

# A Study on the Teaching Model of Comprehensive English Course Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory

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**Abstract:** Since it was introduced in China in the late 1980s, the Multiple Intelligence Theory has caused widespread concern among the domestic education field. This thesis mainly explores the teaching mode in the subject of Comprehensive English from teaching objectives, contents and assessment method and puts focus on the strategy of tasks designing and assessment method. The results of the research indicate that the application of this theory in the teaching of Comprehensive English is beneficial to enhancing students' learning interests and effects. Multiple Intelligence Theory is of great significance in the teaching practice and serves as a theoretical foundation in the construction of multiple teaching strategies and assessment system.

## 1. Introduction

With the advent of the era of globalization, China has put forward higher requirements for English professionals: not only high-level academic and research-oriented talents, but also high-level compound English professionals with application ability and speculative awareness. In order to gain an advantage in the fierce competition for talents, it is necessary to attach importance to the improvement of students' comprehensive skills. The current syllabus for English teaching for English majors in Colleges and universities issued in 2000 clearly defines the basic core position of the Comprehensive English curriculum. Among all the courses for English majors, the Comprehensive English course is not only the core course with the longest class hours, the highest class hours density and the most credits, but also the key to ensure the quality of private undergraduate English majors' training. Therefore, in order to better guarantee the teaching effect of this course, the author's school has carried out several rounds of reform on the comprehensive English course. Even so, there are still some problems to be solved urgently, such as students' learning initiative is not high, teaching mode and evaluation means are relatively single. How to change the current situation and improve the teaching and learning effect of the course is a problem we must think about.

## 2. Theoretical Basis of Research

### 2.1 Summary of Multiple Intelligence Theory

In 1983, Howard Gardner, a cognitive psychologist at Harvard University, first proposed the Theory of Multiple Intelligence in his book *Frames of Mind*. In his opinion, human intelligence consists of nine kinds of intelligence: linguistic ability, logical and mathematical ability, visual and spatial relationship ability (sensitivity to color, line, etc.), musical rhythm ability (rhythm, tone, and melody), physical movement ability, and interpersonal communication ability (ability to understand others and their relationships, ability to communicate with others), self-reflection ability (correct understanding of oneself), natural observer ability (exploring society and nature) and existential intelligence (thinking about life, death and ultimate reality).<sup>[1]</sup> The theory has the following characteristics: 1) The theory of multiple intelligences holds that human intelligence is a combination of how far and how independent each other exists; 2) Intelligence embodied by individuals can be divided into strength and weakness, and everyone has his own development potential; 3) Diversity is practical and is a tool for people to solve problems. The emergence of the

theory of multiple intelligences has broken the traditional understanding that intelligence is centered on linguistic and mathematical abilities, and has also challenged the traditional way of student assessment. This theory has been widely used in the basic stage of educational research, and there are few practical studies in the subject teaching of higher education.

## **2.2 The Relationship between Multiple Intelligences Theory and English Teaching Theory**

The theory of multiple intelligences was put forward by Gardner on the basis of studying the differences in learning ability of patients with brain trauma. However, the content covered by the theory has a far-reaching impact on educational reform. The theory of multiple intelligences emphasizes that individuals construct their own knowledge of things in their own way, which is an “intrinsic constructive” learning concept.<sup>[2]</sup> It has a complementary relationship with English teaching theory. The theory of multiple intelligences provides a new perspective for teachers and students to practice English teaching theory. With the development of English teaching theory, the traditional teacher-oriented teaching concept has changed to student-centered, requiring teachers to pay attention to students' learning motivation and interest. This coincides with the development of students' potential advocated by the theory of multiple intelligences and the attention paid to the development of students' intelligence differences. The combination of multiple intelligence theory and English teaching theory enlarges the application scope of multiple intelligence theory to a certain extent.<sup>[3]</sup>

## **3. An Empirical Study on the Design of Integrated English Teaching Model Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory**

### **3.1 Research object**

This study chooses Class AB of English Major in Chengdu East Soft College as the research object, of which Class A is the experimental class (29), Class B is the control class (30), a total of 59. The selected students are all English majors 16 undergraduate students. In the early stage, they have taken Comprehensive English (I), English listening (I), spoken English and other subjects. The duration of the study is from March 2017 to July 2017. The subjects of the study participated in Comprehensive English (II). At the beginning of the study, the researcher introduced nine components of the theory of multiple intelligences to 59 students, so that students could have a clearer understanding of the theory before participating in the study.

### **3.2 Research Methods**

This study mainly adopts two methods, including questionnaire survey and interview method. Questionnaire survey is a means of indirect collection of research data in written form. Methods of obtaining information by sending questionnaires to the subjects and filling in comments and suggestions on relevant issues. Two questionnaires were used in the study. They are the Comprehensive English Learning Satisfaction Questionnaire and the Multiple Intelligence Development Questionnaire. The two questionnaires will be used twice and distributed to the subjects before and after the beginning of the study. Interview method. Interview method collects objective and real materials from the researcher orally. According to the interviewer's control over interviews, interviews can be divided into structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and non-structured interviews. This study mainly uses unstructured interviews, which means that the researcher did not set up a standardized free conversation after the end of the study. The main purpose of this study is to understand the improvement of the comprehensive ability of the research subjects after they participated in the study. At the same time, it also involves some related issues such as interest in comprehensive English learning.

### **3.3 Research Contents**

Based on the researcher's consideration of the shortcomings of the integrated English curriculum in teaching practice, this study is mainly completed from three aspects: the goal of integrated English teaching, the construction of classroom teaching activities and the construction of teaching

evaluation system.

### 3.3.1 Reconstructing the Training Objectives of Comprehensive English Classroom Teaching Ability

Promoted by T-C teaching reform (TOPCARES-CDIO engineering education model) of Chengdu East Soft University, combined with the idea of individual multiple intelligence development in the theory of multiple intelligence, comprehensive English teaching should not only set teaching goals according to professional quality standards, but also consider students' other intelligent development according to social needs. It is possible to construct teaching objectives. Such as developing students' innovative ability, introspective ability, social communication ability and independent thinking ability to assist students to complete language learning.

### 3.3.2 Construction of Integrated English Classroom Teaching Activities

For a long time, English classroom has been teacher-centered and teaching-oriented. Such a teaching method is not conducive to the cultivation of students' language ability, and directly erases students' interest in learning. According to the theory of multiple intelligences, in such a teaching mode, students are silent "listeners", and they can only be trained in self-cognitive ability and logical reasoning ability. [4] In order to give full play to students' knowledge of self-intelligence, in such a classroom, we should consider designing multiple teaching activities, so as to maximize the potential of each student and improve the teaching effect. The design of classroom teaching activities should be considered from the following aspects: 1) learning background knowledge of articles: assigning tasks to students in advance, searching background knowledge of articles and making records by themselves through consulting network literature or books; 2) grouping students of Class A into groups and participating in classroom learning in the way of group cooperation. Teachers can assign different tasks to each group in the course of curriculum implementation, such as: let the group participate in courseware making, simulate the teacher's class; group participate in topic discussion; group carry out impromptu debate on unit theme; encourage students to ask questions actively, cultivate innovation and speculative spirit. 3) In the course of teaching, teachers can set up interactive activities such as reading pictures, speaking, speaking and guessing, listening to English songs, filling in words, singing and competing, so as to improve students' classroom participation, thereby enhancing students' interest in learning, truly implementing the idea of "learning by doing", and cultivating students' comprehensive ability. To sum up, the design of classroom teaching activities in Class A& B is compared. See Table 1.

Table 1 Comparative Table of Classroom Activities in Class A&B

Class	In-class Teaching Activities	Types of Students' Intelligence Development
Class A (Experimental Class)	Duty Report/Question Discussion/Translation /Vocabulary Discrimination and Exercise/Exercise after Class Background Knowledge Statement/Group Discussion/Listening to Songs and Writing Words/Simulated Teacher Teaching/Picture Reading/Description Picture Listening/Group Evaluation	Language/Logic/Music/Visual Space/Self-introspection/Interpersonal Communication/Physical Movement/Natural Observation
Class B (Controlled Class)	Daily Report/ Discussion/ Translation/Vocabulary Discrimination and Exercise/After-class Exercise	Language/Logic

### 3.3.3 Construction of Teaching Evaluation System

Course evaluation is an important basis for ensuring the quality of teaching and acquiring students' learning situation. It is also an effective means for students to discover problems and change their learning methods. [5] As the core curriculum of English majors, comprehensive English course should attach importance to the establishment of a reasonable teaching evaluation system and abandon the traditional assessment method of final evaluation. In recent years, the front-line teachers of Integrated English have done a lot of work, made many attempts on students' assessment methods, and formed a multi-evaluation system combining formative assessment with final assessment. Moreover, according to the specific teaching situation every year, the assessment methods are diversified and more truly reflected.

## 4. Results and Conclusions

After the study, the data of the experimental class and the control class are collected and counted, and the following conclusions are drawn.

### 4.1. Improvement of Students' English Skills

From the final performance comparison Table of Table 2, the results of each item in Class A (experimental class) were significantly higher than those in Class B (controlled class). This is not only a survey of students' comprehensive language skills, but also reflects their comprehensive abilities, because 50% of the total score comes from formative assessment.

Table 2 Comparative Table of Final Exam Score in Comprehensive English

Class	Average Score	Maximum Score	Minimum Score	Pass Rate
English Class A	70	89	58	87%
English Class B	62	77	36	72%

### 4.2 Improvement of Students' Interest and Initiative in Learning

In the Comprehensive English course satisfaction questionnaire, the topics related to students' interest and initiative in learning are Question 2 and 7: I insist on preparing texts; A. always; B. often; C. sometimes; D. rarely; E. never; besides completing the tasks and assignments assigned by teachers in class, I can study actively after class; A. always; B. always; Often; C. Sometimes; D. Rarely; E. Never. Among these two questions, 79% and 83% of the students in Class A chose "always", while 62% and 70% of the students in Class B chose "always" as the controlled class.

### 4.3 Development of Students' Comprehensive Intelligence

In the intelligence development questionnaire, 83% of the students in Class A think that the teaching activities designed in the classroom have greatly improved their oral ability; 67% think that their written writing ability has improved; 56% think that their organizational and coordination ability has been exercised in participating in teaching activities.

These data fully show that the comprehensive English teaching model based on the theory of multiple intelligences is successful. It fully takes into account the unique intelligence of students, so that teachers can design multiple teaching activities based on the theory to meet the needs of different students. At the same time, the multiple evaluation system can more fairly and objectively reflect the students' learning situation, maximize the potential of students, and achieve "teaching in accordance with their aptitude". The theory of multiple intelligences broadens the research horizon of English education theory and provides teachers with multiple and controllable teaching methods. The change of this mode enriches the teaching content, enhances students' interest in learning comprehensive English, thus enhancing students' comprehensive ability, and lays a good foundation for training more competitive English professionals.

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