

# Analysis on Teacher's Roles in Lead-in Activities of College English Class

Qin Guo<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education, Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an 710062, China

<sup>2</sup>Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology, Guangzhou 510540, China

---

**Abstract:** Lead-in activity is the most important part of English classroom teaching and plays an important role in English teaching. At the same time, the role of teachers in English class is also very crucial, which not only affects the quality of teaching to a great extent, but also greatly affects the teacher-student relationship and teaching atmosphere in the class process. After reviewing relevant literature, it is found that the combination of the two studies is relatively rare. What kinds of roles teachers play in classroom leading activities, and what kind of role each role has, there is still a lack of substantive research. Therefore, this paper tries to study the role of teachers shown in the lead-in link of the 30 excellent teachers who participated in The National Final of the "Teaching Star" Competition of in 2020-2021, and tries to extract the efficient classroom lead-in methods and the effective teacher roles, so as to improve the teaching quality and promote the overall progress of teaching. Three revelations are drawn from the whole study: the effectiveness of classroom introduction, teachers' language literacy and the optimization of teachers' roles jointly determine the quality of English classroom teaching.

**Keywords:** College English class, Lead-in activity, Teacher role.

---

## 1. Introduction

Lead-in activity is the college link of English class and an indispensable part of classroom teaching. Although the time of lead-in activity is short, the quality of lead-in method directly affects the development of subsequent classroom teaching. Effective lead-in activities can stimulate students' interest and desire to learn English. At the same time, teachers' roles are also different due to the different ways of lead-in activities. Teachers' roles are also very significant in English class, because they not only affect the quality of teaching to a great extent, but also greatly influence students in the class process. In addition, the College English Teaching Requirements issued by the Ministry of Education also set higher requirements for the role of teachers. Therefore, it is very necessary to study the role of teachers in the college school English class lead-in activities. Because there are few studies combining lead-in activities with teacher roles, this paper attempts to further explore teachers' roles in the lead-in activities by observing and analyzing the classroom videos of 30 excellent teachers who participated in The National Final of the "Teaching Star" Competition in 2020-2021, so as to improve the teaching quality and promote the overall teaching progress. These videos of the National competition were selected as the research objects because the participating teachers are experienced excellent teachers. Their teaching ways play a strong demonstration role, especially for teachers who have just started the teaching industry, because of their clear teaching objectives, novel teaching ideas and reasonable teaching design. Hence, the research on these college school English teachers' roles in the process of lead-in not only provides a reference for English teachers to understand the effective lead-in, but also helps teachers understand the impact of different roles on teaching development and teaching effect, so that they would think about how to play their due role in classroom teaching and what teachers' roles can play to improve the efficiency of English teaching.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter mainly consists of two parts which are the related research of lead-in

activity and teachers' roles at home and abroad. In accordance with the chronological order, the author sorts out different domestic scholars' studies on the role of teachers and classroom introduction, and extracts key points for analysis and explanation.

### 2.1. Teacher's roles

Role refers to social expectations and requirements of teachers' functions and status. which prescribes the psychological and behavioral ways that teachers should behave in the educational situation. In foreign countries, the early definition of the concept of 'role' was George H. Mead, an American sociologist, who introduced 'role' into social psychology in 1935. Then in 1983, Harmer, an expert on English teaching methods, pointed out that foreign language teachers mainly play the roles of controllers, evaluators, organizers, promoters and resource providers in the classroom. In 1997, Voller thought that teachers should play three roles in the process of cultivating students' autonomous learning ability. These three roles are the facilitator role providing support for learners, consultant role of teacher-student interaction, and knowledge disseminator role. With the development of the times, higher requirements are put forward for the role of teachers. Therefore, researchers pay more attention to teachers' roles and conduct more in-depth research. In 2000, Richards and Lockhart mentioned that teachers view their role from different angles. Nowadays, scholars' research on the role of teachers is still ongoing, and they constantly interpret this concept from new perspectives. In 2015, Kelly and Debra believed that teachers played an important role in promoting students' physical and mental health from the perspective of students' physical and mental health development. To sum up, foreign scholars have conducted a lot of studies on the role of teachers and defined

them from different perspectives. In China, many researchers also put forward their own views on the role of teachers. In recent years, there are many articles about teachers' role orientation published in domestic periodicals. In 2001, Ye Lan, who is a famous educator in China, made a new interpretation of the role of teachers and the professional development of teachers from the aspects of truth, kindness and beauty in his book *The Role of Teachers and the New Exploration of Teacher Development*. She also put forward many distinctive propositions and formed a unique view of teachers. In the same year, Huo Liyan proposed in the *Transformation of Education and the Transformation of Teachers' Roles* that under the background of education changing from closed to open, teachers are not only the exporter of knowledge, but also the guider of students' independent learning. Meanwhile, teachers are also givers of knowledge and learning methods. In 2002, Chen Ji and Li Na came up with the role of teachers as psychologists on the basis of foreign research on teacher's classroom role. Thus, teachers are not 'teachers' in a narrow sense, but psychologists who care about the physical and mental well-being of students. In 2003, Liu Liqun argued in *The Expectation of Teacher's Role in Curriculum Reform* that with the change of teaching behavior, teacher's role will change from knowledge imitator to learning promoter, from curriculum executive to curriculum researcher and developer as well as from simple educator to both educator and learner. All in all, the research on teachers' roles at home and abroad illustrates that the teacher's role in classes is very important.

## 2.2. Lead-in activities

Foreign scholars have done a lot of research on lead-in activities and studied lead-in strategies from different perspectives. In the 1970s, Turney summarized the functions of classroom introduction in *Sydney Micro Skills* as: attracting students' attention, arousing students' learning motivation, constructing teaching objectives, clarifying learning tasks and establishing connections. In the 1980s, Roger Gower, Stephen Walters and others believed that the classroom should be introduced in as many ways as possible. All in all, classroom lead-in is flexible and diverse, and it is also essential. Teachers can use a variety of teaching methods and materials to deliberately attract students' attention and guide students into new learning content. In China, many researchers also put forward their own views on classroom lead-in. In 2001, Wang Baoda believed that lead-in refers to a way in which teachers consciously and purposefully guide students into a new learning environment at the beginning of explaining new knowledge or teaching activities, which is the guiding link and leading link of classroom teaching. In 2010, Fan Jianzhong and Gao Huixian believed that lead-in is a kind of teaching behavior in which teachers, at the beginning of a new teaching content or teaching activity, make students foresee teaching objectives, teaching content and teaching methods in a certain way, and guide students to make psychological and cognitive preparations. Therefore, before the start of a class, teachers should take the initiative to guide students into the class, because it can make college students with poor attention and self-control cognitive and psychological preparation when teachers start new teaching content and activities. In short, scholars at home and abroad have done a lot of research on the definitions, functions and principles of lead-in from different perspectives. Many of these studies on classroom lead-in not only provide a lot of

theoretical basis for classroom practice, but also provide scientific theory and guidance for teachers to design and choose to import activities and methods.

## 3. Research Design

From the overview of teacher roles and lead-in activities above, there is no doubt that lead-in activities and teacher role positioning are very important. In this section, the author states the overall design of the study. This part includes research questions, research objects, research tools and research process.

### 3.1. Research questions

Based on theoretical basis and realistic analysis, this study takes high-quality English class videos of 30 excellent teachers as the research object. Then the author tries to analyze and evaluate the classroom video observation, and conduct qualitative research on teachers' roles in the lead-in activities in order to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the general situation of teacher's role orientation in the lead-in process?
- (2) What are the main lead-in methods adopted in college school high-quality English classes?
- (3) Which teacher's roles are reflected in the lead-in activities?

Finally, this study intends to explore the effective approaches of lead-in and the improvement of teacher's role by summarizing the answers to three questions.

### 3.2. Research subjects

This research intends to take the classroom videos of 30 experienced teachers in the National Final of the "Teaching Star" Competition as the research object. Because of their clear teaching goals and reasonable teaching design, these teachers have played a certain exemplary role in the teaching of English teachers across the country.

### 3.3. Research instruments

There are three main instruments:

**Classroom observation method:** This paper mainly analyzes teacher's roles in lead-in activities by observing the classroom videos of 30 experienced teachers who participated in high-quality English classes competition.

**Text transcription:** Observers repeatedly observed the classroom videos of the English teachers and transcribed the lead-in activity parts of the videos into texts. Then, the author further analyzes the texts required for this research.

**Case analysis:** Extract representative clips from the videos which as the cases are used to further analysis certain teacher's role reflected in various lead-in activities.

## 4. Results and Analysis

The author watched the video of 30 teachers performance in Competition, and then note down the classroom leading activities and the roles they played. The items of the table included class type, number, time, lead-in strategy and teacher role. Then the information is analyzed to summarize their common characteristics, and part of the content in the video is converted to extract and import clips for analysis.

### 4.1. Data analysis

**Table 1.** The Lead-in Situation of High-quality English Classes

Class Type	Numbers	Percentage	Time	Lead-in strategies	Teacher Role
Reading	27	90%	2-7min	Free talk Pictures Music Brainstorming Question Video Game Direct	Designer Controller Promoter Participant Organizer Regulator Guider Resource Provider
Spelling	2	7%	3min	Game Mind map Brainstorming Question	Designer Promoter Organizer Guider Controller
Speaking	1	3%	4min	Video Picture Game	Designer Controller Guider
Total	30	100%	2-7min	Free talk Pictures Music Brainstorming Question Video Game Direct Mind mapping	Designer Controller Participant Organizer Regulator Guider Resource Provider Promoter

As can be seen from Table 1: First, there are 9 strategies of lead-in in this high-quality English classroom competition. They are Free Talk strategy, Picture strategy, Music strategy, Brainstorming strategy, Question strategy, Video strategy, Game strategy, Direct strategy and Mind Mapping strategy. Therefore, it can be seen that there are various lead-in methods used by teachers in the lead-in activities. In addition, teachers carry out different classroom activities according to different classroom types and use a variety of introduction methods in the introduction activities. Since it is the first time for teachers and students to meet in the high quality English class, most of the teachers will introduce themselves in the introduction activity, so that they can smoothly transition to the teaching content. According to students' reactions in class, it can also be seen that classroom introduction can not only stimulate students' interest and motivation, but also create a harmonious classroom atmosphere.

Secondly, the role of teachers in this demonstration class is characterized by diversity, so teachers often play more than one role in high-quality classroom lead-in activities. However, no matter what role teachers play, they all aim to establish links between new knowledge and students' knowledge in the first few minutes of class, complete the cognitive assimilation of new and old knowledge, promote communication between teachers and students, and reflect students' dominant position in class. In the table 1, there are nine roles that teachers play, which are Designer, Controller, Promoter, Participant, Organizer, Regulator, Guider and Resource Provider. These roles have different positive effects on classroom lead-in. For

example, the role of a teacher as a participant reflects the principle of equality between teachers and students. It also reflects the relationship that teachers and students can be friends. Such a teacher makes students feel close to each other, so that students will become active and active, which is conducive to creating an active classroom atmosphere. Thirdly, among the 30 high-quality English classes, there are mainly three basic classes: reading class, spelling class and oral class, with 27 classes, 2 classes and 1 class respectively. The lead-in method and the role of teachers are different for different types of classes. In reading class, the teacher used 8 kinds of lead-in methods and played 8 kinds of roles. In the spelling class, the teachers played 5 roles by using 4 lead-in methods. In speaking English class, the teachers used three kinds of lead-in methods and played three roles. By observing the lead-in strategies and roles of these three types of classes in the table, it can be found that they all have a common characteristic. That is, they all adopt the game lead-in method and play the role of designers. The reason for the use of game lead-in method is related to the nature of college school students who love to play. Taking the method of games can activate the classroom atmosphere, mobilize the enthusiasm of students, so that students can learn in play and play in learning. And the role of designer is essential for teachers, because the progress of a class is related to the teacher's class design. If the design is not reasonable, the class will undoubtedly be difficult to carry out and the classroom effect will be greatly reduced.

**Table 2.** Statistics of Lead-in Time in Classes

Lead-in Time	The Number of Times Used in Classes	Percentage (%)
1-2	1	3
3-5	23	77
6-7	6	20

As can be seen from Table 2, Each teacher's lead-in time is different and ranges from 1 to 7 minutes. It can be clearly seen from the data in the table that the shortest time to lead-in is 1-2 minutes, and the course has 1 class, accounting for 3%. The longest lead-in time is 6-7 minutes. There are 6 classes, accounting for 20%. However, the leading time is 3-5 minutes with the largest number of classes, accounting for 59.4% of the total 17 classes. The reason that most teachers' lead-in times fall within this range is that it is appropriate. Generally speaking, the lead-in time is too long, which will make students feel bored, so they become uninterested in learning,

distracted, fall into a passive state, lose interest in the new lesson, thus affecting the teaching progress and classroom efficiency. Similarly, if the lead-in time is too short, the teacher will rush into the topic, but the physiology and psychology of students have not been fully mobilized, the classroom atmosphere can not be fully active, so it will lead to students difficulty entering the state. But students in the "standby" state cannot accept the information delivered by the teacher, so it will be difficult for the teacher to carry out the teaching activities smoothly.

**Table 3.** Statistics on the number and use frequency of lead-in methods

Lead-in methods	Number of use	Percentage(%)
Pictures	18	29
Question	16	26
Brainstorming	7	11
Video	7	11
Free talk	5	8
Game	4	6
Music	3	5
Direct	1	2
Mind mapping	1	2

It can be seen from the data in Table 3: The lead-in activities cited by teachers of high-quality courses are rich and varied, with nine main lead-in methods. The teachers used a minimum of two lead-in methods and chose a maximum of four methods in the lead-in process. The teachers of the high-quality classroom competition used various lead-in methods 64 times in the teaching process. Image lead-in method was used 18 times, accounting for 29%. The problem lead-in method was used 16 times, accounting for 26%. The frequency of video introduction and the rate of brainstorming were the same 7 times, accounting for 11%. Free Talk method was used 5 times, accounting for 8%. Game lead-in method

was used 4 times, accounting for 6%. Music lead-in method was used 3 times, accounting for 5%. Both direct lead-in and mind map lead-in are used only once, accounting for 2. As can be seen from the above statistical data, the problem lead-in method and picture lead-in method are frequently used and have certain representativeness. Teachers use the lead-in method of question to propose theme-related questions to stimulate students' learning motivation, so that students can think deeply and learn new knowledge in the process of actively seeking answers. The reason why teachers often use the lead-in method of question may be related to the age of learners and the degree of knowledge acceptance.

**Table 4.** Statistics on the number and use frequency of teacher's roles

Teacher Roles	Usage Counter	Percentage(%)
Designer	23	36
Controller	10	16
Organizer	9	14
Promoter	8	12
Guider	5	8
Regulator	4	6
Participant	3	5
Resource Provider	2	3

As can be seen from the data in Table 4: In the whole high quality classroom competition, teachers played the role of teachers in the classroom lead-in 60 times in total. The top five roles that teachers play are designer, controller, organizer, facilitator and instructor. Designer was used 23 times, accounting for 36%; Controller was used 10 times, accounting for 16%; Organizers were used 9 times, accounting for 14%; Facilitator was played 8 times, 12%; The instructor acted five times, accounting for 8%. Most teachers play 2-4 roles in lead-in activities. These 9 roles all have a positive influence on classroom introduction. A variety of roles can stimulate students' interest in learning and thirst for

knowledge from various aspects and help students to enter the learning state. Therefore, in 4.2 Detailed Analysis of Teacher's Roles, the author will analyze five kinds of roles combined with cases respectively. 4.2 Detailed analysis of teacher's roles According to the data in table 1 and table 3, these teachers choose different lead-in strategies when designing different teaching activities. Meanwhile, in different lead-in strategies or in the same strategy, teachers often position themselves in different roles, including organizer, designer, promoter and participant, regulators, etc. In order to further study the role of teachers in the lead-in process, the author analyzes five cases of high-quality college school English lessons with the research method of text

transcription in this chapter, and then elaborates and analyzes the role positioning of teachers in the lead-in process.

## 4.2. Detailed analysis summary

According to the data in table 1 and table 3, these teachers choose different lead-in strategies when designing different teaching activities. Meanwhile, in different lead-in strategies or in the same strategy, teachers often position themselves in different roles, including organizer, designer, promoter and participant, regulators, etc. In order to further study the role of teachers in the lead-in process, the author analyzes five cases of high-quality college English lessons with the research method of text transcription in this chapter, and then elaborates and analyzes the role positioning of teachers in the lead-in process.

# 5. Enlightenment of Teaching

## 5.1. The effective ways of lead-in

First of all, the lead-in should closely follow the teaching content and reflect the main body status of the students. In order to better complete the teaching task, the lead-in design must be organically integrated with the classroom teaching content. At the same time, the lead-in must conform to the characteristics of the students, to closely around the students' interests, personality characteristics, cognitive level to determine the lead-in of the content and program. Because college students are active in thinking and have a strong sense of independence, they should pay attention to the principle of "fun" when designing guidance activities, and firmly attract students' attention through the interlocking guidance. The guidance time should be moderate. The duration of the lead-in activity should be controlled within 3-5 minutes, because too long or too short will affect the completion of the teaching task of the whole class.

Secondly, college English teachers should pay attention to the lead-in activities and strengthen the relevant knowledge. Successful lead-in strategy can enable students to have a strong interest in the teaching content from the very beginning, and greatly improve the teaching efficiency. Therefore, if the teachers want to do this, they must firmly grasp the basic principles and strategies of the introduction, and be familiar with the various methods and skills of the classroom lead-in to design novel and efficient lead-in activities.

Finally, teachers need to create a harmonious relationship between teachers and students, and enhance the participation of students in the lead-in of activities. Teachers should strive to enhance students' awareness of participation in the classroom lead-in activities, and mobilize students' enthusiasm to participate in the lead-in activities. At the same time, the lead-in design should take care of all the students, especially those who have difficulty learning English. Teachers should encourage them to actively and stimulate their interest in learning English.

## 5.2. Teacher's language literacy

"Due to the characteristics of their profession, teachers' language is usually presented in three types: sound language, written language and body language. It can be seen that language literacy of teachers is a really important ability. Through the transcription of the five cases, it is not difficult to find that the lead-in language of these five teachers is not only accurate, smooth, but also logical.

In fact, the 30 excellent teachers in the demonstration class

all have good speech literacy, which has achieved vivid narration and accurate and reasonable language when introducing the topic. However, the time of classroom introduction is extremely limited. In order to guide students' attention to teaching in a short time, the introduction language should be clear and concise. Therefore, teachers need to improve their own classroom language literacy.

In English teaching, teachers must first pay attention to the conciseness and accuracy of teaching languages. Teachers should standardize their expressions and try to use simple sentence patterns, especially for younger learners, because the complexity of language will only make students resist and dislike, thus losing interest and confidence in learning English. Secondly, teachers should pay attention to the vividness of classroom language expression. Humorous expressions can make students experience the charm of language while acquiring knowledge, so as to improve their interest in language learning. Finally, the teacher's presentation should be organized and enlightened. In teaching, the language of English teachers should be as real and logical as possible, because vague and unauthentic English expressions will only confuse students, and they should be good at inspiring students to think positively. Not only that, teachers should encourage students as much as possible to help them produce positive motivation. Often the teacher's inspiring words will make the students suddenly see light.

## 5.3. Improvement of teacher's role

There is no doubt that the role of teachers is diverse. Among the 30 English demonstration classes, there are as many as 9 kinds of teacher roles. This is because in the English classroom introduction activities, the role of the teacher will change according to the classroom type, the specific content of teaching, the creation of the situation and students' learning and psychological conditions. In the process of English teaching, teachers should fully consider various factors and take corresponding measures according to the actual situation. In the case of multiple identities and roles, college English teachers should correctly position their roles and establish correct role awareness.

First of all, the role is not fixed. Any good and effective classroom introduction is inseparable from the careful design of the teacher as a designer. All of these require teachers to design scientific introduction activities and programs according to the teaching objectives, students' age and students' acceptance level. When organizing students to carry out these activities, the teacher plays the role of organizer. At the same time, in order to carry out these activities smoothly, teachers' ability of regulation and control is needed. Therefore, the role of the teacher is constantly changing. Secondly, the role of teachers is targeted. Any teacher role has its rationality. For example, as a learning instructor, teachers need to guide students when they encounter difficulties and guide them from passive learning to active learning.

In a word, the role of teachers is not independent, nor single, but diversified. Only when teachers position it reasonably and combine the guiding strategy with the role of teachers, can they effectively guide and promote the development of students.

# 6. Conclusion

This study observed the classroom introduction part of the National College English Teaching Contest, and made

statistics, analysis and text transcription on the main strategies and roles it played. Based on the classroom observation table, the author made statistics on four tables. Through the statistical data in the tables, the following conclusions can be drawn: First; The introduction methods of high-quality college English courses are flexible and diverse, and the introduction duration is also different. The roles of teachers are diverse, and different roles have different positive effects on students.

Secondly, through a detailed analysis of the five specific roles of teachers in text transmission, it is concluded that in this high-quality classroom activity, teachers' good classroom language can stimulate and activate students' thinking and learning enthusiasm, so that students can express their true ideas. According to the teaching content and the specific situation of students, teachers choose appropriate and reasonable lead-in activities.

Finally, through the research on the role of teachers in the lead-in activity of this high-quality classroom competition, three teaching enlightenment are obtained: effective lead-in, teachers' language literacy and teachers' role optimization.

## Acknowledgment

This project is supported by “The evolution of teachers’

role and the construction of core quality in private Applied Undergraduate Education” (No. 2021GXJK316) (2021 Higher Education planning project of Guangdong Provincial Department of Education).

## References

- [1] Gower, R. & S. Walter. Teaching Practice Handbook. London: Heinemann. Hymes, D, 1983.
- [2] Harmer J. The practice of language education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- [3] Slavin, R. Educational Psychology. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004.
- [4] Turney, C. et al. Sydney Micro Skills. Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1975.
- [5] Voller P. Introduction: Does the Teacher have a role in autonomy learning. In Benson P and Voller P ( eds. ). Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning. London: Longman, 1997.
- [6] Willis, J. A. Framework for Task-based Learning. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1996.