

# The cultivation of "5Cs" key competences in college English learning

Rouxin Wen, Zhao Feng

Department of Basic Sciences, Dalian Naval Academy, Dalian, China.

29896274@qq.com

**Abstract.** 5Cs Framework for Twenty-first Century Key Competences" includes: cultural competence, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Higher education shoulders the responsibility of helping students to improve their 5 key competences. Because of the humanistic nature, College English course can and should integrate cultivating students' 5 key competences into one of its objectives through reforming the learning material, changing the teaching methods, improving learning design and evaluation.

**Keywords:** 5 key competences, cultural competence, critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration.

Cultivating citizens' Twenty-first Century key competences is a common pursuit of global education. The China Education Innovation Research Institute of Beijing Normal University has proposed the "5Cs Framework for Twenty-first Century Key Competences", which includes: cultural competence, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

School is a place for a country's education system to achieve its educational goals. Therefore, in order to cultivate citizens' key competences, integrating these qualities into the school curriculum system through curriculum reform has become an important way. The primary goal of education is not just to enable students to perform well in school, but to help them live better after graduation. Therefore, to get these qualities, students have to learn and apply relevant knowledge and skills in real life situations, which should work together with the subject curriculum content to support the cultivation of competences.

College English course has both humanistic and instrumental nature. In terms of instrumental nature. College English course is an improvement and expansion of English teaching in the basic education stage, with the main purpose of further improving students' English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation abilities. In terms of humanistic nature, the core is human being-oriented, and the 5Cs key competences should be organically integrated into the learning content.

## 1. "5Cs" key competences

The "5Cs" key competences refer to cultural competence, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

### 1.1 Cultural competence

Cultural competence serves as a bridge within 5Cs framework. Culture is the material and spiritual achievement created by humans in the long-term historical development process. Cultural understanding and inheritance competence refers to the process and behavior of people's cognition and understanding, inheritance and sublation, development and innovation of culture. For our country, an individual with cultural understanding and inheritance competence can identify and inherit the excellent culture of the China on the basis of understanding. They can view and understand the commonalities and differences between different cultures with an equal and respectful attitude, and have values, moral ethics, behavioral habits, etc. that reflect the characteristics of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. This competence can be

further concretized into three elements: cultural understanding, cultural identity, and cultural practice.

In a sense, there is a certain progressive relationship between the three: without a basic understanding of the manifestations and values contained in a certain culture, it is impossible to form true identification and love, nor can it be truly put into practice. Cultural understanding and inheritance should be based on the excellent traditional Chinese culture, with a focus on the height of a community with a shared future for mankind. Following the principle of "not forgetting the origin, absorbing foreign elements, and facing the future", we should understand and absorb the excellent parts and positive factors in different countries and ethnic cultures, and promote the creative development and innovative transformation of culture.

## **1.2 Critical thinking**

Critical thinking is the core competence that individuals need to adapt to future social development. An individual with critical thinking is not only able to constantly question, analyze rationally, and reflect on different situations, draw reasonable conclusions or propose effective solutions, but also to carefully consider the views of others and respect their right to challenge their own views. Specifically, critical thinking includes four elements: questioning and criticism, analytical reasoning, comprehensive generation, and reflective evaluation.

The four elements of critical thinking have their respective focuses and are interrelated. From the perspective of mindset, critical thinking begins with critical questioning of information and viewpoints, and finally returns to a tolerant understanding of dissent, tending to consider problems from multiple perspectives. From the perspective of the thinking process, analysis and argumentation focus on dividing the research object into different parts for examination, and using evidence for reasoning; comprehensive generation focuses on balancing and integrating various parts or attributes, making decisions, and generating solutions; reflection evaluation runs through the entire process of questioning, criticizing, analyzing, and synthesizing, and monitors and regulates it to make thinking more rational and cautious.

## **1.3 Innovation**

Innovation is the fundamental driving force for the progress of human civilization and social development, and is the core element for enhancing individual competitiveness. An individual with "innovation" competence can utilize relevant information and resources to generate novel and valuable ideas, solutions, products, or outcomes. Innovative competence includes three elements: innovative personality, innovative thinking, and innovative practice.

Innovative personality focuses on emotional factors to solve the problem of students' willingness or unwillingness; Innovative thinking focuses on internal thinking processes and methods, improving students' ability; Innovative practice focuses on explicit behavioral engagement, solving the problem of "do it or not". Innovation is the result of the synergistic interaction of these three elements. These three form a closed loop and mutually promote, forming three aspects of innovative competence. The higher the level of each aspect, the higher the ultimate level of innovation competence they constitute.

## **1.4 Communication**

Communication refers to the sum of the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that communicators possess to effectively communicate.

An individual with good communication competence is able to effectively communicate information, thoughts, emotions, and values with others or groups through both verbal and nonverbal media in order to achieve specific communication goals. This competence includes three elements: empathy, deep understanding, and effective expression.

## 1.5 Coordination

Coordination refers to the ability of individual students to actively assume their responsibilities based on their identification with the goals and core values of the group or team, and to flexibly make compromises, resolve differences or problems through equal consultation with other team members in accordance with the principle of mutual respect and mutual assistance, achieving common goals and promoting common development. For this interpretation, it can be further concretized into the following three elements: vision identification, responsibility sharing, and negotiation for progress. Starting from vision recognition, implementing through responsibility sharing, and achieving cooperation goals and vision through consultation and mutual progress. The three elements complement and unify organically, forming a closed circle for the development of coordination.

## 2. The cultivation of core competences of the "5Cs" framework in college English learning

### 2.1 Combining learning content with the five elements of the key competences

In college English learning, putting students at the center and promoting the development of students' self-learning ability is the direction, but the guidance and auxiliary role of teachers cannot be ignored, especially in the construction of the key competences when learning college English. Special attention should be paid to the teachers' guidance, and through the selection of learning content, students can be improved in various aspects such as knowledge, ability, and quality.

2.1.1 The content of college English learning should be combined with cultural knowledge to cultivate students' cultural awareness.

Many contents in college English textbooks involve cultural material, and international and domestic cultural information can be extracted for comparison. Then, students are encouraged to compare different cultures, discover cultural differences between China and foreign countries, evaluate and judge their strengths and weaknesses, help students establish correct value orientations, and achieve awareness and understanding of different cultures.

In the classroom, it is necessary to highlight the main role of students, strengthen interaction with them, encourage students to learn independently, enhance their learning abilities, and cultivate thinking capabilities.

2.1.2 Utilize modern teaching methods to help students improve their language proficiency.

In the learning of college English, modern learning methods should be actively used, such as the use of multimedia voice tools, to help correct incorrect pronunciation habits and improve students' oral expression ability. At the same time, some groups can be set up to use valuable topics from textbooks to encourage students to engage in discussions and engage in oral training, in order to effectively improve students' language abilities.

2.1.3 Learning design should revolve around the five competences

In the design process of college English learning, the main focus is to closely integrate learning activities with the five core competences. This can effectively ensure the design of learning activities, promote the improvement of students' key abilities such as language and learning, and also help students develop thinking competence and establish correct cultural awareness.

1) During the warm-up stage, emphasis is placed on cultivating students' language abilities.

2) In the preview stage, emphasis is placed on cultivating students' thinking qualities and cultural awareness.

3) During the learning stage, improve students' learning abilities.

4) Using mind maps to help students effectively review and improve their comprehensive abilities in various aspects.

#### 2.1.4 Learning evaluation promotes the improvement of five competences

In college English learning, under the framework of key competences, new evaluation methods should be established.

1) Develop new evaluation standards based on actual learning situations.

New evaluation standards need to be established to increase the assessment of students' language ability, learning ability, thinking ability, and cultural awareness based on the requirements of the five core competences, in order to demonstrate their comprehensive abilities and literacy.

2) We should attach importance to the process of college English learning.

Under the framework of key competences, evaluation standards are set to highlight students' language ability, learning ability, and cultural awareness in various aspects. On the basis of increasing their daily scores, corresponding allocation is made. With clear standards, students will pay more attention to the teaching process during the learning stage of college English.

3) Develop a corresponding database based on daily classroom learning evaluations.

In order to effectively test college English learning under the framework of key competences, it is necessary to strengthen the monitoring and recording of students' ability development in various aspects, in order to effectively reflect students' specific learning attitudes and effects. Then, based on the comprehensive evaluation of students at the end of the term, mutual verification can be conducted to more objectively reflect the learning status of students. Through the establishment of data, it is also possible to reflect the specific problems of each student based on clear rules, effectively helping them to correct their shortcomings in a timely manner and achieve comprehensive development.

### 3. Conclusion

As mentioned above, in order to effectively construct college English learning under the framework of key competences, not only should the learning content be selected based on the five core competences, but also the learning design and later learning evaluation should be organically combined around the five aspects of learning ability, language ability, cultural awareness, and thinking quality to ensure the construction of the key competences. Thus effectively improving the quality and effectiveness of college English learning in China, and promoting students to achieve comprehensive and comprehensive improvement in the process of English learning.