

Original Research Article

# How to Improve College English Teachers' Teaching Skill

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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on college English teachers' self-improvement of teaching skills, first it describes the present condition of English teaching at colleges, and then presents methods how to improve College English teachers' teaching skill from five aspects, such as: dialogue with yourself, solicit feedback from your students, improve yourself, sharpen your improvisation skills and plan well for next time, in a word, we can go further in teaching only if we prepare well in advance by improving our teaching skills.

**Keywords:** Improve; College English Teachers; Teaching Skills

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## 1. Introduction

With the development of IT and society, and we are living in a fast-changing period and facing some challenges for our college English teachers, how to improve our teaching skill in this special stage? Our students also live in this information age, called internet generation, they are receiving new information faster beyond our imagination, if we couldn't improve our teaching skill, difficult to meet our students' demands with more confidence, even with the massive new online teaching methods came into being such as: MOOCs, Micro-classes, Flipped classroom, but no matter which kind of teaching methods, we need improve our teaching skills and apply it to our teaching, co-grow with our students.

## 2. Present condition of English teaching at colleges

With the coming of marketing economics, on the one hand, many colleges were integrated from different secondary professional schools, many English teachers especially those a little older in age are still using those traditional teaching methods in class and those who just graduated from university are inexperienced and need further training to improve their teaching skills, also there are some others who just put their effort on doing research, they don't have time and effort for improving their teaching skills.

On the other hand, too many classes and other related work make teachers tired and no time and effort to improve themselves, every semester some of them just finish their teaching tasks and focus on language points, neglect language use, so after even some of students get band-4 or band-6 exam certificates, they still couldn't use English to express themselves well orally, as college English teachers, it's high time that we reflected our teaching methods and improved our teaching skills.

## 3. How to improve teaching skill?

Do you remember the last lesson you taught that went incredibly well? What about the one where everything seemed to go wrong? Such lessons make up part of every teacher's teaching experiences, but does it end there? The answer is, it *can* do and perhaps often does – we plan, we teach, we move on. However, it is possible for each lesson to become a learning opportunity for learners and teachers alike. By becoming reflective practitioners, we can open the door to the possibility of constant learning, and think how to improve our teaching skills? Becoming an effective teacher involves seeking out multiple sites of input that can enable you to reflect on and improve the teaching and learning that takes place in your class. I will talk about it from the following aspects:

### 3.1 Dialogue with yourself through a teaching reflection

One very important, but often overlooked, source of input on teaching is you, the teacher. A first step that can form the foundation for other critical reflection is to keep a daily teaching log or journal on your teaching. Start by writing your lesson plan on the right-hand side of your teaching notebook and reserving the left-hand side for comments and reflection. Questions to ask yourself and reflect on in writing might include, What worked well in this class, and why? What didn't, and why? Where did the students seem to have difficulties? Were there any noticeable points where the students seemed very engaged with the material?

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What types of things may need greater clarification the next time? Were there any particular pedagogical strategies that seemed to work well? What will I change the next time I teach this topic?

### 3.2 Solicit feedback from your students

More often than not, we reflect on or sometimes worry about our teaching in isolation, without realizing that our own students can be a great source of feedback on the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms on a day-to-day basis. While end-of-semester evaluations tend to summarize the students' overall responses to the class, this type of input comes too late to be of use to you and your students during the current semester. There are several techniques you can use to solicit ongoing feedback from your students on the class in general or the learning that takes place around specific topics and activities.

After the first couple of weeks of class, ask students to take out a piece of paper and write down three things that have helped their learning in the class and, on the other side of the paper, three things the students would like to change about the class to improve their experience. After reviewing their responses, decide what you can and will change and what you either cannot change or find pedagogically unwise to change. You can also let the students know what you will be changing based on their suggestions. This type of informal feedback can be gathered at different points over the semester.

### 3.3 Improve yourself by further learning

The new century's teaching has put forward new requirements to us. We should break the previous teaching routine, use and deal with teaching materials flexibly. We should change the tendency of paying too much attention to imparting knowledge, emphasize the formation of active learning attitude, and make the process of acquiring knowledge and skills become the process of learning to learn and forming correct values. We should strengthen the connection between the course content and students' life, modern society and the development of science and technology, pay attention to students' learning interest and experience, and select the necessary basic knowledge and skills for lifelong learning including information technology. We should change the current situation of overemphasizing learning, rote learning and mechanical training, encourage students to participate actively, be willing to explore and be diligent in practice, and cultivate students' ability to collect and process information, analyze and solve problems, and communicate and cooperate. Most important we should teach students new ways of learning.

### 3.4 Sharpen your improvisation skills

When you're teaching, things don't always go to plan. Sometimes, activities will run for much longer than you expected, forcing you to ditch other things you'd planned for the class. Other times, worksheets or games you'd spent hours preparing could fall flat and you may have to abandon them completely. Just one question from a student can change the direction of the entire class, derailing your plan and taking you on a detour. When things like these happen, you need to be able to think on your feet.

You can't be too regimented when it comes to teaching. Planning is key, but you also need to be prepared to throw it all out the window if the situation calls for it. You need to be able to come up with an alternative game or activity at a moment's notice, pulling things out of the bag off the top of your head.

If you're a new teacher, don't worry. This comes with experience.

If you spend enough time teaching different types of lessons, you'll build up a huge memory bank of activities. To do that, make sure you force yourself to keep trying new things in the classroom. If you stick to the same format or subject matter too much, you won't grow as a teacher and you'll find it very difficult to deviate from your lesson plans.

### 3.5 Plan well for next time

Decide what you want to try and do differently in your next lesson. It could be a different way of doing what you are already doing or something completely new to you, or it could perhaps simply be refining something you consider worthwhile doing but are slightly shaky on.

Enjoy experimenting and when you've finished the class, **stop** again and evaluate how it went. This cyclical process of experimentation and reflection is a way to develop, and replace stagnation with continual learning.

## 4. Conclusion

In short, there is no end to learning and improve your teaching skills, and diligence can make up for one's incompetence. A teacher who is unwilling to lag behind the development of the times will surely make some achievements and add to the icing on the cake for quality education.

## References

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