic English works, students are surely able to develop their English proficiency, literary literacy, critical thinking, cross-cultural communication competence and teamwork spirit. In addition, teachers endow students with the decision-making right, allowing them to achieve practical learning goals through independent exploration and blended learning methods.

#### 4. Conclusion

This model is characterized by integration and immersion, combining professional skill-based courses, knowledge-based courses, with comprehensive training courses to achieve the integration of in-class and after-class platforms, online and offline resources, and on-campus and off-campus programs, aiming at cultivating students' practical and innovative abilities. This model covers most of the courses in the teaching programs for English education majors, realizing an organic unity of knowledge, skills, and core literacy. All English teachers participate in guiding students in reading and discussing classic English works, rewriting and role-playing, reciting and acting rehearsals, etc., thus achieving an organic extension of the in-class time to after-class time. Moreover, online platforms are fully utilized to provide language and cultural knowledge related to classic works, through which adapted movies and TV shows are watched, online rehearsals are conducted; therefore, on-line and off-line resources are both employed. Finally, all project groups present their learning outcomes through multiple rehearsals and live recitations, the outcome-oriented assessment is conducted and the quality of education is further ensured.

Another major feature of this model is the whole process, immersive approach, which adopts project-based management and circular progressive methods, exploring innovative cultivation models to realize the development of humanistic literacy, English proficiency, and professional skills. Each classic work is a group project, with detailed task assignments within the project team, such

as director, screenwriter, character roles, stage setting, poster design, etc. The work of all project team members revolves around maximizing their creativity and imagination through reciting and acting of the classic works on the basis of cooperation and collaboration. In terms of exemplification and demonstration, the whole process and immersive education approach enables students to participate in all the stages of reading, writing, listening, watching, reciting and acting, facilitating students' mastery of the entire organizational process and key tasks, and after they obtain teaching positions in primary schools, they can quickly apply what they have learned from the innovative model at college to the after-school English reciting and acting activities.

#### Fund Project

This research is supported by 2023 Beijing Union University project "Research and Practice on Innovative Practical Teaching Models for English Education Majors Based on Reciting & Acting of Classic English Works".

#### References

- [1] Deng, Fangjiao. (2024). Reform of the practical teaching system for English education majors with the cultivation of practical abilities as the core. *Western China Quality Education*, 10(16),83-86.
- [2] Li, Tingting. (2018). The wisdom of performance—The enlightenment of drama on college English teaching. *Drama Literature*, 427 (12) ,136-140.
- [3] Ma, Zejun. (2015). The construction of an integrated teaching model of reading, listening, writing, and acting: Inter-loading, inter-supporting and inter-acting—A classic case of practical teaching of "Novel Reading and Drama Performance". *Foreign Language Education & Research*, 3 (3), 27-30.
- [4] Wang, Quan. (2019) On the cultivation of critical thinking in English drama teaching from the multimodal perspective. *Education and Teaching Forum*, (32), 207-208.
- [5] Zhang, Lv. (2020). Exploration of the "project teaching" model for cultivating video cultural and creative talents in application-oriented undergraduate colleges. *Journal of Changsha University*, 34 (1), 149-153+160.
- [6] Zheng, Jie, &Liu, Humin. (2019). Teaching practice of cultivating innovative talents in English and American literature guided by critical thinking methods: Taking the course of "English Drama" as an example. *Journal of Hubei University of Science and Technology*, 39 (5), 134-137.