

# Practical Study on Cultivating Students' Critical Thinking in College English Teaching

Xiaomei Sun

HeiLongJiang University of Technology, 158100

---

**Abstract:** With the development and continuous progress of society, corresponding reforms are also being carried out in education, and the traditional exam oriented education methods can no longer meet the needs of current education development. In the current process of education reform, with the goal of quality education, we continuously focus on improving students' comprehensive qualities and abilities. Higher education institutions are the last period of learning for many students. Afterwards, they will enter society. Once college students enter society, they will not only need to present their knowledge on paper, but also need to apply the knowledge they have learned to practice and use it as a weapon to solve difficulties and challenges. Therefore, critical thinking has become a hot topic in many educational developments, and it is necessary to attach importance to the cultivation of critical thinking among college students in the current educational process. As one of the important courses for students to learn, college English has made critical thinking a key aspect of teacher education during the reform process.

**Keywords:** English Teaching in Colleges and Universities; Critical Thinking Ability; Practical Research

---

## Introduction

With the development of globalization, China's economy and society have made corresponding high-quality progress. The trend of globalization has led to an increasing demand for talent from countries and society. Under the influence of traditional exam oriented education in China, parents attach great importance to education and invest more and more accordingly, so the number of talents in China will also tend to increase, making the competition for talents very fierce now. Therefore, in the process of social development, the demand for talents is also increasing. A true talent not only needs to have pure professional and technical knowledge in a certain aspect, but also has some comprehensive and inferior subject knowledge. Now, what is more important is the comprehensive quality of the corresponding talents. Critical thinking ability refers to the ability of corresponding talents to extract effective information from complex environments when facing complex problems, and to carefully study and analyze it to find a good solution to problems. This is also a necessary skill for many talents in spiritual self-improvement.

## 1. Overview of Critical Thinking Ability

Critical thinking ability is an important ability that China will focus on cultivating in higher education in the 21st century. In the process of carrying out higher education reform, it is pointed out that comprehensive education should be provided to students, utilizing existing educational resources and measures to cultivate their comprehensive qualities, and enabling students to actively innovate and develop the knowledge they have learned during their growth, thus truly transforming the knowledge they have learned into an ability to solve practical problems. Critical thinking ability refers to the ability of students to use their knowledge and skills to scientifically analyze and identify specific solutions to practical problems. When students have excellent thinking ability, they can quickly analyze any problem and come up with corresponding solutions, and sometimes even come up with unexpected solutions. Simply put, critical thinking ability refers to enabling students to face any difficulties and problems in the process of development and conduct systematic analysis<sup>[1]</sup>.

## **2. Necessity of Cultivating Students' Critical Thinking Ability in College English Teaching**

### **2.1 Needs of the development of the times**

Now, with the trend of globalization sweeping the world, China's international status has further significantly improved in the process of global development. In the process of international communication, the study of Chinese foreign languages is particularly important. The demand for talents with foreign languages is increasing in the current era. Therefore, in the current education process, it is also necessary to strengthen students' language recognition ability, in order to cultivate their critical thinking ability and enhance their competitiveness in the workplace in the era of fierce talent competition. Moreover, with the continuous changes in the economic development situation of our country, it is required to carry out certain reforms and innovations in the education program for talents. Not only should we further improve the knowledge structure of talent cultivation, but also enhance their moral literacy and interests. Therefore, cultivating students' critical thinking ability in college English teaching is a trend in the current era<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.2 Needs of English teaching in colleges and universities**

In the context of educational reform in the new era, it is necessary to make corresponding reforms in English teaching in universities. In the process of English teaching reform, traditional English teaching has led to the phenomenon of high scores but low abilities. Many students have strong written English test abilities, but poor grades in oral expression. They focus more on learning relevant exam taking skills, but do not truly consider English as one of their skills, nor are they able to express what they want to express with the knowledge they have learned. When answering real oral questions, students usually have a blank mind and do not know how to communicate and answer questions in English. The current situation of traditional college English teaching has led to a lack of individual thinking ability among many students, which needs to be improved.

## **3. Strategies for Cultivating Students' Critical Thinking Ability in College English Teaching**

### **3.1 Revising the objectives of college English teaching**

In the process of college English learning now, many students only follow the learning mode developed in high school before, without forming a specific plan for their future development and how to use English skills. Therefore, in the process of college English teaching, schools need to make students clearly realize the importance of English skills and make corresponding teaching goals. This allows students to truly gain in the learning process. The teaching objectives designed in the process of educational reform not only affect students' learning status during the learning process, but also have a significant impact on the teaching content and methods used by teachers in the actual teaching process. As a public and foundational course, English is something that every major student in a university needs to learn. However, in the actual teaching process, many English teachers lead students in simple word translation, and many teachers do not attach importance to grammar, let alone practicing students' oral English in class. In the process of learning English, students simply aim to pass the CET-4 and CET-6 exam, and do not excessively consider English skills as a skill in their future work and development. Therefore, this requires universities to modify the teaching objectives of college English during the teaching process, allowing teachers to use innovative means to cultivate students' innovative learning abilities. We also need to make students feel the importance of English learning in class, with a focus on improving their oral ability, exercising their critical thinking ability, and enabling them to recognize the importance of English learning and feel the application of English in practical life, thereby enhancing their critical thinking ability<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **3.2 Mobilizing students' autonomy and enthusiasm**

English is a relatively difficult subject for many students. After entering university, students' autonomy becomes stronger, and teachers do not overly emphasize students' learning, which leads to an increasing number of students losing interest in learning English. This requires college English teachers to appropriately encourage and motivate students to learn English during the teaching process, and to raise some questions in the classroom or engage in some oral practice to improve students' thinking ability. In the teaching process, teachers can use innovative methods to establish critical topics for students to discuss and analyze, communicate in English, or encourage students to explain stories in English. This can not only exercise students' English language skills, but also improve their English critical thinking ability. Moreover, in the process of course learning, teachers should actively record students' performance in the classroom and include their classroom performance in the final grade. This can greatly stimulate students' initiative and enthusiasm in the classroom.

## Conclusions:

In summary, in the new era of development, there are certain problems in the process of English teaching in universities. It is necessary to reform the corresponding teaching objectives in the context of the new talent demand development, fully realizing the importance of cultivating students' critical thinking ability in college English teaching. It is required to establish new teaching objectives for talent cultivation in college English, require teachers to innovate teaching methods in the teaching process, actively encourage and attract students' interest in English learning, and guide students to cultivate their thinking through classroom activities designed with some questions and innovative methods in the curriculum, so as to better promote the improvement of contemporary students' critical thinking ability, meet the comprehensive needs of society for talents and lay a good foundation for students' future development.

## References:

- [1] Zheng Zening. Exploring the Construction of a Model for Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in College English Teaching [J] Journal of Jiangxi Electric Power Vocational and Technical College, 2019, 32(01): 28-29.
- [2] Wang Congying. Further Discussion on the Importance of Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in College English Teaching [J] English Square (Later Issue), 2017(4): 63-66.
- [3] Zhou Beibei, Zhang Leilei. Analysis of Strategies for Cultivating Critical Thinking Ability in College English Learning [J] Journal of Hubei Second Normal University, 2019, 36(03): 87-90.