

# Exploration of Interdisciplinary Teaching Models Integrating Economic Management Cases into College English Courses

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**Abstract:** With the continuous deepening of the globalization process and the full arrival of the knowledge economy era, society's demand for compound and applied talents with multi-disciplinary backgrounds, strong practical abilities, and high comprehensive qualities is becoming increasingly urgent. Against this backdrop, college English courses, as a key link in China's higher education system, urgently need to shift their teaching objectives from the previous single language skills training to a greater emphasis on cultivating students' comprehensive humanistic qualities, strengthening their cross-cultural communication and exchange abilities, and enhancing their comprehensive capabilities in using English to analyze and solve practical problems in their respective professional fields. This article aims to systematically explore an innovative interdisciplinary teaching model, that is, organically integrating practical cases in the field of economics and management into the process of college English teaching. It deeply analyzes the theoretical support and basis of this model, proposes specific and feasible teaching implementation paths, and at the same time dissects the potential challenges that may be faced and their coping strategies. Thus, it provides reference and inspiration for promoting the systematic reform of college English teaching, enhancing the practical effect of teaching, and ultimately better adapting to and serving the overall goal of talent cultivation in higher education in the new era.

**Keywords:** College English; Economic Management Case; Interdisciplinary teaching; Teaching mode; Language application ability

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## 1. Introduction

College English teaching has the characteristics of fundamentality, extensiveness and persistence in higher education in China. For a long time, its teaching model has mostly been oriented towards General English (EGP), focusing on the imparting of language knowledge and skills training such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening and writing. This model has made significant contributions to strengthening students' language foundation, but its drawbacks are becoming increasingly prominent: the teaching content has a relatively weak connection with students' professional background

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and future career demands, which can easily lead to a “separation of learning and application”. Students have a single motivation for learning, mostly for the purpose of taking exams (such as the CET-4 and CET-6). The classroom lacks interactivity and critical thinking, making it difficult to effectively cultivate students’ comprehensive language application ability and higher-order thinking in real and complex situations <sup>[1]</sup>.

## **2. Theoretical basis and core concepts**

### **2.1. Interdisciplinary integration theory**

The theory of interdisciplinary integration emphasizes breaking down the barriers between traditional disciplines and advocates the cross-penetration and systematic integration of knowledge from different disciplinary fields to achieve innovation and application of knowledge. Introducing economic management cases into college English teaching is precisely a practical exploration based on the theory of interdisciplinary integration. English is not only a language discipline but also an important tool for international communication. Its combination with the discipline of economics and management can create real, rich, and professional-targeted language usage scenarios for students. During this process, students not only learn professional terms in the field of economics and management, business communication paradigms, and cutting-edge industry information, but also can effectively enhance their comprehensive application abilities in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing through case discussions, report writing, scenario simulations and other methods. At the same time, this integration has also broadened students’ professional knowledge horizons, enhanced their understanding and analysis abilities of practical problems in a multi-disciplinary context, and truly achieved the coordinated development of language skills and professional qualities. This interdisciplinary teaching approach helps shape students’ comprehensive qualities and cross-border thinking, enabling them to flexibly apply knowledge from different disciplines in an increasingly complex and diverse professional environment, and to possess stronger adaptability and competitiveness.

### **2.2. Situational learning theory**

The theory of situational learning emphasizes that knowledge does not exist in isolation but is generated, developed and applied in specific and real environments. Therefore, this theory holds that the learning process should be as close as possible to the actual situation to ensure that learners not only master abstract concepts but also can flexibly apply them to real-life scenarios. Introducing economic management cases into college English classrooms is precisely based on this concept, creating a highly realistic language usage environment for students, enabling them to learn in a context close to the real world <sup>[2]</sup>.

During this process, students seem to be personally involved in actual business activities and decision-making scenarios by reading, analyzing and discussing various economic management cases. They need to use English to gather information, express opinions, conduct logical reasoning, participate in group discussions, and even simulate business negotiations and formulate strategies. This immersive learning approach enables students to naturally apply language while solving practical problems, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the role of English in expressing complex thoughts and conveying professional information.

In addition, situational learning not only enhances students’ language accuracy and fluency, but also effectively stimulates their intrinsic learning motivation and autonomy. Compared with the traditional teaching method that mainly focuses on vocabulary memorization and grammar practice, case teaching makes the learning goals more explicit and the process more challenging and interesting. In the process of attempting to solve real management problems in English, students are more likely to see their own progress and the practical value of the language, thereby enhancing their confidence and being willing to invest more energy in further learning.

In conclusion, through the organic integration of economic management cases and English teaching, the theory of situational learning has been effectively put into practice. This not only optimizes the language acquisition path but also cultivates students’

ability to comprehensively use English for communication and decision-making in real environments <sup>[3]</sup>.

### **2.3. Constructivist learning theory**

Constructivist learning theory profoundly emphasizes the active constructive role of learners in the process of knowledge acquisition, holding that true knowledge is not obtained through passive reception but is the product of learners' active construction in the continuous interaction with the environment. In the practice of college English teaching based on economic management cases, this theory has been fully reflected: the role of students has undergone a fundamental transformation, from traditional knowledge recipients to active participants and active constructors. By deeply analyzing real economic management cases, actively participating in group discussions and collective reflections, and in this process fully mobilizing their existing knowledge reserves and relevant experiences, they gradually built a new and more complete knowledge system. During this process, students constantly use English for critical thinking, effective expression and in-depth communication, integrating the professional information contained in the cases with their own cognitive understanding, and forming viewpoints and insights with personal characteristics. Teachers mainly play the role of guides and facilitators, supporting students in conducting in-depth thinking and independent exploration by building learning scaffolds, designing inspiring questions, and providing timely feedback. This teaching model not only effectively enhances students' comprehensive application ability of English, but also significantly strengthens their awareness of autonomous learning, cooperative communication skills and critical thinking level, providing an important path for cultivating economic management talents with an international perspective and comprehensive quality <sup>[4]</sup>.

## **2.4. Construction and implementation path of teaching mode**

### **2.4.1. Design comprehensive teaching cases**

Based on the core curriculum system of the economics and management major and the overall goals of college English teaching, a series of teaching cases that are both comprehensive and typically representative are designed. These cases need to organically integrate the training of English language skills with the application of professional knowledge in economic management. The content should cover multiple typical business scenarios, such as international business negotiations, market research and analysis, enterprise strategy formulation, interpretation of financial statements, and cross-cultural communication, etc. The selected cases should contain rich and idiomatic English language materials and incorporate key economic management concepts and practical operation links, enabling students to deepen their understanding of professional knowledge while learning the language.

The case design should be of moderate difficulty, matching the student's current English proficiency and professional knowledge foundation, while also having an appropriate level of challenge to promote the improvement of their cognitive level. The cases should be able to stimulate students' learning initiative and interest in exploration, guiding them to communicate and make decisions effectively in real contexts through various forms such as cooperative learning, role-playing, and case discussions in English, thereby comprehensively enhancing their comprehensive application ability and professional quality <sup>[5]</sup>.

### **2.4.2. Adopt diversified teaching methods**

To fully meet the diverse learning needs and styles of different students, we have meticulously designed and integrated a variety of teaching methods, including but not limited to case analysis, group discussion, and role-playing. In the case analysis course, teachers will guide students to conduct a systematic and in-depth analysis of specific cases, helping them identify the core issues in the cases, explore feasible solutions, and analyze the English language application skills involved, thereby enhancing students' analytical and language comprehension abilities. Group discussion courses focus on encouraging students to work in groups, have thorough discussions around the problems in the cases, promote the exchange of ideas and the collision of viewpoints among each other, and enhance the spirit of teamwork and the effect of cooperative learning. Role-playing courses, by having students simulate different roles in real economic management

scenarios and engage in contextualized English dialogues and interactions, not only enhance their oral expression skills and language adaptability but also deepen their understanding and application of professional knowledge. In addition, we actively utilize multimedia teaching methods, such as playing English business videos related to the course content and presenting economic management case materials with both pictures and text, to enrich the classroom teaching content in diverse forms, stimulate students' interest in learning, and thereby significantly enhance the overall teaching effect and students' learning experience.

#### **2.4.3. Establish a diversified evaluation system**

The construction of a diversified teaching evaluation system aims to comprehensively and objectively measure students' learning outcomes and ensure the scientificity and effectiveness of the evaluation. The evaluation content should not only cover students' English language knowledge and skills, such as vocabulary, grammar mastery, listening comprehension, oral expression, reading comprehension and writing ability, but also widely include their comprehensive performance in economic management case analysis, such as the depth and breadth of problem analysis, the innovation and practicality of problem-solving, and the degree of teamwork and contribution. And the systematicness and acuity of critical thinking, etc. In terms of evaluation methods, a strategy that organically combines formative assessment with summative assessment is adopted. Formative assessment focuses on students' performance during the learning process, including their enthusiasm for classroom interaction, the quality of homework completion, the degree of participation in group discussions, and phased learning reflections, etc. Summative evaluation focuses on the final assessment of learning outcomes, such as final exam results, the quality of course papers, and the level of project reports. Through this multi-level and multi-dimensional evaluation system, not only can students' learning progress and existing problems be fed back in a timely and accurate manner, but it can also provide a basis for teachers to adjust teaching strategies and optimize teaching content, thereby effectively promoting the all-round development of students in terms of knowledge, ability and quality<sup>[6]</sup>.

### **3. Potential challenges and countermeasures**

#### **3.1. Potential challenges**

Interdisciplinary teaching places extremely high demands on teachers' professional qualities. Teachers not only need to be proficient in English language teaching but also possess solid professional knowledge in economic management. However, at present, most teachers may only be proficient in a certain field, making it difficult to meet the demands of interdisciplinary teaching. In addition, there are also difficulties in integrating teaching resources. English teaching resources and economic management teaching resources have significant differences in content and form. How to effectively integrate the two and form a resource system suitable for interdisciplinary teaching is a major challenge. Meanwhile, students' foundations and learning abilities vary greatly. Some students may be relatively weak in English learning, while others may have difficulty understanding economic management knowledge. This poses obstacles to the unification of teaching progress and the achievement of teaching objectives<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### **3.2. Coping strategies**

In response to the issue of insufficient professional quality among teachers, schools can regularly organize teachers to participate in interdisciplinary training courses and academic symposiums, invite experts in the fields of English and economics and management to give lectures and provide guidance, encourage teachers to conduct interdisciplinary research and teaching practices, and enhance their comprehensive teaching abilities. In terms of integrating teaching resources, a dedicated teaching resource development team can be established, with the participation of English teachers and economics and management teachers, to screen and integrate the existing teaching resources, and develop targeted and practical interdisciplinary textbooks, courseware and online learning resources. For the issue of students' foundation differences, teachers can adopt a stratified teaching approach, grouping students based on their English proficiency and

economic management knowledge foundation, and setting different teaching objectives and contents to meet the learning needs of students at different levels.

### **3.3. Potential challenges**

With the rapid development of the social economy and the acceleration of the process of global integration, knowledge and skills in the fields of English and economic management are constantly being updated and changed at an unprecedented speed. This change is not only reflected in the expansion and deepening of professional knowledge, but also in the rapid iteration of technical means and industry demands. Therefore, teaching content and methods must keep pace with The Times, constantly adjust and innovate, in order to meet society's demand for high-quality talents. However, in the actual teaching practice process, the update of teaching content often lags behind the speed of industry development. Some textbooks and course Settings fail to incorporate the latest theoretical and practical achievements in a timely manner, resulting in a certain disconnection between the knowledge students have learned and their practical application. Meanwhile, the teaching methods are rather traditional. The teacher-centered lecturing model still dominates, lacking interactivity and practicality, and it is difficult to effectively stimulate students' learning initiative and innovative thinking ability<sup>[8]</sup>.

### **3.4. Coping strategies**

To ensure the timeliness and practicality of teaching content, schools should establish close cooperative relationships with enterprises and industry associations, keep abreast of industry trends and demands promptly, and invite industry experts to participate in the formulation of teaching syllabi and the update of teaching content. Meanwhile, teachers are encouraged to adopt innovative teaching methods, such as project-based learning, case-based teaching, and flipped classrooms, to cultivate students' autonomous learning ability and innovative thinking. In terms of teaching environment and facilities, schools can actively seek support from the government and society, increase investment in teaching facilities, build modern multimedia classrooms and simulated business laboratories, and provide good hardware conditions for interdisciplinary teaching.

## **4. Conclusion**

The interdisciplinary teaching model integrating economic management cases into college English courses is a positive response to the demand for talent cultivation in higher education in the new era and also a beneficial exploration for the in-depth development of college English teaching reform. It breaks down the barrier between language teaching and professional learning. By creating real, interesting and challenging learning situations, it transforms English from a learning object into a thinking tool and communication medium for exploring the professional world and solving practical problems. This model can not only significantly enhance students' comprehensive application ability of English, but also simultaneously cultivate their critical thinking, business literacy, teamwork and lifelong learning abilities, thereby better fostering compound talents with an international perspective and cross-cultural communication skills.

## **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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