

# Application of ESP Teaching Mode Based on English Learning Styles of College Students Majoring in Arts and Sports

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**Abstract.** This study investigated and analyzed the learning styles of college students majoring in art and physical education optimized by Joy M Reid's learning style theory, and critically evaluated the application of the English teaching model designed in the ESP course by conducting experimental classes in Xi'an Technological University and analyzing data collected from the pre-test and post-test of the experiment with the tool of Oxford's Learning Style Questionnaire. In this study, the ESP teaching model was designed for the experimental class from three aspects: clear teaching objectives, analysis of learners' needs, and attention to the cultivation of pragmatic ability. In experimental class, the teachers adopted a new approach that created English communication scenarios and focused on the development of audio-visual listening, speaking, and supplements it professional writing and comprehension skills. In general, this scenario-based ESP teaching model optimized by Joy M Reid's learning style theory in this study could be helpful to stimulate students' interest in learning to the greatest extent, improve students' language application ability, consolidate students' understanding and application of English, and adapt to the requirements of the international society for art and sports talents.

**Keywords:** Learning style; Arts and sports majors; ESP teaching mode; College English

## 1. Introduction

Students majoring in art and physical education are a special group with unique thinking characteristics, group personality and professional learning characteristics. Research on learners' learning styles can reveal the impact of learners' individual differences on second language acquisition, allowing teachers to teach students in accordance with their aptitude and adjust their teaching to discover students with different learning styles. Through effective ESP teaching models, teaching is more targeted and adaptable, allowing art and sports students to acquire knowledge or skills in their own majors or different genres through learning English.

The purpose of the study is to reform the current English teaching method by analyzing the advantages and limitations of the learning style of college students majoring in art and physical education, focusing on the purpose of learners, so that art and physical education students can acquire the knowledge or skills of their majors or different genres through learning English, and finally improve the English teaching level of art and physical education majors, and deeply explore the strategies of English education teaching and student ability training in art and sports majors from the theoretical and practical perspectives.

## 2. Theoretical Research on the Learning Styles of Arts and Sports Majors

**2.1 The Origins of Theoretical Research.** The concept of learning style originates from general psychology and refers to the individualized way of thinking [1] (Ellis1994; Ehrmaneta2003) and relatively stable habitual behaviors (Kee1979; Willing1987) adopted by learning individuals when processing learning materials, interacting with others and the environment. In recent years, foreign scholars have focused on applying the theoretical research results of learning styles to teaching practice to guide teachers' teaching and students' learning. David Kolb [2] divides learning styles into convergent, divergent, assimilative and adaptive types. Reid [1] was the first to introduce the concept of learning styles into the field of foreign language teaching. Based on learners' different sensory preferences, she divided learning styles into visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile types.

Rebecca Oxford [3] divides learning styles into five categories: 1. Related to the senses: visual, auditory and hands-on types; 2. Related to personality traits: extroversion and introversion; 3. Related to information processing methods-intuitive random type and concrete organized type; 4. Related to the way of receiving information-closed type and open types; 5. Learning styles related to thinking styles-analytical and holistic ones.

**2.2 Research Design.** This article uses a questionnaire survey to examine the learning styles of 120 students in four classes of the 22<sup>nd</sup>-level art and physical education major at Xi'an Polytechnic University. The research tool uses Oxford's Learning Style Questionnaire (Style Analysis Survey) and adopts a self-report method. Score your relative English proficiency in the class in terms of learning ability, motivational beliefs, independent learning strategies, etc., and investigate and analyze the characteristics of perception, personality, and information reception style of college students majoring in sports and arts.

**2.3 Analysis of Research Results.** The survey results show that students in the Department of Physical Education and Art prefer visual and experiential English learning. They prefer visual stimulation and are good at remembering what they see. They like to complete the task of English learning through personal participation in extracurricular and extracurricular activities such as classroom activities, internship activities and role-playing. In terms of personality, the vast majority of students have an extroverted learning style. When learning English, they like to do things with others or complete tasks assigned by the teacher in groups. In terms of information reception and information processing, the learning style of such students is open and intuitive. Likes innovation in learning rather than repetitive learning methods, has rich imagination but lacks logic and reasoning.

In terms of personality, the vast majority of students have an extrovert learning style, and in English learning they like to do things with others or complete tasks assigned by the teacher in groups. I like to participate in group learning activities, like games, discussions, role performances, etc. The disadvantages of extrovert learners are that they are difficult to learn independently, a person is easily irritable when learning, cannot concentrate, at the same time, their learning behavior is influenced by external factors and personal emotions, stability and persistence are poor, and learning lacks planning, lack of in-depth attitude and will to investigate problems. This requires teachers to adopt a higher-structured approach to teaching. Guide them to form a serious and careful study attitude and study habits that follow the plan.

In the way of receiving information and processing information, the learning style of such students is open and intuitive. In the intuitive and open-ended style, the mean of intuition is higher than that of the rational type, indicating that most students like to speculate, like change, like to accept new concepts, like flexible and diverse classroom teaching activities, and do not like repetitive monotonous step-by-step learning.

Based on the results of data analysis, college students majoring in physical education and art can understand their own learning styles, which can help carry out personalized teaching and provide guidance to teachers and students.

### **3. ESP - an Effective Way to Reform English Teaching for Arts and Sports Majors**

Students majoring in art and physical education are a special group with unique thinking characteristics, group personality and professional learning characteristics. How to carry out English teaching according to the learning styles of art and sports students is the focus of this study.

**3.1 Definition of ESP.** ESP refers to English for Specific Purpose, which is an emerging sub-discipline. The more authoritative definition is proposed by Hutchinson & Waters: ESP is a teaching approach that focuses on the learning goals of the students in terms of its content and methodology. ESP is a type of English related to a specific occupation or subject as well as an English course based on the specific purposes and specific needs of learners. The "specific" in ESP refers to the purpose, not the language itself. It is not only an emerging subject but a way of teaching organization. ESP has three obvious characteristics: (1) ESP teaching objectives are clear. (2) ESP teaching is based on the analysis of learners' needs. Students' learning needs must be taken into account with the selection of teaching content and the adoption of teaching methods. (3) ESP

teaching focuses on the cultivation of pragmatic ability. Students mastering English mainly use it proficiently within their own professional scope to meet the needs of communication in English.

### 3.2 The Implementation of ESP Teaching Mold in Experimental Classes

According to the results obtained by data analysis, the members of the research group of this project have a scientific basis for the learning style characteristics of college students majoring in sports art, and the teachers of the pilot class have adjusted the teaching concept and teaching style. Using ESP teaching, according to the characteristics of different majors, a new model of professional communicative English teaching as the core, through the creation of English communication situations, the new model of audiovisual speaking, supplemented by professional stylistic writing and comprehension training, is developed.

First, the students' learning needs and future job needs are analyzed, and the student-centered approach is made clear that this course is to prepare students for career exchanges in the target situation. The members of the research group constantly instilled in the students that "learning English is not an end, not learning a language for the purpose of language, but learning a specific professional course through language."

Secondly, the curriculum has increased the study of specialized courses, including sports English and film appreciation. We try to make teaching artistic, bring students the enjoyment of beauty, and attract students' attention. In teaching, we mostly use icons, diagrams, tables, formulas, diagrams and images combined with text and some visual media to teach and supplemented by body language such as expressions and gestures to adjust the classroom atmosphere and stimulate students' interest. At the same time, make full use of modern teaching methods. Create a good learning environment.

Finally, according to the characteristics of students' learning style, we introduce activity teaching, game teaching and simulation practice teaching to match the kinesthetic learning tendency of most students, so that students can give full play to their own style advantages. In the simulation practice, we designed some professionally related scenarios for students to carry out simulation practice, such as Olympic volunteers, judges, journalists interviewing athletes, art exhibitions, art auctions, etc. Practice has shown that similar interactions can most motivate students to learn, make them arouse a lot of enthusiasm and enthusiasm for participation, and the enthusiasm for exploring unknown language expressions is unprecedentedly high.

**3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Effectiveness of ESP Teaching Mold in Experimental Classes.** After a semester's trial, project participants will test the effect of project implementation through the 2022-2023 (1) final exam. The pilot class achieved good results compared with the non-pilot class. The scores of students in each class are shown below:

Table 1. The 2022-2023 (1) final exam scores of students in each class

Class code	Number of students in each class	Number of failing grades	Highest score	Lowest score	Average score of each class	Average score of each class's college entrance examination
<b>4489.05-06,44 89.12-13 (pilot)</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>73.22</b>	<b>106.5</b>
4489.08-09,44 89.16,18(non-pilot)	118	12	80	37	70.50	107.8

From the comparison of the final exam results, we can see that the average college entrance examination score of the students in the pilot class was 1.3 points lower than that of the non-pilot class, and the average final score at the end of the semester was 2.72 percentage points higher than that of the non-pilot class. This shows that ESP teaching based on students' learning styles is quite successful, students' scores have improved significantly, and the scores of every student in the entire class have increased significantly, and the differences between students are also minimal. Finally, the highest and lowest scores of the pilot class are higher than those of the non-pilot class,

indicating that the performance of students in this class has significantly improved regardless of their original learning foundation.

Through the comparative analysis of the teaching effects of pilot classes and non-pilot classes and the comparative analysis of semester examination results, the following conclusions can be drawn: The practical effect of ESP teaching based on the characteristics of college English learning styles of art and physical education students is satisfactory. ESP teaching stimulates students' interest in learning, makes them more active in class, and greatly improves their ability to learn independently. Through ESP teaching, students change their concept of learning English, use a language to learn their own professional knowledge, and improve their learning consciousness. The "student-centered" ESP teaching provides students majoring in art and physical education with opportunities for personality development and potential development.

#### 4. Conclusions

The university English teaching system for arts and physical education built according to the ESP method is in line with the actual situation of students. It is true that art and sports students have a poor foundation and little interest in learning English, but they do not have a complete foundation for learning English, nor have they completely lost interest in English. Therefore, the key to university English teaching in arts and sports majors is to improve students' interest in learning and motivation to learn. ESP teaching can realize learning English at the same time, broaden professional horizons, students can directly feel the use of foreign languages, promote the transformation of external needs into internal motivation, and provide internal motivation for overcoming learning difficulties.

Some problems were also encountered in the implementation of ESP teaching. For example, the students majoring in physical education and art in the English classroom are in the form of joint classes, and the students of the two majors have different learning styles, learning needs and communication purposes, which weakens the pertinence of curriculum design and teaching methods, and the effectiveness of teaching effect evaluation.

In the future, the research on the characteristics of university English learning styles of physical education and art students will be further refined, and the similarities and differences between the learning styles of students of the two majors will be further studied, and the scope of research objects will be expanded. Focus on the role of teachers in ESP teaching, and focus on how teachers can avoid the lack of professional knowledge of language teachers through some teaching methods.

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