

Research on EAP Courses in Application-oriented Undergraduate Universities

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Abstract: Application-oriented undergraduate universities are developing rapidly, and high-quality application-oriented talents with “engineering, intelligence and management” characteristics have become the general goal of personnel training in such colleges. The construction of EAP course is not only the top priority of college English teaching reform, but also carries the important task of cultivating international vision and cross-cultural communication ability. Through the analysis of the development of application-oriented undergraduate universities and their EAP courses, this paper deeply investigates the necessity of EAP course construction, and proposes the path of the construction, which will provide theoretical research value for EAP teaching and college English reform, and explore a new mode for application-oriented undergraduate universities personnel training.

Keywords: Application-oriented undergraduate university; EAP course

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1. Introduction

The goal of China’s Education Modernization 2035 puts forward new requirements and standards for personnel training in application-oriented undergraduate universities, and also points out the direction of reform and development for college English teaching in application-oriented undergraduate universities. As the most widely used language in the world and an important tool for international exchanges, English is the most important medium for China to communicate with other countries and regions in science, technology, culture and other fields, and an indispensable language tool in China’s continuous deepening of opening-up. College English can help cultivate and reserve a large number of talents with a global vision, international awareness, intercultural communication ability, understanding of international rules, and proficiency in international negotiations. It can provide sufficient high-quality talents to promote national reform and opening up, social and economic development, improve China’s ability to fulfill international obligations and participate in global governance, and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The principal problem in foreign language teaching has changed into the contradiction between students’ demand for professional study and research in English and the fact that college English teaching can not fully meet the demand. College English teaching must be placed within the framework of national strategic needs. EAP is an indispensable language teaching method to improve students’ language skills and scientific research ability in major fields, meet the requirements of universities’ educational positioning and discipline construction, and cultivate students’ strong international communication ability in professional fields. For application-oriented undergraduate universities, academic English ability has become the core standard for cultivating talents with innovative thinking ability and global vision.

2. Current situation and research of application-oriented undergraduate universities

Application-oriented undergraduate is a kind of undergraduate institution which is different from academic university. Most of

these institutions are converted from local ordinary undergraduate universities. The construction of application-oriented undergraduate is a major project established in the field of higher education after the revitalization plan of higher education in central and western China and the construction of “Double first-class”. It aims to encourage and guide various kinds of colleges and universities to develop their characteristics in different directions and fields and strive to be first-class. This project aims to further implement the innovation-driven development strategy, support local ordinary undergraduate universities’ transformation into application-oriented universities. It focuses on supporting colleges and universities, which actively explore and play a leading role in the transformation and reform, to strengthen the construction of internship, experiment and training environment, platform and base, encourage the participation of industrial enterprises.

Only when application-oriented undergraduate universities are exposed to the trend of economic development, can they break through the bottleneck of resource supply and realize their own take-off while serving national and regional development. Exploring the academic English teaching system based on local characteristics will enable cultivating students’ academic English ability. The transformation of local undergraduate universities to application-oriented undergraduate universities is a comprehensive upgrading and updating of educational philosophy and behavior, and a revolutionary change. With the improvement of talent ability as the core of training, we should promote the close connection between the supply side and the industrial demand side of talent training for application-oriented undergraduate universities, actively explore a transformation and development path suitable for their own development, highlighting their own advantages and characteristics, and build a platform for application-oriented talent training. Following the principle of integration of industry and education, comprehensive and collaborative development, the construction of a diversified and collaborative education model needs to be guided by serving regional cultural industries and involve the government, relevant industries, enterprises, schools and other parties. For example, Shanxi Datong University, as an application-oriented local undergraduate university, Digital media technology specialty is constructed from six aspects: multiple collaborative education platform, personnel training objective, curriculum system, teaching staff, practical teaching system and system mechanism. It is of great reference value to promote the organic connection of education chain, talent chain, industrial chain and innovation chain and realize the scientific development of Chinese digital media technology personnel training. (Zhao Huiqin, Chen Xiaohui, 2018)

3. Current situation and research of EAP courses

EAP(English for Academic Purpose) is not only an important way to cultivate students’ academic ability and accomplishment, but also an essential way to cultivate international interdisciplinary talents. EAP(English for Academic Purpose) combines specific subject content with language teaching objectives, focuses on solving language problems encountered by students in the course of subject knowledge learning, concentrates on cultivating major-related English ability, and helps students to understand and master general academic English knowledge and basic English expressions, which will improve their ability to communicate professionally and work in English.

Under the background of accelerating the development of classification, connotation and characteristics of universities, EAP, as one of the important components of ESP (English for Specific Purpose), is starting to flourish in the field of English teaching. It offers specialized courses which are tailored to meet the specific needs of learners. As a result, it can develop the English learning skills learners need to succeed in a university environment. EAP(English for Academic Purpose) is essentially a branch of applied linguistics that deals with the teaching of English as it relates to learning purposes, including English for Specific Academic Purpose (ESAP) and English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP). With the rapid economic development and the increase of diversified and refined needs of discipline construction in the society, EAP teaching becomes more and more prominent in the higher education in our country. Various forms of EAP teaching courses have been widely opened in colleges and universities.

With the deepening of globalization, there are more and more occasions for college students to listen to academic lectures, participate in academic discussions, write academic papers and communicate with peers in English. This change has attracted the attention of the foreign language circle, especially many scholars represented by CaiJigang (2021), on EAP(English for Academic Purpose). A voice for the existence and value of academic English. Gong Rong (2018) tried to establish and compare and interpret the concept pedigrees of EAP teaching in China and abroad from a holistic perspective, surveyed the development pattern of EAP teaching and research for undergraduate students in the United Kingdom, the United States and China, predicted the development prospect of EAP teaching in China, and proposed the suitability of grassroots teachers’ participation in the construction of EAP teaching theories. Wang Chunyan(2019), based on the curriculum content of academic English from 20 universities around the world, points out that in the context of the internationalization of higher education, it is very important to cultivate students’

language ability for international academic activities. Li Jianjun, Miao Xin and Zhang Yuliang (2022) believe that in the context of building a community with a shared future for mankind, telling Chinese stories well through academic discourse is an important guarantee for Chinese culture to go global, a basic dimension to highlight China's discourse system, and an effective form to shape the image of the Party and the country. Intelligent selection and teaching application of EAP reading materials (Jin Tan, Li Shiwei, Liu Fengkai, 2021).

EAP is the "demand-driven" language teaching originated from the academic environment of universities, and the identity of students is set to "students in the disciplines" (de Chazal 2014). It aims to help learners adapt to English-medium learning and research (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons 2002). It first appeared in Britain and the United States, focusing on cultivating students' language ability in professional learning. Since the 1960s, academic English has experienced a process from the cultivation of register ability, rhetorical ability and learning skills to the cultivation of disciplinary culture and critical literacy. Academic English is a branch of applied linguistics that includes ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purpose) and EGSP (English for General Academic Purpose). (Cai Jigang, 2018)

4. Research on EAP Curriculum Construction in application-oriented undergraduate universities

Application-oriented undergraduate universities should focus on the needs of high-quality talents in transformation development and innovative talents, and devote themselves to cultivating application-oriented talents with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, the United States and labor. It is essential to adhere to the people-oriented connotation of development, adhere to the industry as a necessity, take the initiative to serve development, and adhere to the integration of industry and education, comprehensive and coordinated development. According to the nature and characteristics of application-oriented undergraduate universities, emphasis should be placed on strengthening the construction of school-running orientation and governance mechanism, the mode of integration of production and education, faculty, teaching resources, personnel training, student development, scientific research and social services, cultural inheritance and innovation, international exchanges and cooperation, school-running characteristics and other aspects.

The author collected relevant literature of application-oriented undergraduate universities and identified research gaps. At the same time, I searched relevant research materials of EAP, carefully sorted out, summarized and analyzed them, and mastered detailed data from aspects of teaching, demands and teachers through questionnaires and interviews. There is a natural connection between EAP and majors. The interdisciplinary research method is adopted to link English teaching and majors and penetrate each other, which not only meets the requirements of the College English Teaching Guide, but also achieves the goal of cultivating applied international talents. It is one of the tasks of higher education to guide and promote the construction of local universities towards application-oriented construction, and the curriculum is the core element of application-oriented personnel training. The provision of EAP courses in colleges and universities can not only meet the national strategic needs, serve the national reform and opening up and economic and social development, but also meet the needs of students in professional learning, international exchange, further study, employment.

The construction of EAP courses should first find out its own positioning, strengthen the value guidance, and reflect the moral cultivation of people as the fundamental requirement. When setting curriculum objectives, we should grasp the cooperation of government, industry, university and research to educate people, and embody the combination of learning and application in the integration of production and education. In today's information technology era, artificial intelligence provides rich teaching resources for higher education. While information technology enables and enhances efficiency, it ensures the normalization of dynamic updating of courses. The main force of curriculum construction is the teacher, a strong teacher team is the necessary condition to ensure the curriculum construction, optimize the teacher structure, improve the professional quality and ability of teachers, coupled with a reasonable evaluation system, so that the construction of teachers frontier. In terms of course content, the author believes that it must be based on the background of new English and closely combined with the new engineering major to create the integration of curriculums, majors, disciplines, platforms and services, and finally realize talent training, namely, docking national strategies, regional development and industry needs, upholding inheritance and innovation, and integrating into international exchanges.

To set up EAP courses in application-oriented undergraduate universities, we need to make all-out efforts to seek common development, build a joint team to build a platform, and finally realize shared achievements. With the help of big data technology and artificial intelligence technology, EAP course learning and teaching platform are built to encourage students to use information

technology to obtain relevant resources and cultivate students' information technology literacy. Through innovative resources, innovative information and innovative teams, a benign interactive inter-school community, teacher community and industry-university-research community can be formed. The construction of EAP curriculum system must reflect the application, speciality, demand, practice and innovation. The construction of EAP teaching resources must be scientific, cross-cutting and pioneering, and deeply integrate engineering disciplines, technical disciplines and basic disciplines to realize inter-discipline circulation. Strengthen the linkage between schools, governments, enterprises and research institutes in all dimensions to realize the circulation inside and outside the school.

5. Conclusion

However, for a long time, colleges and universities have not paid enough attention to ESP course. How to effectively reverse the bias of EAP course from top to bottom and completely change the deep-rooted weak course has become one of the difficulties. In addition, it is also a big problem for application-oriented undergraduate universities to consider how to reflect regional characteristics and serve national strategies in English teaching, establish a scientific and complete EAP curriculum system, and promote the application of scientific research and serve local areas according to their talent training standards and students' needs.

In the new period of realizing the leap-forward development of higher education and the popularization of higher education, applied undergraduate university plays an important role in our higher education system, and has become an indispensable force in the construction of higher education great power. In recent years, on the basis of normalizing major withdrawal to achieve "lean down", major adjustment and optimization 2.0 version with the goal of "strengthening" has been launched to sort out and refine existing and potential application-oriented majors in colleges and universities, promote the establishment of application-oriented professional clusters that meet the needs of industrial development, and promote colleges and universities to build majors relying on industries and industrial colleges relying on majors. We will deepen the integration of industry and education and strengthen the ability to cultivate talents that support industrial revitalization.

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