

# Construction of College English Ecological Classroom from the Perspective of Student-centered Theory

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**Abstract:** According to the theory of constructivism and the principle of educational ecology, this paper mainly puts forward the constructive strategy of student-centered College English ecological classroom model, which has practical significance for improving the quality of College English classroom teaching and reforming the current college English teaching model.

**Keywords:** Constructivism, College English, Ecological classroom.

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## 1. Introduction

The study of educational ecology in China began in the 1980s. The book of Ecology of education written by Dingfu Wu in 1990 is the first monograph on ecology of education in mainland, China. The author transplanted the perspective of environmental ecology into the macro education system and analyzed the impact of ecological environment and ecological factors on education by using the theory of ecology. Mr. Kai Ren published a monograph with the same name as Ecology of education in 1992, who tried to use the principles and methods of ecology to further analyze the phenomenon of education., Mr. Guorui Fan published a monograph on ecology of education in 2000, which made a breakthrough on the achievements of the first two scholars in terms of depth and breadth. In 2006, Mr. Linfu Wu's ecological management of education systematically discussed related subjects, environment, information and classroom ecology. The above works studied the phenomenon of education from the perspective of ecology, broadened the vision of education research, expanded the field of education research, enriched the tools of education research, and improved the validity of education research.

The reform of college English teaching began at the beginning of this century. The higher education Department of the Ministry of Education issued the new college English teaching requirements, which reformed the nature and objectives of college English teaching, teaching requirements, curriculum setting and teaching mode in order to adapt to the new situation of the development of higher education and deepen the teaching reform in August 2007. Professor Jianlin Chen of Shanghai international studies University interpreted the new curriculum requirements as internationalization of teaching philosophy, normalization of multimedia teaching, ecologicalization of teaching environment. He also pointed out that the reform of ecological college English curriculum was an important part of college English teaching reform and the development direction of college English classroom teaching reform. After that, articles on ecological classroom construction of college English were published one after another. For example: Pan Zhao's "construction of college English ecological classroom model", Meihua Xiong's "overall teaching exploration of ecological foreign language classroom", Yu Tao's "creation of college English ecological classroom" and so on. The arguments of these scholars are of great significance to the construction of college English

ecological classroom. However, in general, these studies focus on the macro level of educational ecological research, and the discussions on the micro level is insufficient, which requires further exploration on how to implement the concept of ecological education in the actual classroom teaching. In addition, the relevant research does not consider the value and significance of ecology to educational research from the perspective of pedagogy because researching from the standpoint of pedagogy is the starting point and destination of educational ecological research.

This paper, from the perspective of constructivism and on the basis of explaining the concept of education ecology and ecological classroom, puts forward specific strategies for constructing student-centered ecological classroom in college English so as to improve the quality of college English classroom teaching and provide a useful attempt to further promote the current reform of college English teaching.

## 2. The Basic Connotation of Constructivism Theory

Constructivism is an important branch of cognitive theory, which was first proposed by Swiss psychologist Piaget in the 1960s. Psychologists and educators like Vygotsky, Ausubel, Bruner and other ones enriched and developed the theory of constructivism and had formed different branches later. However, its basic viewpoint is consistent: constructivism theory holds that the premise of cognition is the conflict between existing concepts and new information, and an unbalanced process of the individual experiences. Learning is a dynamic process of active construction. Knowledge is not taught by teachers, but acquired by means of meaning construction by learners with the help of others including teachers and learning partners in a certain social and cultural context. In other words, the acquisition of knowledge depends on the learner's ability to construct the meaning of the knowledge based on his own experience, rather than on the learner's ability to memorize and recite what the teacher has taught. Constructivism theory emphasizes the initiative, sociality and situation of learning. It is emphasized that the teaching should be student-centered under the guidance of teachers, and the situation which is conducive to the students' construction of meaning should be created, so that the learning can take place in a situation which is similar to the real situation, so as to solve the problems students encounter in real life.

### **3. Educational Ecology and Ecological Classroom**

German biologist and philosopher Haeckel first proposed the concept of ecology in 1866, which refers to the interaction between organisms and their living environment. At the beginning of the 20th century, the biology-based ecosystem generalized or penetrated all the research fields of natural science, social science and humanities, thus enabling people to study natural, social and human problems including the problems of higher education from a new perspective and with new methods. Ecology of education considers education as an ecosystem, and studies the essential and necessary laws of the essential and inevitable connection between education and the external environment as well as the basic laws between various links and levels within education including macro and micro structures. The ecological classroom is the microscopic structure of the educational ecosystem which is composed of the ecological factors such as teachers, students and the teaching environment. It is a student-oriented multi-dimensional interactive and open teaching ecological model. So a healthy ecology of classroom must follow the law of ecological chain, keep the balance of all factors of classroom ecology, cultivate students' ability of independent learning and lifelong learning, achieve the sustainable development goals, and make education truly personalized and lifelong.

### **4. The Construction of Student-centered College English Ecological Class**

#### **4.1. Establish the Teaching Goal of Life**

The ecological view basically means the view of life, which is the organic. The ultimate goal of ecological class is to let the living entity grow and develop naturally, harmoniously and freely under good conditions. For a long time, the traditional English classroom focus on imparting language knowledge as their own responsibility, and putting the passing of related exams as the goal. The examination-oriented education model makes English classroom lose its vitality, reduces students' interest and motivation, destroys the balance of classroom ecology, and greatly affects the quality of education. Construction of benign ecological classroom must first develop diverse teaching goal of sustainable development, so we should transfer the training mode by promoting the traditional language skills training mode to the cultivation of intercultural communicative competence, expanding the training mode from imparting language knowledge to the cultivation of the learning strategy, so as to promote the multi-level and comprehensive development of students, and achieve the goals of sustainable development.

#### **4.2. Select Good Teaching Contents to Improve Students' Learning Motivation**

Teaching content is the core of the classroom as well as an important factor for the success of education. For a long time, college English classes only pay attention to the imparting of teaching materials and the completion of teaching plans on time, which violates the development needs of students, disconnects with the needs of the society, and seriously frustrates the learning enthusiasm of students. As the master of the class who has the absolute authority, the teacher completely ignores the student's interest, the need, the emotion and the cognition activity rule. The new type of

classroom must pay attention to the selection of teaching content, which should not only meet the requirements of the society but also should select proper teaching materials by putting college students as the center according to the actual English level of college students, interests and needs, so as to stimulate the learning motivation and enthusiasm of college students, strengthen the autonomy and responsibility of college students.

#### **4.2.1. Infiltration of Cultural Teaching**

Language is a part of culture, which not only reflects culture but also is the carrier of culture. The inseparability of language and culture determines that learning a language requires learning culture firstly. Therefore, in English learning, teachers should strengthen the teaching of cultural content for students while teaching knowledge of language and training students in listening, speaking, reading and writing, so as to effectively improve the effect of English learning. In the English class, teachers should introduce the history, culture and customs of the English-speaking countries by combining the learned materials. Teachers can ask students to search and sort out related information in the preview of materials, or ask students to report to the class in groups by comparing with our native culture, which not only enhance students' learning autonomy but also enhance their interest in English learning.

#### **4.2.2. Rational Use of Network Resources**

With the rapid development of computer technology, computer technology is more and more widely used in classroom teaching. At present, some college English classes adopt the demonstrative multimedia mode of teaching. This mode of English teaching can effectively reduce the time of blackboard writing, improve the efficiency of classroom time, enrich teaching resources and make up for the shortage of traditional teaching. Outside the classroom, college students can get in touch with original English movies, English songs, English radio and English TV programs. The students can improve their interest in English learning and application ability by participating in online forums, sharing English learning experience and fun, and using English instant chat. Especially, the appreciation of the original English movies can not only make students learn the pure pronunciation and authentic expression but also make them feel the foreign culture and improve their intercultural communication ability.

#### **4.2.3. Combination of Internal and External Activities**

Learning a language requires creating situations and practicing it again and again. So the implement of the second classroom should be taken actively in addition to classroom learning, teachers should encourage students to take an active part in all kinds of English activities, such as the English recitation contest, the spoken English competition, English dubbing contest, English corner etc., let the students realize autonomous learning and the organic combination of classroom teaching by creating the language environment of a variety of forms, strengthening the practical application of language and culture, which Not only enrich the students' spare time life but also enhance their interest in learning.

### **4.3. Create An Ecological Classroom Environment**

Classroom teaching environment is the combination of subjective and objective conditions and forces which are necessary for classroom teaching activities. Ecological classroom environment includes good classroom physical

environment and reasonable ecological niche of teachers and students. Classroom physical environment includes classroom environment elements such as the color of classroom, light and lighting, noise, temperature, and class size. A quiet teaching environment is the basic condition of teaching, so the noise should be minimized. The light of the classroom should be bright and downy, the color setting of the classroom should be sweet and comfortable, the creation of a kind of cheerful psychology atmosphere for the teacher and student is necessary. In addition, due to the particularity of language learning, small-class teaching is more conducive to giving play to students' autonomy and participation, so class size should be controlled and small-class teaching should be implemented. In addition, the reasonable ecological niche of teachers and students is also the basis for creating an ecological classroom environment in addition to a good classroom physical environment. In the ecological teacher-student relationship, teachers and students are equal in personality and they are interactive in communication activities. Students are the subject of learning. Classroom teaching is a process in which students take the initiative to acquire knowledge and cultivate their ability under the guidance of teachers. Teachers are the organizers, guides and promoters of students' learning. Only when students are fully respected and put on an equal footing can they have better exchanges of knowledge, feelings and thoughts with students, so as to make teaching and learning mutually beneficial.

#### **4.4. Embody the Student-centered Teaching Method**

Both constructivist cognitive theory and ecological classroom theory emphasize the process of student-centered teaching. The student-centered teaching mode is a subversion of the traditional teacher-led teaching mode. College students' learning autonomy in traditional class is not high and they rely too much on teachers and textbooks. This dilemma requires the teacher to create the situation to arouse the necessary psychological state, concept, emotion, motivation of the students in learning, and stimulate their independent learning behavior. As the German educator Diesterwego said: the art of teaching does not consist in imparting skills, but consist in inspiring, awakening and inspiring. For example, in the comprehensive course of college English teaching related to the aliens, students are divided into groups before lecturing, and each group makes up an English story about an encounter with aliens. The story must include time of occurrence, place of occurrence, how to occur and what to occur when they met the aliens, so as to let students give full play to their imagination and creativity. Then the teacher asks the speaker of each group to tell the story or arranges the group to act out the story during the class. Finally, lets everyone choose the most creative story and the best acting group and so on. They can use the topics they are interested in to give play to their learning initiative, improve their learning motivation and learning ability, and enhance their ability of teamwork by setting the situation for students in this way. The student-centered classroom needs to provide students with more structures at the beginning of the course, and then gradually shift the responsibility to the students, the teacher should allow them to do their own activities and solve their own problems ultimately. Another example such as the text of *Dad Wise*, it is a short play. Before learning the text, the teacher should firstly introduce students the knowledge about drama, such as various classification of drama, the script structure,

etc., and then divide the students into three groups and let students learn the text carefully, analysis the instruction of stage, ponder the language of each character, and then show the three games out respectively in the form of stage play. The students study the text carefully, and take the initiative to look up the dictionary or ask for help when they meet difficulties in understanding the expression in order to perform the content of the play accurately and vividly. All the students show high enthusiasm, most of them have recited the lines, and some of them add something of their own to the performance. This kind of learning stimulated by the inner thirst for knowledge reflects positive metacognition by experiencing, reinterpreting information, cooperating and interacting with others. Through this cooperative learning approach, the more students learn to solve different types of problems, the more they will think about how to solve problems, and the more likely they are to transfer the acquired knowledge and skills to real life situations when they encounter real problems.

#### **4.5. Establish An Objective and Reasonable Evaluation System**

Teaching evaluation is an important part of college English course, which is the feedback and test of teaching effect. However, in the past, the evaluation method of measuring students' learning effect by only using a final paper or grades of English certificate is one-sided and unitary, which cannot truly reflect students' comprehensive level and it is not conducive to the improvement of students' learning enthusiasm. Therefore, a comprehensive, objective and reasonable evaluation system is crucial to the construction of ecological college English teaching model. The objective, reasonable and scientific evaluation system should be a dynamic, developing evaluation system, and should be an organic combination of formative evaluation and summative evaluation. In particular, more attention should be paid to the neglected formative assessment of students' learning process. A learning file for each student can be set up to record the student's academic performance, class performance, attendance, homework completion, etc., so as to investigate each student comprehensively in different ways. In addition, timely communication with students and feedback of students' learning results are beneficial for both teachers and students to adjust teaching or learning strategies and jointly improve teaching results. It is beneficial to establish a student-centered, interactive and cooperative ecological classroom by establishing such a scientific and benign evaluation system.

### **5. Conclusion**

Ecological classroom construction of college English under the perspective of student-centered theory not only explore the objective laws of college English teaching in ecological theory, but also achieve the goal of taking the student as the center by combining the reality of classroom teaching in each link of classroom ecology, so as to cultivate students' autonomous learning and the ability to solve practical problems and improve the effect of college English teaching.

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