A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF CHINA’S 2007 COLLEGE ENGLISH CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS: A LIFELONG LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF CHINA’S 2007 COLLEGE ENGLISH CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS: A LIFELONG LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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Thesis

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The People’s Republic of China (hereinafter China) is the most populous country in the world. According to the World Population Statistics (2014), the current population in China is estimated to be approximately 1.39 billion people which is 130 million greater than the population in India (the second largest country in the world). With the purpose of turning the vast population into abundant human capital, fostering national growth and enhancing national competitiveness in a global age, China initiated education reform in the 1980s in parallel with the economic reform started in the late 1970s (Law, 2006).

With the deepening of economic reform, China has experienced a rapid marketization, industrialization, urbanization, and internationalization. These changes have redefined the needs of human capital and presented challenges to Chinese society (Huang & Shi, 2008; Law, 2006; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). First, the gradual shift from labor-intensive to technology-intensive industries has resulted in an increased unemployment rate, particularly among those with low qualifications and poor skills. Workforce in both rural and urban areas confronted new demands for more sophisticated skill sets (Huang & Shi, 2008; Law, 2006). Second, the change from a centrally planned economy to a socialist market economy has expedited the pace of urbanization, giving
rise to uneven economic development. This resulted in widened the gap between poor and rich within, and between regions, e.g. between rural and urban areas, between coastal and interior areas. Overall, it has exerted negative impact on China’s social harmony and security (Huang & Shi, 2008; Law, 2006; Wang & Morgan, 2012). Third, with the advent of information and knowledge economy in 1990s, multi-skilled intellectuals and workers with creativity and innovation are needed to ensure the nation’s competitiveness in the global marketplace (Huang & Shi, 2008; Law, 2006; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013).

In order to accommodate the redefined needs of manpower and alleviate the social contradiction caused by economic disparity and uneven wealth distribution, Chinese government was determined to press forward with education reform and make national endeavor to build lifelong learning system whereby Chinese citizens may gain access to all-round personal development (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013; Wang & Morgan, 2012). The effort was identified in China’s latest College English curriculum reform launched in 2003. The China’s College English Reform announced in 2003 included curriculum reform, the teaching model reform and the testing system reform. The purpose was to deal with the difficulties and problems that College English education was confronted with, including dominance of conventional and teacher-centered method, unbalanced development of English language skills, fast-increasing student numbers, and insufficiency of qualified English teachers and facilities (Chen & Klenowski, 2009; Hu & McGrath, 2012; Wang, 2004).
The College English Curriculum Requirements (CECR), published in 2007, was issued as the guideline for the College English Reform (Wang, 2004). It prescribed cultivation of students’ English practical ability, autonomous learning ability, and cultural capacity as the teaching objectives (China’s Ministry Of Education [CMOE], 2007). Fostering students’ lifelong learning ability was defined as one long-term objective of the teaching model reform (CMOE, 2007). Specific guidelines stipulated in support of these goals include the integration of information communication technology (ICT) into College English teaching and learning, student-centered teaching and learning, and the incorporation of formative assessment into its evaluation model (CMOE, 2007). The move indicates that China’s College English education is undergoing a reform with a lifelong learning theme (Xie, 2012; C. Zhang, 2014; W. Zhang, 2010).

**Lifelong Learning in China**

The concept of lifelong education was introduced to China in the late 1970s. It was first embraced within public policy, and was most visible in the form of adult education in response to the human resource requirements in the early phase of China’s economic reform (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). With the development of education reform, Chinese citizen started to consider lifelong education as a more holistic approach and recognized that it is more than adult education (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). The concept of “Lifelong learning” has risen in place of “lifelong education” and received great attention due to its critical role in building a learning society where lifelong learning ability is facilitated in each individual. Lifelong learning is a national endeavor in response to the rapid technical and scientific advance,
as well as an accelerated pace of obsolescence in knowledge economy (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). The concepts of lifelong education and lifelong learning are the two core elements in lifelong education theory (Ning, 2007). Lifelong education is the support system for lifelong learning, whereas lifelong learning serves as the cornerstone in lifelong education system (Ning, 2007). In a broad sense, they can be used interchangeably (Naude, 2011).

The process of marketization, industrialization, urbanization, and internationalization created challenges for China, such as redefined needs of manpower and social contradiction. In response to these challenges the Chinese government recognized the vital role of lifelong learning in modernizing education and adopted it as an educational strategy as well as to support national knowledge economy (Ding & Yang, 2012; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). In 1995, the National People’s Congress passed the Education Law of the People’s Republic of China which was the first national law to grant lifelong education legal status (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). According to the aforementioned legislative act, “China will press forward with education reform, promote the coordinated development of education opportunities of various types and levels, and establish an ever-improving lifelong education system to serve the needs of her socialist market economy” (as cited in Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013, p. 3).

Early in the 21st century, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee promulgated policy requirements and decided to make national endeavor to build lifelong education system and learning society (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J.
Wang & Y. Wang, 2013; Wang & Morgan, 2012). The report of the Third Plenary of the 16th National Congress of CCP in October 2003 explicitly claimed the aim to fundamentally modernize the education system and to transform China into a learning society (Huang & Shi, 2008). Two months later, the Central Committee of CCP and the State Council held the first National Talents Conference. The traditional concept of “talents” was redefined from emphasizing academic credentials to creativity and innovation. The strategy of revitalizing China through science and education has been formulated as the fundamental guideline of constructing a learning society in China (Huang & Shi, 2008; Wang & Morgan, 2012). In 2010, the Central Committee of CCP and the State Council issued “The National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development in China (2010-2020)” and reiterated the goal of progressively establishing a lifelong education system, whereby everyone is allowed to learn lifelong for overall personal development (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013).

With the view of earnestly implementing lifelong learning policies and relevant regulations, the Chinese government constructed a management framework with top-down lines of command (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013; Wang & Morgan, 2012). At the central level, the Ministry of Education (hereinafter MOE) plays the leading role to coordinate the work of other State Council departments and government authorities in this respect (e.g. the Ministry of Agriculture and the State Forestry Administration are responsible for technical education in agriculture and forestry). The government authorities at various levels have formed steering groups to put forward lifelong learning in their respective jurisdiction. Meanwhile, civil
communities and market force are playing an increasingly important role in lifelong learning provision. More and more non-governmental sectors are involved in this movement (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). Funding for lifelong education is earmarked under national education law and executive edicts. Enterprises and business units are required to set aside 1.5 to 2.5 percent of their total wage costs for employee training. Other financial resources for lifelong learning include social contribution and private investment (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013).

In line with the key ideas of lifelong learning, learning opportunities throughout life cycle and across diverse settings, two main strategies were adopted by CCP and the State Council to establish an effective system of lifelong learning. The strategies include popularization of school education at preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary and continuing levels, and formation of learning community as building blocks for further learning society construction (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013).

As the foundation of lifelong learning for individuals as well as the whole society at large, school education was accorded paramount importance (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). In 1986, China enacted the Basic Education Law to implement nine-year compulsory education covering the schooling from elementary to junior levels (Law, 2006). Alongside with the universalization of senior secondary education and rapid development of vocational education, China actively expanded student enrollment to higher education (Huang & Shi, 2008; Law, 2006; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). A series of reforms including curriculum reform and structural realignment were initiated to enhance the efficiency and quality of school
education (Law, 2006). Meanwhile, Chinese government vigorously developed continuing education and distance education due to the accessible and flexible options it provides for the general public on lifelong learning. The rapid technological change from the early “monotony” of radio and TV teaching to diverse educational forms offer through radio, TV, internet-based and multi-media tools has promoted distance education (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). The current system consists of one central open university, 44 provincial open universities, and 1103 municipality branches and 1853 county-based workstations, which is the largest distance education system in the world (The Open University of China, 2013). Accordingly, 68 tertiary institutes were approved to provide distance teaching on a trial basis with an attempt to create more accesses to university resources for the general public (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013).

Driven by the idea that “a learning society is in fact an aggregation of learning collectives, from organizational units to community and society at large” (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013, p. 8), the central government stretched her vision to community education construction as well. In 2001, 28 national experimental districts of community education were announced by the Ministry of Education (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013; Wang & Morgan, 2012). By 2010, the number increased to 164, including 96 national districts and 68 demonstration districts which covered almost all provinces, autonomous regions, and direct-controlled municipalities except Tibet. Nearly 400 experimental districts at provincial and municipal levels were established (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). Numerous organizational learning units
(such as community schools, community libraries, and community museums) and learning families were created across these areas (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013).

After decades of hard work, the framework of lifelong learning system has been established in China. Multiple means of accessing educational resources were created to satisfy people’s demands for personal development throughout their lives, which promoted the overall quality and employability of Chinese workforce, and drastically transformed the intellectual structure of the whole nation. The concept of “Lifelong learning” has found its way into the collective consciousness of Chinese public. While affirming the significant progress China achieved in lifelong education construction, Tan, J. Wang, and Y. Wang (2013) pointed out that

To build a robust system of modern education, formal education at schools requires continuous reform, which is largely about the transformation of schools into learning organizational units. In particular, profound reform in teaching and learning is required to induce formal and substantial transformation of schools from a mere provider of knowledge to the proving ground for lifelong learners. (p.10)

This statement provides a thought for the future development of school education with a lifelong learning theme. On one hand, continuing effort shall be made to enhance the connection between school education and other educational forms under the whole umbrella of lifelong learning. On the other hand, it is necessary to initiate a profound reform in teaching and learning with the aim to apply the ideas of lifelong learning.

Norman argued that the way to foster lifelong learners involves not only instruction, but also access to the world and a chance to play a meaningful part in it (as cited in Fischer, 2000, p.3). However, the current school education focuses on transmitting knowledge rather than facilitating the development of problem-solving skills. The teaching work
puts too much attention on teachers’ teaching and neglects students’ autonomous learning (Cao, 2012). Huang and Shi (2008) once showed their concern on the negative impact that traditional teaching mode might exert on lifelong learning and argued that teacher-centered teaching pattern is not an effective way to address the varied learning needs of students. Given the fundamental role that school education plays in lifelong learning system, deciding how to transform school into a learning community for lifelong learners should be a central concern for Chinese policy makers, school administrators, as well as the general public.

**College English Education in China**

Since China’s opening up in the late 1970s, international cooperation and exchange between China and Western countries began to prosper. English, as a global Lingual Franca, has played an increasingly important role in China’s modernization, development, and national competitiveness in the global age (Chen & Klenowski, 2009; Law, 2006; Zhang, 2004). English as foreign language (EFL) education has become “a national and individual commitment” (Chen & Klenowski, 2009, p.4) in China since high English language proficiency helps job candidates to gain an edge in a tightened labor market (Chen & Klenowski, 2009). Due to the critical role that higher education plays in the nation’s growth, the English proficiency of its graduates is widely considered as a key index of China’s global competitiveness (Chen & Klenowski, 2009). College English, therefore, was officially designated as a required course in the curriculum of Chinese higher education, and has aroused great policy attention (Chen & Klenowski, 2009)
College English education, was previously referred to as public English education before 1985 (Cai, 2007), is “the EFL education for non-English major students in the Chinese higher education context” (Chen & Klenowski, 2009, p.4). Mandated College English courses have been offered since the mid-1980s (Cai, 2007; Chen & Klenowski, 2009). It constitutes a course unit, and “accounts for 16 points or 10 % of the total credit points required for a Bachelor degree” (Chen & Klenowski, 2009, p.4). The course unit includes English language foundation courses, English for practical use courses, language and culture courses, and English courses for specific purposes (academic and/or profession-related English courses) (Wang, 2004). In 1987, the Ministry of Education started to launch College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) and Band 6 (CET-6) in nationwide as the main assessment instruments to determine college students’ English proficiency levels and to reinforce an effective College English education (Cai & Xin, 2009). Speaking English Test (SET), the oral session of CET, has been added since 1999 (Chen & Klenowski, 2009).

The practice in College English education is regulated through nationally unified curriculum, the College English Teaching Syllabus, and more lately, the College English Curriculum Requirements (Cai & Xin, 2009; Chen & Klenowski, 2009). Until this point, MOE has initiated three rounds of College English curriculum reforms nation-wide with the attempt to promote the quality of College English education to better meet the needs of socioeconomic development in China (Cai & Xin, 2009; Chen & Klenowski, 2009; Zhang, 2004).
In 1985 and 1986, the former State Education Commission (the current MOE) issued the National College English Teaching Syllabus for the Science & Technology students and the Liberal Arts students respectively (Cai & Xin, 2009; Chen & Klenowski, 2009; Zhang, 2004), which officially marked the end of the “chaos” caused by the former national College English curriculum issued in 1962. The old syllabus solely required that students should be able to read English texts on general topics at a speed of 84 words per minute (Zhang, 2010). Without applicable guidelines to follow, schools had to explore and work out their own teaching objectives and course arrangement, which led to uneven English abilities among college graduates. The revised syllabi put forward distinguished objectives for College English teaching between the majors of the Science & Technology and the Liberal Arts, and set up high English proficiency standards in reading and translating with the hope of facilitating China’s technological and scientific exchange with the outside world (Chen & Klenowski, 2009; H. Zhang, 2004; W. Zhang, 2010).

The National College English Syllabus issued in 1999 was a response to the problematic phenomenon of “low efficiency” (Cai & Xin, 2009; Chen & Klenowski, 2009). Speaking and reading were given equal weight. The cultivation of students’ English communicative competence started to gain attention (Chen & Klenowski, 2009; Zhang, 2010). From that point, College English teaching in the majors of the Science & Technology and the Liberal Arts was conducted under the guidance of one unified syllabus (Cai & Xin, 2009).
In 2003, MOE launched a new round of national College English curriculum reform, and issued “College English Curriculum Requirements (pilot edition)” in January, 2004 (Cai & Xin, 2009). As mentioned before, the curriculum reform, together with the reforms of teaching model and testing system, are these three main parts of the College English Reform initiated in 2003. The new testing syllabus prescribed developing students’ English practical ability, autonomous learning ability, and cultural capacity as the teaching objectives (CMOE, 2004). ICT-integrated College English teaching and learning were highly encouraged (CMOE, 2004). Formative assessment was introduced to go hand-in-hand with summative assessment (CMOE, 2004).

After three-year pilot implementation, MOE revised the pilot edition based on the evaluation of the curriculum reform experience in the experimental areas, and issued “College English Curriculum Requirements” in 2007 (Cai & Xin, 2009; Chen & Klenowski, 2009). Small changes were made in the revision to improve the feasibility and rationality of the 2007 CECR. It is worth noting that these two editions both placed the learner in the center of every learning activities, and highly advocated a role change of the teacher from a mere knowledge provider to a learning coordinator in classroom instruction (CMOE, 2004; CMOE, 2007), which reflects the key ideas of lifelong learning. In particular, the 2007 CECR defined cultivation of students’ lifelong learning ability as one long-term goal of the ICT-integrated student-centered teaching model reform (CMOE, 2007). All these details indicate the integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR, or into College English education at large. China’s College
English education is undergoing a reform with a lifelong learning theme (Xie, 2012; C. Zhang, 2014; W. Zhang, 2010).

**The Statement of Research Problem**

Since the implementation of the 2007 CECR, frontline educators and educational researchers have produced great amounts of valuable studies exploring teaching approaches or strategies in order to create a supportive environment for autonomous learning, and for lifelong learning. However, researchers have not examined the 2007 CECR from a lifelong learning perspective.

As mentioned previously, College English education is undergoing a reform with the idea of lifelong learning. The change is a response to the higher quality demand for College English education, as well as in response to a changing socioeconomic and educational context. First, it is unrealistic to expect that 16-credit College English education will equip students with needed knowledge and skills in the future because complete coverage is impossible; knowledge learned within the 16 credit hours might be obsolescent in the future due to the rapid change in knowledge economy age (Cao, 2012; Xie, 2012; Zhang, 2014). Second, students might not be able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in school to solve problems in their future workplaces due to the lack of practical experience (Cao, 2012; Fischer, 2000; Xie, 2012; Zhang, 2014). What students need, therefore, is not only instruction, but an access to the world, and the sense and ability for lifelong learning which would enable them to update knowledge and skills throughout their lives (Cao, 2012; Xie, 2012; Zhang, 2014). As the current guideline document, the 2007 CECR reflects the integration between lifelong
learning and College English education, and provides policy support. Examination of the integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR is of great importance to College English teaching and learning, and to the implications for future integration.

Moreover, through decades of effort, the framework of lifelong education system began to take shape in China (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). However, the clamor for a profound reform in classroom instruction is getting higher. The teacher-centered traditional teaching methods hinder the key ideas of lifelong learning from being applied (Ding & Yang, 2012; Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013; Wang & Morgan, 2012). As the foundation of lifelong learning system, effective school education has been accorded paramount importance (Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). Transforming formal educational institutions into learning communities for lifelong learners has become a practical issue for the actual realization of lifelong learning in China (Huang & Shi, 2008; Tan & J. Wang & Y. Wang, 2013). As such, the integration between lifelong learning and College English education would shed light on this issue. To this end, this study aims to examine the 2007 CECR (not including the appendixes) from lifelong learning perspective to explore the integration between lifelong learning and College English education. Specifically, this study inquiries into the following research questions: How does the 2007 CECR integrate the key ideas of lifelong learning? Which aspect of lifelong learning is missing in the 2007 CECR?

The Statement of Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR, and to identify and expand on
implications for future integration, as well as for the transformation of formal educational institutions into learning communities for lifelong learners.

In this study, I will apply Gerhard Fischer’s (2000) five principles of lifelong learning to examine the 2007 CECR’s specific guidelines prescribed in the following areas: character and objectives of College English, teaching requirements, course design, teaching model, evaluation, and teaching administration. These five principles are listed as follows (Fischer, 2000, p.8-9):

1. Learning should take place in the context of authentic, complex problems (because learners will refuse to quietly listen to someone else’s answers to someone else’s questions);

2. Learning should be embedded in the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities;

3. Learning-on-demand needs to be supported because change is inevitable, complete coverage is impossible, and obsolescence is unavoidable;

4. Organizational and collaborative learning must be supported because the individual human mind is limited; and

5. Skills and processes that support learning as a lifetime habit must be developed.

These five principles can be viewed as the abstract of Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory as they include all the main ideas. The first principle defines the supportive environment for lifelong learning which enables learners to acquire and apply knowledge and skills on real-world problems, and to conduct self-directed learning. The
remaining four principles propose specific teaching and learning approaches to facilitate lifelong learning, including pursuing intrinsically rewarding activities, learning on demand, organizational and collaborative learning. Developing lifelong learning sense and ability is particularly stressed.

**Significance of the Study**

China’s College English education is experiencing a historical transition (Cai, 2007; Zhang, 2009). The 2007 CECR guideline reflects the official and social expectation of College English education. The integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR is widely considered as a response to the changing socioeconomic context in China (Ning, 2007; Xie, 2012; C. Zhang, 2014; W. Zhang, 2010). An in-depth examination of the integration has therefore referential significance to the exploration of the strategies for future integration, as well as for the transformation of formal educational institutions into learning communities for lifelong learners.

The chapter plan of my thesis is as follows: the current research on the topic will be introduced in Chapter 1, including the background information (lifelong learning and College English education in China), research problem, research purpose, and significance of the study. In Chapter 2, research literature pertaining to lifelong learning ideas and the 2007 CECR will be reviewed. A critical examination of the 2007 CECR from a lifelong learning perspective will be conducted in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, includes a summarize the examination, reflect the limitation of the research, and discuss implications for future integrations between lifelong learning and College
English education and for transforming formal educational institution into learning community for lifelong learners.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter contains two sections: first is a review research literature focusing on Gerhard Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory. The second session reviews research literature regarding the 2007 CECR for the purpose of ascertaining the researchers’ and frontline educators’ opinions about the two highlights of the integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR. These sections highlight the cultivation of students’ English practical ability and autonomous learning ability.

The Key Ideas of Lifelong Learning

The concept of “lifelong learning” has been traced back to the works of the ancient Greeks (Bosco, 2007). Plato and Aristotle described a continuous process of learning throughout a lifetime for philosophers, which encompassed the development of a set of competencies and dispositions enabling individuals from elite social class to engage in continuous scholarship (Bosco, 2007). Confucius, the famous philosopher and educator in ancient China, expatiated on the necessity of lifelong learning (Ning, 2007). Confucius’ idea of “education for all” is the earliest philosophy and practice of lifelong learning in China, which indicates the idea that access to learning opportunities should be open to the whole population, regardless of social status (Zhang, 2008). Over the past
several decades, lifelong learning came into prominence and has been on the agenda worldwide (Bosco, 2007; Smidt & Sursock, 2011). The increasing interest in the promotion of lifelong learning is largely a consequence of the social and economic changes caused by rapidly growing information technology. To prevent being marginalized in the global age, most nations have made concerted efforts to promote lifelong learning earnestly in order to gain a place in the competitive global economy (Bosco, 2007; Fischer, 2000; Smidt & Sursock, 2011; Stella, 2012).

**Lifelong Learning Idea in Broad Sense**

The European Commission defined “lifelong learning” as “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within personal, civic, social or employment-related perspectives” (as cited in Smidt & Sursock, 2011, p.10). The Executive Summary of the World Bank Report in 2003 described the lifelong learning framework as learning extending from early childhood to retirement, and identified three essential types of learning including formal learning (school education, technical and professional training programs), non-formal learning (on-the-job and household training), and informal learning (a lifelong process whereby individuals acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes from family members, friends, people in the community, or other information sources) (the World Bank, 2003).

The above two definitions convey the lifelong learning idea in a broad sense, which can be briefly generalized as follows: Lifelong learning implies a universal right to learning. Multiple learning opportunities are highly supported across human beings’
life-spans, whether formal or non-formal/informal, whether employment-oriented or self-enrichment-oriented. In other words, lifelong learning recognizes and recommends learning activities which occur beyond formal educational settings. It is an inclusive and responsive education system which provides individuals with accesses to learning opportunities when they need them (Bosco, 2007; Fischer, 2000; Smidt & Sursock, 2011; Stella, 2012). People participate in education, for all purposes, throughout one’s lifetime (Smidt & Sursock, 2011). Learning takes place among heterogeneous groups of people in families, schools, working places, and virtual communities. There is no boundary concerning age, profession, and social status (Bosco, 2007; Fischer, 2000; Smidt & Sursock, 2011; Stella, 2012). Boshier concluded that the focus of lifelong learning is not on where/when a person learns, but on the quality of what is learnt (as cited in Naude, 2011, p. 76).

**Jarvis’ Definition of Lifelong Learning**

Jarvis explored the conceptual framework of lifelong learning from the psychological and philosophical perspectives. He argued that learning is intrinsic to living and being because the complexity of humanity requires people to keep on learning unceasingly throughout their lives (as cited in Guo, 2010, p.207). Learning is therefore an existential process, a very complex human and lifelong process (as cited in Guo, 2010, p.207). Jarvis’ existentialism regarding learning lays a foundation for people to understand learning as a lifelong process (Guo, 2010). Learning shall not be separated from the rest of life, but be part of living.
According to Jarvis, lifelong learning is

The combination of process throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person—body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses): experiences a social situation, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the person’s individual biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person (as cited in Guo, 2010, p.208).

He identified three variables in the lifelong learning process, including learner (humanity, to be more precise), society (learner’s life world), and the intersection of learner and society, and maintained that learning occurs at the intersection of learner and society, usually when these two are in tension. The content of the experience then starts to transform cognitively, emotively, and/or practically. The major outcome of the process is a changing or more experienced person (as cited in Guo, 2010, p. 208). Jarvis emphasizes that it is the whole person who learns. Both body and mind are involved; besides, the changes created in the learning process include the person’s self, identity, self-confidence, esteem, new knowledge and skills, attitude, emotion, value, belief, and appreciation of the senses (as cited in Guo, 2010, p. 208). The interdisciplinary approach Jarvis proposed provides us with a holistic perspective for the understanding of learning. His theory recognizes the complexity of humanity, the relationship between learner and his/her life world, and the importance of experience in lifelong learning process (Guo, 2010). Jarvis also introduced a sociological framework for the understanding of lifelong learning, and examined human learning and learning society from both a political and a moral perspectives (Guo, 2010).
The above summary of research literature presents a general idea of lifelong learning. Compared to the traditional teaching and learning modes, lifelong learning frees learning from the time and place constraints, and puts learners’ needs as the first consideration. A lifelong learning process involves not only knowledge and ability growth, but also cognitive and emotive changes. Experience or direct participation is of great importance in the process. All these factors provide a basis for the understanding of Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory.

**Fischer’s Lifelong Learning Theory**

Fischer (2000) introduced a conceptual framework of lifelong learning from a pedagogical perspective. He stated that lifelong learning stimulates and empowers learners not only to gain conceptual understanding of the knowledge and skills but also to apply them with creativity and innovation. He quoted Normans’ words and highlighted that what learners need from education is not only “instruction” (as cited in Fischer, 2000, p. 3), but “access to the world” (as cited in Fischer, 2000, p.3), so as to build a connection between the existing knowledge in their minds and the knowledge in the world. He summarized and illustrated the different emphases on training (formal education) and lifelong learning (as shown in Figure 1). Fischer also pointed out that traditional approaches used in formal education generally hinder learners from seeing the relevance of what they learn, and keep them away from relating learning with practical life. The main reason is that learners are mostly placed in a decontextualized environment to consume the assigned-to-learn knowledge. He argued that educational modes which focus on knowledge transfer and restrict learning to the solution of well-
defined problems (one prescribed process for obtaining one correct answer) would result in the lack of practical experience, which learners need to perform a meaningful part in real life. Comparatively, lifelong learning transcends these approaches by engaging learners in the context of real-world problems and allowing them to explore information spaces so as to acquire knowledge with understanding and construct solutions independently and innovatively (Fischer, 2000). The direct usefulness of new knowledge for the task at hand would motivate learning interest greatly. Fischer (2000) took informal workplace learning or apprenticeships as an example, and highly recommended the integration between learning and work-related activities with a lifelong learning theme.

Table 1: Emphasis on Training versus Emphasis on Lifelong Learning (Fischer, 2000, p.6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emphasis on training</th>
<th>Emphasis on lifelong learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemologies of knowledge</strong></td>
<td>explicate and transfer existing knowledge</td>
<td>understand existing knowledge and create new knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching</strong></td>
<td>add-on to current teaching methods</td>
<td>change what we teach and how we teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessments</strong></td>
<td>number of facts known</td>
<td>articulating knowledge, reflective practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mindset</strong></td>
<td>passive consumer</td>
<td>active designer, co-developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td>schools, separate, formal, forced</td>
<td>workplace, families, museums, integrated, informal, discretionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New knowledge</strong></td>
<td>assigned-to-learn, decontextualized</td>
<td>need-to-know, on demand, contextualized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>rote learning</td>
<td>learning with understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fischer (2000) emphasized that “lifelong learning is more than training or continuing education” (p. 5). To Fischer (2000), lifelong learning is “a mindset and a habit for people to acquire” (p.3). It places higher value on capabilities, values, and commitments, rather than degrees, diplomas, and certificates (Bosco, 2007). Watson as quoted by Stella (2012) stated that lifelong learning policies tend to encourage people to engage in learning for its own sake rather than as a means to a specific end, such as employment. All these statements indicate that the focus of lifelong learning theory is primarily on the sense and the ability to learn for a lifetime (Bosco, 2007; Fischer, 2000; Stella, 2012). As Jarvis argued, learning is intrinsic to living and being (as cited in Guo, 2010, p.207). It is part of human life, and should not be narrowed into short-term school education or training. I admit that lifelong learning emphasizes the continuous engagement in learning. Developing lifelong learning sense and ability is the core of the theory as they are prerequisites for learning lifelong.

Fischer (2000) listed the profound changes in the nature of education and work to indicate that it is a necessity rather than a possibility to cultivate people’s lifelong learning ability. These changes include an increasing prevalence of high technology in workplace, the widening differences between the educated and the uneducated, and career change. Bosco (2007) pointed out that it cannot be assumed that people know how to learn as learning strategies might not be taught during their schooldays. Both Fischer (2000) and Bosco (2007) called on schools and universities to equip learners with lifelong learning skills whereby learners can copy well with the inevitable changes in future professional and private lives. The approaches to lifelong learning that Fischer
recommended include self-directed learning, learning on demand, collaborative learning, and organizational learning (Fischer, 2000).

Self-directed learning, also known as self-managed learning, refers to the learning approach by which the learner is responsible for his or her learning. Driven by personal desire and need, individuals undertake learning activities, such as choosing one’s own field, selecting learning content or resources, exploring conceptual understanding of learning materials, completing self-chosen tasks, and so on (Bosco, 2007; Fischer, 2000). Self-directed learning de-emphasizes teacher-centered teaching modes. Instead, it stresses “mutual dialogs and joint knowledge construction” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). The foci in learning process have shifted from “the teacher and what is taught” to “the learner and what is learned”. Deeper understanding and critical thinking are recommended and supported (Fischer, 2000; Smidt & Sursock, 2011). This student-centered approach involves a shared responsibility for learning and a different relationship between teacher and learner in classroom setting, in which teachers are not merely seen as truth-tellers, but also as coaches, facilitators, mentors, and also learners (Fischer, 2000; Smidt & Sursock, 2011). Fischer (2000) stressed that teachers should feel comfortable becoming learners in many situations because “mutual competency and symmetry of ignorance, supported by objects-to-think-with (externalization of ideas, concepts, and goals), leads to settings and opportunities for learning by all participants” (Fischer, 2000, p.17). Self-directed learning grants equal autonomy and responsibility to learners, which promotes participation in learning and helps to foster learners’ ability to acquire new knowledge.
Learning-on-demand refers to the approach by which learners acquire certain skills or knowledge when they need (Fischer, 2000). It is a task-driven learning strategy through which learners are able to extend their knowledge base efficiently. This approach helps learners deal with the rapid change in the 21st century as a complete coverage of the knowledge they may need in the future is impossible.

Collaborative learning and organizational learning are approaches to support lifelong learning by creating shared understanding, initiating mutual dialogs, and constructing knowledge jointly among stakeholders (Fischer, 2000). The shared understanding can be created in a culture in which stakeholders consider themselves as reflective practitioners, rather than experts who know all the answers (Fischer, 2000). The rationale for these learning approaches is that “the individual, unaided human mind is limited: there is only so much we can remember and there is only so much we can learn” (Fischer, 2000, p.11). The symmetry of ignorance (all the stakeholders lack the relevant knowledge) is used as a source of power to promote mutual learning. All stakeholders are allowed to share their ideas and to express their concerns. Through the exploitation of breakdowns, symmetry of ignorance, and experimentation, new knowledge and the environment which motivates creativity and innovation can be constructed collaboratively (Fischer, 2000). These four lifelong learning approaches mentioned above are closely interrelated and interdependent, which shall be conceived as a whole while applied.

Fischer’s (2000) theory focused on the investigation of teaching approaches to facilitate lifelong learning. It is worth noting that Fischer (2000) tended to adopt an
employment-oriented view and paid little attention to learners’ cognitive and emotive changes in the process of lifelong learning. He is a proponent of Sachs’ argument of learning cannot be separated from working (as cited in Fischer, 2000, p.6), and advocated the integration between learning and working. Nevertheless, the conceptual framework presented in Fischer’s (2000) theory gives us an insight into the understanding of lifelong learning from a pedagogical perspective. His theory provides us with critical ideas for examining educational practice and policies that aim to facilitate lifelong learning. These ideas (as discussed above) include the emphasis of a balanced development between knowledge and practical ability, the emphasis of developing lifelong learning sense and ability, four approaches to support lifelong learning (self-directed learning, learning on demand, collaborative learning and organizational learning).

Fischer (2000) abstracted the main points from his theory, and presented the descriptive and prescriptive goals that lifelong learning should be grounded in, which are shown as follows (Fischer, 2000, p.8-9): (1) Learning should take place in the context of authentic, complex problems (because learners will refuse to quietly listen to someone else’s answers to someone else’s questions); (2) learning should be embedded in the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities; (3) learning-on-demand needs to be supported because change is inevitable, complete coverage is impossible, and obsolescence is unavoidable; (4) organizational and collaborative learning must be supported because the individual human mind is limited; and (5) skills and processes that support learning as a lifetime habit must be developed.
The first goal defines the supportive environment for lifelong learning which enables learners to acquire and apply knowledge and skills to real-world problems, and to conduct self-directed learning. The remaining four goals propose specific teaching and learning approaches to facilitate lifelong learning, including pursuing intrinsically rewarding activities, learning on demand, organizational and collaborative learning. Developing lifelong learning sense and ability is particularly stressed. These five goals conceptualize the framework of Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory. As such, they can be viewed as the five principles of Fischer’s (2000) theory. This study uses Fischer’s (2000) theory as its theoretical basis, and applies his five principles to examine the 2007 CECR.

2007 College English Curriculum Requirements

The issuing of the 2007 CECR has aroused great attention among scholars, researchers and frontline educators. The existing research literature regarding the integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR mainly focuses on the exploration of effective teaching strategies for autonomous learning in the College English classroom. Very little work has been done to examine the necessity and rationality of the integration; and no work has been done to examine the integration from a policy level. Through reviewing the 2007 CECR, two main highlights of the integration were identified, which are the cultivation of students’ English practical ability and autonomous learning ability. This literature review is conducted with the focus of what College English educators said about these two highlights.
Practical English Promotion

Compared to the national curricula issued in 1985/1986, and 1999, the foci of the 2007 CECR have been shifted from building English language foundation to promoting communicative competence, from reading ability development to the development of the ability to use English in a well-rounded way (Chen & Gu, 2008; Gu, 2007; Gong, 2009; Han, 2012; Zhang, 2009).

Zhang (2009) pointed out that all the curricula introduced before 2004 prescribed cultivation of students’ English reading ability as the main teaching aim. This was an educational response to the socioeconomic development at the early stage of China’s Reform and Opening when foreign documents and literature were the main sources for Chinese people to know the outside world (Gong, 2009; Zhang, 2009). Although the 1999 syllabus put the promotion of English communicative ability on the agenda, it was not defined as a teaching objective. Driven by the principle of putting reading ability first, the teacher-centered teaching pattern and grammar-translation teaching method have dominated College English classrooms for more than two decades (Cai, 2007; Zhang, 2009). Constant effort was made to build and enhance students’ English language foundation (Cai, 2007; Gong, 2009; Han, 2012; Zhang, 2009).

The reading-ability-oriented College English education had taken active part in promoting college graduates’ English ability, which in turn provided strong support for China’s international cooperation and exchange (Cai, 2007; Zhang, 2009). However, the emphasis on academic knowledge rather than on practical knowledge resulted in the low language proficiency in listening and speaking. Due to the increasing social and
individual demands for English communicative competence (Cai, 2007; Liang & Chen, 2011; Zhang, 2009), the focus change in the 2007 CECR was important (Han, 2012; Wang, 2004; Zhang, 2009).

Han (2012) argued that the 2007 CECR did not elaborate the following concept of “to develop students’ ability to use English in a well-rounded way” (CMOE, 2007, p. 23). This might lead to misunderstandings among higher education institutions. In his discussion of framing teaching objectives of College English, Shu (2012) proposed that China’s College English education should aim to develop students’ English communicative ability and to promote English teaching and learning for special purposes (profession-related English teaching and learning), in order to improve students’ English practical skills to engage in professional activities and international exchange. He maintained that the nature of language acquisition is to learn through use, and to learn to use. It is therefore reasonable and necessary to provide English courses for special purposes. Students, as beneficiaries, are enabled to reinforce and further basic professional knowledge through English. Their English ability would be enhanced through participating in profession-related English activities. According to Shu (2012), the ability to “use English in a well-rounded way” (CMOE, 2007, p. 23) may be defined as the English ability to engage in professional activities and international exchange.

I think the aforementioned concept implies two ideas: First, it indicates a balanced development of these five English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating (Wang, 2004); second, it emphasizes the ability to apply English knowledge in the real world. That is to say, the concept highlights student’s
English practical ability. Students should be able to apply their English skills in multiple settings which are not necessarily confined to professional activities and international exchange. Therefore, the definition of Shu (2012) has its limitation. But his argument shows his recognition of English practical ability promotion. The approaches of “learn through use” and “learn to use” imply his positive attitude toward the balanced development between knowledge and practical ability.

Gong (2009) examined the teaching objectives of the 2007 CECR from the needs analysis perspective. He admitted that, compared with the previous national curricula, the 2007 CECR gives schools the autonomy to design their own College English syllabus under its guidance. It shows policy makers’ concern for the needs of schools, teachers, and students. But Gong (2009) criticized the focus on listening and speaking, and argued that there is no need to improve students’ overall proficiency in these five English language skills including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. First, the needs for English language skills are varied in different professions. Not all of them require high language proficiency in listening and speaking (Gong, 2009); second, educational resources shortage, especially financial constraint, urges schools to improve efficiency and to teach students the knowledge needed for work (Gong, 2009); third, the limited credit hours on College English result in a minor chance to achieve the goal of developing students’ ability to use English in a well-rounded way (Gong, 2009; Gu, 2007). Gong (2009) contended that, in order to address the individualized learning needs and social needs, the 2007 CECR should improve its feasibility and allow individual learners not to achieve overall proficiency, but to be proficient in at least one English
language skill. Students should be allowed to choose according to their learning needs and personal interests.

According to Gong’s (2009) theory, schools are recommended to design and offer separate course units targeting five English skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. Students should select at least one course unit based on their learning needs and/or personal interests in order to reinforce their proficiency in the targeted language skill(s). It might be an effective way to stimulate students’ interest in studying English and to promote students’ English level in a short time. However, a large percent of English learners in China have few chances for a supportive language learning environment outside the classroom (Wang, 2004). The way of spending all the credit hours in the targeted language skill(s) would result in a regress in the untargeted ones due to the lack of practice. In other words, the progress in one language skill is at the expense of the regress in the others, which breaks the balanced development of English language skills. According to Chomsky, the unbalanced development would constrain further development of learners’ ability in English language use because these skills are closely interrelated and interdependent (as cited in Gu, 2007, p.142). As such, the theory of Gong (2009) violates the basic rule of language teaching and learning. Despite his good intention of putting students’ learning needs as the first consideration, the feasibility of Gong’s (2009) theory should be questioned.

In respect to the focus change in the 2007 CECR, Han (2012) argued that College English education is not all about language ability promotion. From the humanistic perspective, he urged educators to attend to the role that College English
plays in supporting students’ cognitive and intellectual development. Han (2012) pointed out that language is not only a tool for communication, but also a carrier of culture, a tool for thought, and a medium to know the world. Therefore, College English shall not only be considered as a tool subject, but also the subject which can scaffold learners to a higher level of learning including the development of critical thinking, creative thinking and cross-cultural awareness. Han’s (2012) theory, in a way, challenges the educational philosophy which considers economic outcomes (international competitiveness, continued economic growth) as the main goals of education policy. His thoughts on the nature of College English education provide a valuable insight into the future revision of the 2007 CECR. After all, College English class is not skill training course. English education shall not be narrowed into English skill training.

Based on the research literature reviewed above, I found out that most of the researchers and educators recognize the importance of English practical ability, and believe that it is necessary to shift the focus of the 2007 CECR onto practical English promotion. But they tend to adopt different approaches to develop students’ practical knowledge. Shu (2012) advocated providing profession-related College English courses to enhance students’ English practical skills for professional activity participation and international exchange. Gong (2009) suggested developing students’ English language skills in accordance with their learning needs and personal interests. Despite the limitations, their arguments show their positive attitude toward practical English promotion.
**Autonomous Learning and Lifelong Learning**

As one of the teaching objectives in the 2007 CECR, cultivation of students’ autonomous learning ability has drawn great attention from College English educators. Cao (2012), Xie (2012), and Zhang (2014) confirmed its necessity and pointed out that autonomous learning (similar to self-directed learning) is an essential ability for lifelong learners. Wang (2004) argued that it is impossible for students to acquire all the knowledge and skills in class due to the time constraint. Thus, it is a necessity rather than a possibility to promote students’ autonomous learning in order to facilitate them to continue their study outside classroom. He emphasized that knowledge transmission is important, but it is more important to teach students effective learning skills and encourage them to conduct autonomous learning. Cao (2012), Xie (2012) and Zhang (2014) all made the same point in their research. In addition, Zhang (2014) advocated that College English teachers should put students at the center of all teaching activities and conduct a role change from truth tellers to coordinators in order to encourage autonomous learning. Cao (2012) examined and identified the student’s new role in autonomous learning as self-directed learner, self-evaluator, cooperative learner, explorer, and sharer, which provides the basis for decisions about teaching and learning strategies in English autonomous learning mode. Their arguments indicate teachers’ recognition of the critical role that autonomous learning plays in promoting English study. Frontline educators are making effort to break away from traditional spoon-feeding teaching in order to facilitate students’ autonomous learning.
C. Zhang (2014), W. Zhang and Liu (2009) believed that the integration between lifelong learning and College English education is a good response to a changing social and educational context. Zhang (2014) pointed out that lifelong learning ability has become a means of survival for people in the 21st century since school education can’t teach everything we may need to know in the future. The rapid technology change and increasingly high job requirements urge us to keep learning for a long time. Ning (2007) argued that higher education is the key stage for learners to cultivate lifelong learning ability. As a required course in China’s higher education, College English plays an important role in the whole lifelong learner cultivation project. He called for a change in College English classroom instruction, and advocated to integrate lifelong learning ideas into College English teaching and learning.

Xie (2012) argued that the integration between lifelong learning and College English education sets higher requirements on College English teaching and learning. Teachers should go beyond knowledge instruction, and make concerted effort to promote autonomous learning and to improve students’ motivation to learn. Xie (2012) proposed the concept of lifelong English learning ability, and explored teaching strategies including building harmonious relationship between teacher and student, using diverse teaching resources, integrating ICT teaching, promoting autonomous learning, and adopting formative and summative assessment approaches in order to promote lifelong English learning ability. Zhang and Liu (2009) pointed out that current College English teaching highlights autonomous learning ability, but neglects collaborative learning ability and innovative ability. They called for equal attention to these three
essential abilities of lifelong learners, and advocated web-based teaching and learning due to the convenience of online message transmission, rich network resources, and audio and visual support for divergent thinking and visual thinking.

The above summary of research literature manifests the positive attitude of researchers and frontline educators toward the integration between lifelong learning and College English education. The arguments of C. Zhang (2014), Ning (2007), and W. Zhang and Liu (2009) show their understandings of the importance of the integration. The research of Xie (2012) demonstrates her concrete effort on teaching strategy innovation, which helps to create an environment to support students as lifelong English learners. The research of Zhang and Liu (2009) shows their critical thinking of the current College English teaching from a lifelong learning perspective. All these arguments and research indicate the commitment of researchers and educators to the realization of lifelong learning ideas in College English classrooms.

Conclusion

In general, College English educators take a positive attitude toward the two main highlights of the integration between lifelong learning and College English education in the 2007 CECR. Although educators tend to adopt different approaches on practical English promotion, most of them recognize the importance of English practical ability. They attend to autonomous learning promotion, and appreciate the integration between lifelong learning and College English education. However, the work they have done so far mainly focuses on how to implement the guidelines prescribed in the 2007 CECR. No effort was made to examine the guideline document critically from a lifelong
learning perspective. How does the 2007 CECR integrate the key ideas of lifelong learning? Which aspect of lifelong learning is missing in the 2007 CECR? A series of questions remain to be answered. That is where this study is situated.

My review of research regarding lifelong learning focuses on Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory. Fischer (2000) explored the conceptual framework of lifelong learning from a pedagogical perspective. His theory provides us with critical principles for examining educational policies that aim to facilitate lifelong learning. This study uses Fischer’s (2000) theory as theoretical basis, and applies his five principles to examine the 2007 CECR.
CHAPTER III
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF 2007 COLLEGE ENGLISH CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will apply Gerhard Fischer’s (2000) theory of lifelong learning to conduct a critical examination of the 2007 CECR. The examined areas include character and objectives of College English, teaching requirements, course design, teaching model, evaluation, and teaching administration.

Character and Objectives of College English

The opening paragraphs defined the 2007 CECR as a guideline document for China’s College English education (CMOE, 2007). It put forward that:

Because institutions of higher learning differ from each other in terms of teaching resources, students’ level of English upon entering college, and the social demands they face, colleges and universities should formulate, in accordance with the Requirements and in the light of their specific circumstances, a scientific, systematic and individualized College English syllabus to guide their own College English teaching (CMOE, 2007, p. 22).

The above statement conveys two principal ideas. First, under the guidance of the 2007 CECR, higher education institutions are allowed to design their own College English syllabus. The individual College English syllabus shall be formulated in
accordance with school capacity and specific circumstances they face (such as teaching resources, educational goals, and the English entry levels of students). In other words, the 2007 CECR provides policy guide on College English education on a macro scale. Higher education institutions have the autonomy to make adjustments within the policy framework set by the 2007 CECR for tailor-made syllabi. Compared with the 1999 syllabus, which imposed high degree of uniformity in College English education (Cai & Xin, 2009), the 2007 CECR made a breakthrough and adopted an inclusive and flexible approach. It shows policy makers’ recognition of the varied conditions and challenges that higher education institutions face.

Second, it proposed the general requirements for the individual syllabus, which are “scientific”, “systematic”, and “individualized.” The “scientific” requirement directs higher education institutions to construct an individual syllabus on the basis of needs analysis and condition analysis. The teaching methods and evaluation model they use must respect the principles of language teaching and learning (Wang, 2004). “Systematic” means the individual syllabus should be an integrated system that includes teaching objectives, teaching arrangements, evaluation, and teaching administration (Wang, 2004). “Individualized” indicates that the syllabus should be tailor-made in accordance with the educational goals, school capacity, and specific learning needs of students (Wang, 2004). The request for an individualized College English syllabus indicates policy makers’ concern for the varied needs of lower levels (e.g. schools, teachers, and students) in the organizational chart. Policy attention was paid not only to the official and social expectation of College English education, but also to that of
individual learners’. The recognition of students’ varied learning needs and the recognition of the different conditions and challenges that schools face imply the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the 2007 CECR.

According to the 2007 CECR, College English is “a required basic course for undergraduate students” and “an integral part of higher learning” (CMOE, 2007, p. 22). Knowledge and practical skills of English language, learning strategies, and intercultural communication are the main components of College English (CMOE, 2007). Developing students’ ability to use English in a well-rounded way became one of the teaching objectives instead of reading ability development. Listening and speaking ability promotion was attached great importance (CMOE, 2007). Autonomous learning ability promotion and general cultural awareness cultivation were written as the other two teaching objectives (CMOE, 2007).

Generally speaking, the 2007 CECR took a balanced approach to formulate the main components and teaching objectives of College English. To begin with, the 2007 CECR put emphasis on both knowledge acquisition and practical ability promotion as the knowledge and practical skills were both included in the main components. Meanwhile, the 2007 CECR prescribed English practical ability promotion as a teaching objective and put it as the first consideration. These provisions correspond with the lifelong learning idea of encouraging students to not only gain knowledge, but also know how to apply them (Fischer, 2000).

Second, the 2007 CECR incorporated learning strategies in order to facilitate students’ autonomous learning. Autonomous learning is a way of learning in which
students initiatively and independently arrange learning contents, organize learning activities, and evaluate learning outcomes through media, educational facilities, and the instructions or help of teachers (Cao, 2013). Similar to self-directed learning, students in autonomous learning mode are responsible for their learning. It is associated with independence of thought, individualized decision-making, creative and critical thinking (Cao, 2013; Hiemstra, 1994). Autonomous learning ability is widely considered as one essential skill of lifelong learners (S. Cao, 2012; Y. Cao, 2013; Xie, 2012; Zhang, 2014). Therefore, the principle of “skills and processes that support learning as a lifetime habit must be developed” (Fischer, 2000, p.9) is represented because continuous engagement in autonomous learning mode helps to enhance students’ sense and ability to learn. Learning would gradually become a habit of individual learners. The process of cultivating autonomous learning ability is the process that supports learning as a lifetime habit.

Third, the general cultural awareness cultivation was articulated both in the main components and the teaching objectives of College English. It manifests the effort that the 2007 CECR made to educate students who are both linguistically and culturally equipped. General cultural awareness cultivation helps students gain an in-depth understanding of the nature of language and culture through the comparison of the cultures studied and their own. In a way, it enhances the impact that foreign language learning exerts on the development of students’ cognition, intelligence, emotion, and humanity. Jarvis once argued that lifelong learning results in a continually changing or a more experienced person; the changes involve not only knowledge and ability growth,
but also cognitive development (as cited in Guo, 2010, p.208). Therefore, knowledge acquisition, ability promotion, and cognitive development shall be an integrated part and be given equal weight in a lifelong learning process. The highlight on general cultural awareness cultivation in the 2007 CECR shows the support for students’ cognitive development. It indicates the integrated approach that the 2007 CECR adopted.

The above provisions indicate that the 2007 CECR aims to promote College English education into a level where English learning is not only about knowledge acquisition, but also practical ability and autonomous learning ability cultivation. Students are encouraged not only to enhance English language ability, but also to develop an insight into the cultures of English speaking countries. As such, the part of “Character and Objectives of College English” in the 2007 CECR is well-considered as it embraces a holistic approach to facilitate students’ English knowledge and ability growth and to attend to their cognitive change. However, there are still some issues that remain questionable.

First, the 2007 CECR required higher education institutions to put emphasis on listening and speaking while cultivating students’ practical ability in English language use (CMOE, 2007). In fact, it is a focus of the whole guideline document as the 2007 CECR highlighted the development of students’ listening and speaking ability in every part. The guaranteed teaching hours and credits were explicitly required in the part of “Course Design.” According to Professor Wang Shouren (2004), one of the authors of the 2007 CECR, putting listening and speaking in the first place does not mean that reading is not any more important. He emphasized that College English education
should strive for a balanced development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating because language acquisition is not only about knowledge accumulation but also the ability to use the knowledge to communicate in practical life; Listening and reading are the ways to obtain information, whereas speaking and writing are the ways to present information. They are closely interrelated, and cannot be separated. Based on this idea, the emphasis on listening and speaking in the 2007 CECR can be interpreted as a correction of the unbalanced approach adopted by the old policies, which highlighted reading ability, but neglected listening and speaking. It is also an attempt to put right the tendency of stressing only language foundation building and ignoring practical ability promotion.

However, neither the 2007 CECR, nor the revision note issued by CMOE, provided a clear instruction to explain the intention of the provision. It led many higher education institutions to go from one extreme to the other, namely, from paying little attention to listening and speaking ability cultivation to giving it first rank regardless of students’ varied learning needs and personal interests (Gong, 2009; Gu, 2007). As Gong (2009) argued, the needs for English language skills are varied in different professions. Not all of them require high language proficiency in listening and speaking. The one-size-fits-all approach would again result in an unbalanced development of between these five English language skills due to the limited credit hours on College English. The language skill(s) that students truly need might not be given enough weight. At this point, the 2007 CECR violates the principle of “learning-on-demand needs to be supported” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). If students were not able to get what they expect from
College English classrooms, how could these teaching activities be “intrinsically rewarding” (Fischer, 2000, p.9)? The rationality and feasibility of this provision is therefore questionable. The 2007 CECR is responsible for the preciseness and clearness of its statements, and should provide clear and detailed instruction to help schools gain a good understanding of its provisions. If necessary, the 2007 CECR should leave the choice to schools and let them decide which language skill(s) shall be emphasized based on their own circumstances and students’ learning needs. Of course, an overall development of these five language skills must be a prerequisite. In this way, students’ learning demands could be addressed, and English learning activities would be intrinsically rewarding.

Second, organizational and collaborative learning were not represented in this part. These two are important approaches to support lifelong learning as individual human mind is limited (Fischer, 2000; Zhang & Liu, 2009). Teamwork becomes a necessity when people need help to complete unfamiliar tasks. Organizational and collaborative learning abilities are required to create the shared understanding, to initiate mutual dialogues, and to construct knowledge jointly and innovatively among team workers. With the rapid technology change and information explosion, people take on more jobs that tend to be more complex and more comprehensive (Fischer, 2000). Organizational and collaborative learning abilities, therefore, have become essential abilities for the lifelong learners in the 21st century. The 2007 CECR should integrate these two concepts with autonomous learning, and give equal weight to them. I recommend to incorporate students’ organizational and collaborative learning abilities
promotion into the teaching objectives of College English, and to set specific teaching requirements to facilitate students’ organizational and collaborative learning.

**Teaching Requirements**

The teaching requirements in the 2007 CECR were set in three levels ranging from basic, intermediate, and advanced (CMOE, 2007). Each level was divided into six parts to provide specific standards in terms of listening, speaking, reading, writing, translating, and vocabulary (CMOE, 2007). College students in non-English majors were required to reach the basic level at least before graduation (CMOE, 2007). The 2007 CECR encouraged higher education institutions to create supportive environments for students with high English proficiency to attain the intermediate or the advanced levels (CMOE, 2007). Cohering with the statement in the opening paragraphs, the 2007 CECR allowed higher education institutions to select their level(s) and adjusted the standards according to their specific circumstances in preparation for an individual College English syllabus (CMOE, 2007). It again demonstrates reform designers’ recognition of the differences between colleges, and of the varied learning needs among students.

In addition, the 2007 CECR proposed the principle of teaching in accordance with students’ English levels and aptitude. It required higher education institutions to provide individualized instruction in order to address specific learning needs of students (CMOE, 2007). That is to say, schools and teachers are responsible for approaching students as individuals by taking account of their English levels, perceptual frameworks, learning styles and needs. The principle indicates the central
position of students in College English teaching activities. Students’ demands on learning are put as the first consideration in the process of College English teaching. As such, “learning-on-demand” (Fischer, 2000, p.9) can be supported. Learning can be embedded in “the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities” (Fischer, 2000, p.9).

As mentioned before, the teaching requirements set specific standards as reference for schools to make individual College English syllabuses. The 2007 CECR paid attention not only to English language ability promotion, but also to the development of students’ ability to reinforce and further professional knowledge through English (CMOE, 2007). The enhanced connection between English study and professional knowledge acquisition would facilitate students’ English practical use in their professions and future careers (Wang, 2004). But it is worth noting that the teaching requirements tend to limit learning within the school setting. It is not compatible with the principle of “learning should take place in the context of authentic complex problems” (Fischer, 2000, p. 8). As Fischer (2000) argued, compared to the complex authentic context, the simple academic environment gives less support for students to see the relevance of what they learn and to relate learning with practical life, as it places students in a decontextualized environment to consume the assigned-to-learn knowledge. Students’ practical ability can not be promoted effectively. He pointed out that the authentic context enables students to learn and apply knowledge on real-world problems. It facilitates students’ autonomous learning and creative thinking. Students are more likely to see “the direct usefulness of new knowledge for actual problem situations” (Fischer, 2000, p.6), which would highly motivate their learning interests. In view of these facts, I would recommend the 2007 CECR gives
more policy support to encourage students to use English beyond the school setting. It concerns whether students’ English practical ability could be truly enhanced. Possible actions that I suggest include increased credit hours on social practice and diversified extracurricular activities for practical English promotion.

Moreover, the teaching requirements did not provide any standard for autonomous learning ability promotion and general cultural awareness cultivation. As discussed before, autonomous learning ability is one essential skill for lifelong learners. General cultural awareness cultivation helps to develop students’ cognition, which is an integral part of lifelong learning. These two were both written into the 2007 CECR as the teaching objectives. Improvement is required to complete the “Teaching Requirements” part so as to maintain the coherence between the teaching objectives and the teaching requirements.

Furthermore, the 2007 CECR set the basic requirements as the national minimum standards for college students in non-English majors. It seems to be necessary as it is a good way to reinforce the effective implementation of the 2007 CECR and to motivate English teaching and learning in higher education sectors (Chen & Klenowski, 2009). As Professor Wang Shouren (2006) argued, the aim of setting the minimum standards is to guarantee the quality of College English teaching. However, as a mandatory provision, it leaves no choice for schools but to observe. Higher education institutions have to spare no effort to help students and make sure all these standards could be met before their graduation. According to the research of Cai and Xin (2009), China’s higher education has completed the transformation from elite education to mass education. One direct result of the transform is the varied entry
levels among college students. Most of the students in top ranking universities have already reached the national minimum standards in admission, whereas a large percent of students in general universities cannot make it until graduation. The situation reveals the contradiction between the national minimum standards and the varied conditions of higher education institutions. Compared to the top ranking universities, the general universities share more accountability in the up-to-standard project due to the average low English proficiency of their students. Accountability is associated with pressure. It is hard to say whether schools and teachers would pay more attention to College English teaching itself or to the high passing rate of the national minimum standards. It is also hard to know whether students’ English study is ability-oriented or test-oriented.

According to the research of Cai and Xin (2009), Chen and Klenowski (2009), and Shu (2012), although the 2007 CECR has alleviated the high stakes attached to the CET, most of the higher education institutions keep using CET-4 as the main assessment instrument since it is designed in accordance with the national minimum standards. The passing rate of CET-4 is still widely viewed as a criterion to evaluate College English teaching and learning.

In view of these facts, the national minimum standards, in a way, distract students, teachers, and schools’ attention from College English teaching and learning since their effort could not be devoted exclusively to English study, but also to the CET passing rate. The time that should be dedicated to practical English promotion has to be spent on studying coaching materials, developing test-wise skills, and doing
mock tests in pursuit of high CET passing rate (Chen & Klenowski, 2009). The test-oriented College English teaching and learning would hardly engage students in the context of “authentic, complex problems” (Fischer, 2000, p.8) to allow them to learn and enhance English practical ability on real-world problems. Neither would it equip students with lifelong learning skills to support English learning as a lifelong habit. In fact, it tends to direct learners to consider passing the CET as the end of the learning process rather than a beginning (Shu, 2012). Obviously, this situation is not what policy makers wanted as they have been making great effort to promote students’ English practical ability and autonomous learning ability. In the future revision of the 2007 CECR, I suggest to eliminate the national minimum standards. Freed from the pressure of reaching standards, universities are more likely to conduct a focused College English teaching and learning. It is also compatible with the inclusive and responsive strategies that policy makers adopted in the 2007 CECR.

Course Design

The 2007 CECR defined the course system of College English as “a combination of required and elective courses in comprehensive English, language skills, English for practical uses, language and culture, and English of specialty” (CMOE, 2007, p.29). Comprehensive English and language skills courses are about the development of English language knowledge and skills; English for practical uses courses are about the development of English practical ability; language and culture courses are about general cultural awareness cultivation; English of specialty courses are about the development of the ability to reinforce and acquire professional knowledge through English, which is a part of English practical ability promotion.
That is to say, the 2007 CECR intended to design a course system which supports English language and practical ability cultivation, general cultural awareness promotion, as well as the connection between English study and the study on specialized areas. It corresponds with the emphasis of a balanced development between knowledge and practical ability in Fischer’s lifelong learning theory (2000). Moreover, the 2007 CECR emphasized that the individual course system of school should be designed in accordance with the varied learning needs of students. It follows the principle of “learning-on-demand needs to be supported” (Fischer, 2000, p.9), and reflects student-centered teaching idea.

The 2007 CECR required higher education institutions to “take into full consideration the development of students’ cultural capacity” (CMOE, 2007, p.29) in formulation of their individual course system. It emphasized that

College English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world. It not only serves as an instrument, but also has humanistic values (CMOE, 2007, p.29).

The above statement shows that the 2007 CECR recognizes the influence that foreign language learning would bring to the development of students’ cognition, intelligence, and humanity. It is compatible with the teaching objective of cultivating students’ general cultural awareness. It again implies that the 2007 CECR aims to educate students who are both linguistically and culturally equipped.
**Teaching Model**

In the part of “Teaching Model”, the 2007 CECR called for a teaching model reform and required higher education institutions to “remold the existing unitary teacher-centered pattern of language teaching by introducing computer/classroom-based teaching models” (CMOE, 2007, p.30). The computer/classroom-based teaching models refer to the one which integrates modern information technology (particularly, the network technology) into College English teaching and learning (CMOE, 2007): To begin with, the 2007 CECR encouraged colleges and universities to establish online course systems and adopt the teaching model which combines classroom teaching and online teaching as supplement to each other. For example, if listening ability were promoted mainly through online courses, at least one-hour face-to-face coaching should be provided after 16 to 20 hours’ online teaching in order to guarantee good learning outcomes. If the teaching of speaking were mainly conducted in classroom, online practice is required to enhance the learning effect (CMOE, 2007). Second, the 2007 CECR advocated the integration of multimedia technology into classroom instruction as it is proved that the application of multimedia technology into teaching, featuring audio, visual, and animation effects, plays an active role in promoting activities and initiatives of students (CMOE, 2007). Third, the 2007 CECR required higher education institutions to create supportive environment in accordance with their own capacity to facilitate students’ individualized and autonomous learning in a web-based setting (CMOE, 2007). Effort is needed to adopt good teaching software and to increase the accesses to ICT resources (CMOE, 2007).
The 2007 CECR intended to take advantage of the ICT-integrated teaching model to alleviate teacher shortages as ICT facilities and teaching software can replace teachers to assist students with repeated language practice (CMOE, 2007; Wang, 2004). Meanwhile, the ICT-integrated teaching model helps to improve students’ English knowledge and practical ability by engaging them in the authentic language learning environment created by ICT facilities (CMOE, 2007; Wang, 2004). The 2007 CECR also aimed to promote students’ autonomous learning ability through equipping them with learning strategies, increasing accesses to learning, and accommodating individualized learning needs (CMOE, 2007; Wang, 2004).

The emphasis on both knowledge and practical ability promotion in the model is compatible with the lifelong learning idea that embraces a balanced development between knowledge and ability. Moreover, the authentic language learning environment created by ICT facilities enables students to learn and apply knowledge on real-world problems. The direct usefulness of the knowledge for the tasks at hand, as well as the audio and visual support provided by ICT facilities, would highly motivate students’ interests for English learning. In view of this, the ICT-integrated teaching model observes the principles of “learning should take place in the context of authentic complex problems” (Fischer, 2000, p.8) and “learning should be embedded in the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). In addition, the new model frees College English teaching and learning from the time and place constraints of traditional classroom teaching. Multiple learning opportunities and accesses to learning resources would be available for students to choose (CMOE, 2007). It helps to accommodate the varied learning needs of students and facilitates
students’ autonomous learning. That is to say, the ICT-integrated teaching model supports “learning-on-demand” (Fischer, 2000, p.9).

The 2007 CECR uses the platform set by modern information technology to reform its teaching model in order to create supportive environment for College English teaching and learning. But it shall be noted that the aforementioned changes are only part of the story. The central aim of the teaching model reform is to achieve the essential change in teaching philosophy and practice, as the 2007 CECR highlighted that

Changes in the teaching model by no means call for changes in teaching methods and approaches only, but, more important, consist of changes in teaching philosophy and practice, and in a shift from a teacher-centered pattern, in which knowledge of the language and skills are imparted by the teacher in class only, to a student-centered pattern, in which the ability to use the language and the ability to learn independently are cultivated in addition to language knowledge and skills, and also to lifelong education, geared towards cultivating students’ lifelong learning ability (CMOE, 2007, p.31).

The above statement focuses on the key ideas of student-centered teaching and learning, a balanced development between knowledge and ability, and lifelong-learning-oriented teaching model reform. First, the 2007 CECR recommended the teaching philosophy, which places students in the center of all learning activities. The roles that teachers should assume are not merely knowledge providers, but also coaches and facilitators. The central position of students and the leading role of teachers in College English teaching and learning were specified and confirmed. This provision corresponds with the student-centered approach that lifelong learning highlights.
Second, the 2007 CECR emphasized a balanced development between knowledge and ability. The ability here refers to the practical ability in English language use and the ability for autonomous learning. The stress on autonomous learning ability promotion indicates the support for lifelong learning ability promotion as autonomous learning ability is one essential skill for lifelong learners. It is compatible with the principle of “skills and processes that support learning as a lifetime habit must be developed” (Fischer, 2000, p.9).

Last, but most importantly, the 2007 CECR defined the long-term goals of the teaching model reform, and showed the direction of future development of College English education, which is to gradually integrate lifelong learning ideas into College English teaching and learning to promote students’ lifelong learning ability and to build College English education as an integral part of lifelong education. It is the first time that the terms of “lifelong learning ability” and “lifelong education” appear in the national College English syllabi. It is fair to assert that the changes in teaching philosophy, teaching pattern, and teaching practice in current reform are made to contribute to the long-term goals; and it is just a beginning. The future national curriculum reform and College English reform at large would follow the direction and achieve these goals by stages. The above statement, in a way, reveals the lifelong-learning-oriented nature of the current reform, which can be interpreted as a note for the police decisions in the 2007 CECR.

It is worth noting that organizational and collaborative learning are not represented in the effort to develop students’ lifelong learning ability. The principle of “organizational and collaborative learning must be supported” (Fischer, 2000, p.9)
therefore is not followed. As discussed before, organizational and collaborative learning ability are the essential skills for lifelong learners in the 21st century. Higher education institutions shall take advantage of the modern information technology to facilitate students’ organizational and collaborative learning both within and beyond the school setting. Further improvement on the 2007 CECR will be needed to provide policy support for these two learning approaches.

**Evaluation**

In the part of “Evaluation”, the 2007 CECR introduced the evaluation model in College English teaching and defined the scope of student and teacher assessment. The evaluation model in the 2007 CECR consists of two parts: the evaluation of students’ learning and that of teachers’ teaching (CMOE, 2007). The evaluation of students’ learning includes formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessment refers to various methods that teachers use to evaluate students’ academic progress in the teaching process (CMOE, 2007). It includes students’ self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment conducted by teachers and school (CMOE, 2007). Summative assessment is conducted at the conclusion of a teaching phase, which “mainly consists of final tests and proficiency tests” (CMOE, 2007, p.33).

Compared to the national syllabi issued in 1985/1986, and 1999, the 2007 CECR introduced formative assessment into its evaluation framework (Chen & Klenowski, 2009). It is applied to go hand-in-hand with summative assessment in order to track the learning process of students and provide ongoing feedback. The introduction of formative assessment indicates that both process and product are
valued in College English learning. Similar to the evaluation of students’ learning, the evaluation of teachers’ teaching puts equal weight on the teaching process and effects (CMOE, 2007). In addition to students’ test scores, the factors of teachers’ attitudes, teaching content and methods, and lesson plans, are all required to be taken into account (CMOE, 2007). These provisions direct teachers and students to focus on English teaching and learning itself rather than on the final test result, which would lead to a more focused College English teaching and learning to support students’ English language ability promotion. Compared to the test-oriented approach, the ability-oriented approach is more likely to engage students in “the context of authentic, complex problems” (Fischer, 2000, p.8), to embed learning “in the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities” (Fischer, 2000, p.9), and to support “learning-on-demand” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). That is to say, a more focused College English teaching and learning helps to creative supportive environments for students to develop skills “that support learning as a lifetime habit” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). As discussed above, the introduction of formative assessment in the 2007 CECR reflects a movement toward lifelong education.

Moreover, students’ involvement in assessment is encouraged as self-assessment and peer assessment are required. The process of self-assessment is also the process of self-reflection from which students are able to identify what they have achieved and what they have not yet achieved. It helps students gain a better understanding of their specific learning needs. Peer assessment helps to deepen students’ understanding of the learning standards. A good understanding of the learning standards and learning needs would facilitate students’ autonomous learning.
Meanwhile, the 2007 CECR intended to use formative assessment to monitor students’ autonomous learning and College English teaching in both computer/classroom-based settings. All these approaches to autonomous learning show the effort that the 2007 CECR made to develop students’ lifelong learning ability, as autonomous learning ability is one essential ability of lifelong learners. It follows the principle of “skills and processes that support leaning as a lifetime habit must be developed” (Fischer, 2000, p.9).

Furthermore, the evaluation of students’ English practical ability was highlighted (CMOE, 2007). The 2007 CECR required that the proficiency tests that schools designed shall involve the assessment of the five English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating (CMOE, 2007). It again reveals the 2007 CECR’s commitment to a balanced development of these five English language skills and to practical English promotion.

It is worth noting that the general cultural awareness was not mentioned in the scope of student assessment. As discussed before, general cultural awareness cultivation supports students’ cognitive development, which is an integral part of lifelong learning. Policy makers should have recognized its importance, as it was prescribed as one teaching objective in the 2007 CECR and attached great importance in the part of “Course Design.” Therefore, I recommend a further improvement of the consistency between the teaching objective, course arrangement, and evaluation. In addition, policy support is needed to support organizational and collaborative learning, as these two lifelong learning approaches are still unrepresented.
Teaching Administration

In the part of “Teaching Administration”, the 2007 CECR provided guidance on College English teaching administration in terms of teaching file management, course credit, faculty hours, and teacher training. It is worth noting that the 2007 CECR advocated adapting College English course system into the credit systems of schools. As requested, College English courses should account for 10% (around 16) of the total credits required for a Bachelor degree. It is suggested that the credits that students receive through online courses shall account for no less than 30% of the 16 credits.

This approach allows students to take College English courses (the elective ones) based on individual learning needs and personal interests, which helps to motivate students’ interests in English study. As such, it supports “learning-on-demand” (Fischer, 2000, p.9), and follows the principle of “learning should be embedded in the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). Besides, it guarantees the minimum hours that students spend on autonomous learning in the web-based setting, which facilitates the development of students’ autonomous learning ability, and in turn helps student develop lifelong learning skills. However, the 2007 CECR did not explain how the percentage numbers of “10%” and “30%” were generated. So the question remains whether all the universities and colleges in China need the 10% College English classes, and how many of them have the capacity to reach the number of “30%”. Of course, these questions are beyond the scope of the current research. But empirical research is still required to examine the feasibility and rationality of these provisions.
Moreover, the 2007 CECR should set specific requirements in this part to encourage teachers to become lifelong learners. As Fischer (2000) argued, “teacher—more than other members of our society—need to be lifelong learners” (p.16) because “creating new paradigms for learning requires teachers who understand and are committed to the improvements envisioned” (p.16). Therefore, frontline educators, as the role models for students, shall actively develop lifelong learning skills and become guides or facilitators to support students as lifelong learners. Possible action that I recommend is to establish incentive mechanisms to encourage teachers to attend to lifelong learning. Higher education institutions may provide teachers with the access to lifelong-learning-themed seminars or workshops to improve their lifelong learning sense and ability.

**Conclusion**

Through examining the 2007 CECR, I found out that four of the five principles in Fischer’s (2000) theory are represented in the examined areas of character and objectives of College English, teaching requirements, course design, teaching model, evaluation, and teaching administration. The principle of “organizational and collaborative learning must be supported” (Fischer, 2000, p.9) is not represented. In general, the 2007 CECR reflects the key ideas of Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory. The main points include ability promotion, student-centered teaching philosophy, general cultural awareness cultivation, and ICT-integrated teaching model. It is worth noting that the 2007 CECR defined students’ lifelong learning ability promotion as one long-term goal of the teaching mode reform, which reveals the lifelong-learning-oriented nature of the reform. Apart from all these strengths, I think
further revision is needed to improve the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the 2007 CECR. I will provide detailed discussion in the following Chapter.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this chapter, I first summarize my examination of how the 2007 CECR integrated the key ideas of lifelong learning. Next, I discuss the limitation of my study. Then, I provide the recommendation for further improvement of the 2007 CECR, and discuss the implications for future integration between lifelong learning and College English education in China and for the transformation of formal educational institution into learning community for lifelong learners.

Summary of My Examination of the 2007 CECR

Based on the study results and discussion in Chapter III, I concluded that the 2007 CECR in general reflects the key ideas of Fischer’s lifelong learning theory (2000). Four of the five principles in his theory are represented in the specific requirements in the areas of character and objectives of College English, teaching requirements, course design, teaching model, evaluation, and teaching administration.

First, the 2007 CECR emphasized ability cultivation. The ability includes students’ English language ability in practical use and autonomous learning ability. The relevant requirements that support ability cultivation include prescribing the development of students’ English practical ability and autonomous learning ability as
two teaching objectives of the 2007 CECR, prescribing English practical skills and learning strategies as two main components of College English, course arrangement, ICT-integrated teaching model reform, and the introduction of formative assessment approaches (CMOE, 2007). In addition, the 2007 CECR set specific standards in the part of “Teaching Requirements” for the development of students’ ability to acquire professional knowledge through English (CMOE, 2007), which is part of English practical ability cultivation (Wang, 2004). The emphasis on practical English is compatible with the balanced approach that Fischer (2000) advocated to knowledge acquisition and practical ability promotion. The emphasis on autonomous learning ability shows the effort that the 2007 CECR made to develop students’ lifelong learning skills. It follows the principle of “skills and processes that support learning as a lifetime habit must be developed” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). As discussed before, students in autonomous learning mode are responsible for their learning. They need to arrange and complete the whole learning process initiatively and independently, including identifying problems, searching for learning resources, constructing solutions, and evaluating learning outcomes. Continuous engagement in the process helps to enhance students’ sense and ability for learning. Finally, learning would become a habit and be part of their lives.

Second, the 2007 CECR advocated student-centered teaching philosophy. The central position of students in College English teaching and learning was specified and confirmed in the part of “Teaching Model” (CMOE, 2007). In addition, the 2007 CECR proposed the principle of teaching in accordance with students’ English levels and aptitude in the part of “Teaching Requirements,” and repeatedly highlighted that
higher education institutions shall take into full consideration the varied learning needs of students in formulation of individual College English syllabus (CMOE, 2007). Meanwhile, it directed schools to make concrete effort (such as course arrangement, ICT-integrated teaching and learning) to facilitate individualized teaching and learning (CMOE, 2007). These requirements support the principle of “leaning-on-demand needs to be supported” (Fischer, 2000, p.9), as schools attend to students’ learning demands and create multiple learning opportunities for accesses to facilitate autonomous learning and individualized learning. Learning could be embedded in the pursuit of “intrinsically rewarding activities” (Fischer, 2000, p.9) as student could get what they expect from College English learning.

Third, the 2007 CECR highlighted general cultural awareness cultivation. It prescribed intercultural communication as one of the main components of College English, set general cultural awareness cultivation as one teaching objective, and attached great importance to the development of students’ cultural capacity in the part of “Course Design” (CMOE, 2007). As discussed before, cultural awareness cultivation supports the development of students’ cognition, which is an integral part of lifelong learning. Therefore, the emphasis on general cultural awareness indicates the integrated approach that 2007 CECR adopted.

Fourth, the 2007 CECR adopted the ICT-integrated teaching model (CMOE, 2007). It supports the principle of “learning should take place in the context of authentic, complex problems” (Fischer, 2000, p.8), because the ICT-integrated teaching model helps to create authentic language learning environment for students to learn and enhance their English language ability on real-world problems.
Fifth, in the part of “Teaching Model”, the 2007 CECR defined the development of students’ lifelong learning ability as the long-term goal of the teaching model reform (CMOE, 2007). It indicated the future development direction of College English education and revealed the lifelong-learning-oriented nature of the reform.

The above five highlights show a deep integration of lifelong learning ideas into the 2007 CECR. Most of the key ideas of Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory are represented in the essential areas of the 2007 CECR, including the teaching objectives, the main components of College English, teaching philosophy and requirements, teaching mode, course arrangement, and evaluation. As such, the 2007 CECR, as the guideline document for China’s College English education, would provide great policy support for lifelong-learning-oriented College English teaching and learning.

**Limitation**

As discussed before, College English education in China is in the primary stage of a lifelong-learning-oriented reform. Research effort shall be made not only to the development of innovative teaching and learning strategies, but also to an in-depth inquiry from a policy level. Due to the limited resources, this study only conduct a critical examination of the body part of the 2007 CECR from a lifelong learning perspective. Future research is needed to use lifelong learning theory to critically examine and explore the appendixes of the 2007 CECR in order to provide more reliable and valuable implications to move forward the reform. Besides, as I discussed before, the 2007 CECR required that College English courses should account for 10%
of the total credits required for a Bachelor degree. The credit hours that students spend on online courses shall account for no less than 30% of the 16 credits. But it did not explain how these numbers were generated. My research cannot address this issue as it goes beyond the scope of the current study. But empirical research is needed to examine the rationality and feasibility of these requirements.

**Recommendation and Implications**

In my examination of the 2007 CECR, I identified the missing aspect of Fischer’s (2000) lifelong learning theory and some questionable issues. Recommendation for further improvement of the 2007 CECR was discussed. The main points are summarized as follows:

First, the principle of “organizational and collaborative learning must be supported” is not represented in the 2007 CECR. As discussed before, organizational and collaborative learning abilities are two essential skills for the lifelong learners in the 21st century because “the individual, unaided human mind is limited” (Fischer, 2000, p.11), and team work is required to help people accomplish unfamiliar and/or complex tasks. Students need to know how to create shared understanding, how to initiate mutual dialogue, and how to construct solution creatively and jointly in a work team. Future improvement is needed to provide policy support to these two learning approaches.

Second, I agree with Gong (2009) that College English education should not exclusively focus on listening and speaking in the development of students’ English practical ability, because not all professions require high language proficiency in listening and speaking. The one-size-fits-all approach might result in an unbalanced
development between these five English language skills. Students’ learning needs might not be addressed due to the limited credit hours on College English. It violates the principles of “leaning-on-demand needs to be supported” (Fischer, 2000, p.9) and “learning should be embedded in the pursuit of intrinsically rewarding activities” (Fischer, 2000, p.9). The 2007 CECR should leave the choice to schools and let them decide which language skill(s) shall be emphasized. But an overall development of these five language skills must be guaranteed.

Third, I recommend eliminating the national minimum standards as it tends to direct teachers and students to pay more attention to the passing rate rather than to College English teaching and learning. Much attention has to be given to coaching materials, doing mock tests, and developing examination-wise skills (Chen & Klenowski, 2009). It would substantially reduce the chance of developing students’ English practical ability and lifelong learning skills.

Fourth, the specific standards set in the teaching requirements tend to limit College English teaching and learning within the school setting. Although the ICT-integrated teaching model helps to engage students in an authentic language learning environment, the experience in the virtual environment is different from the one gained in the real world. I recommend encouraging students to go outside the walls of the school to learn and enhance their practical English in the real world. I think higher education institutions should consider increasing the credit hours spent on English social practice and diversifying extracurricular activities for practical English promotion.
Fifth, the coherence between the areas of teaching objectives, teaching requirements, course design and evaluation shall be improved in the 2007 CECR as general cultural awareness cultivation was attached importance in the parts of “Character and Objectives of College English” and “Course Design,” but not represented in the parts of “teaching requirements” and “evaluation.” It seems that the 2007 CECR recognized the importance of cultural awareness teaching, but did not put it as the first consideration. The higher education institutions that are responsible for implementation would attend to the unequal weights that the 2007 CECR put on between the teaching objectives (the development of students’ English practical ability, autonomous learning ability, and cultural capacity), and give less attention and investment to cultural awareness teaching. It might be considered one reason for the situation that Han (2012) criticized -- College English, in a way, has become a tool subject for English training. Therefore, I recommend that the 2007 CECR should set up specific teaching and evaluation standards to guide students’ cultural capacity promotion in order to guarantee a balanced development between students’ English practical ability, autonomous learning ability, and cultural capacity.

Sixth, the 2007 CECR should encourage teachers to develop and enhance the sense and ability for lifelong learning because “creating new paradigms for learning requires teachers who understand and are committed to the improvements envisioned” (Fischer, 2000, p.16). Driven by the lifelong learning sense, teachers would make constant effort to update knowledge and to enrich teaching strategies in order to improve their teaching. The good examples and the supportive environment that
frontline educators create would highly motivate and facilitate students to become lifelong learners.

For future integration between lifelong learning and College English education in China, I think policy makers should consider incorporating organizational and collaborative learning ability promotion into the teaching objectives of College English in order to put equal weight on these lifelong learning approaches including autonomous learning, organizational and collaborative learning. I recommend improving the coherence between different parts of the guideline document to support the achievement of all teaching objectives. In other words, if we incorporate organizational and collaborative learning ability promotion into the teaching objectives, we should set up specific requirements in the areas of teaching requirements, course arrangement, and evaluation to guide teaching activities. Moreover, we should devote time and energy to maintaining and improving the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the guideline document to direct and support higher education institutions to address the varied learning need of students. I strongly suggest eliminating the national minimum standards so as to guarantee a more focused College English teaching and learning and to support students as lifelong learners. In addition, I think higher education institutions should establish incentive mechanisms to encourage teachers’ lifelong learning ability promotion.

For the transformation of formal educational institution into learning community for lifelong learners, I think a supportive guideline document for lifelong-learning-oriented teaching and learning shall be a prerequisite. Concerned educators shall pay special attention to improve the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the
document to allow schools to explore and construct workable individual plan in accordance with their capacity and students’ varied learning needs. Moreover, concerned educators shall follow the student-centered principle and initiate an ability-oriented teaching model reform. The ability here includes the ability to learn and apply knowledge on real-world problems, autonomous learning ability (or self-directed learning ability), and organizational and collaborative learning ability. Meanwhile, schools and teachers shall be encouraged to take advantage of the modern information technology to create an environment to support students’ autonomous learning, organizational and collaborative learning. In addition, teachers shall be encouraged to become lifelong learning practitioners to support students as lifelong learners.

As a trend in education, lifelong learning is playing an increasingly important role in China’s education system. The integration between lifelong learning and College English education is a necessity. It is a response to the demand for high-quality College English education, and also has great significance for the actual realization of lifelong learning in China’s school education. This study examined the integration from a policy level. The study result indicates that the current guideline document for College English education (the 2007 CECR) reflects the key ideas of lifelong learning. Although there is room for further improvement, we can still trust that the 2007 CECR would provide great policy support for the realization of lifelong learning ideas in College English classrooms. Due to limited resources, this study has its limitation. But I hope it could be a modest spur to induce more valuable contributions to this issue.
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APPENDIX

College English Curriculum Requirements

With a view to keeping up with the new developments of higher education in China, deepening teaching reform, improving teaching quality, and meeting the needs of the country and society for qualified personnel in the new era, College English Curriculum Requirements (Requirements hereafter) has been drawn up to provide colleges and universities with the guidelines for English instruction to non-English major students.

Because institutions of higher learning differ from each other in terms of teaching resources, students' level of English upon entering college, and the social demands they face, colleges and universities should formulate, in accordance with the Requirements and in the light of their specific circumstances, a scientific, systematic and individualized College English syllabus to guide their own College English teaching.

1. Character and Objectives of College English

College English, an integral part of higher learning, is a required basic course for undergraduate students. Under the guidance of theories of foreign language teaching, College English has as its main components knowledge and practical skills of the English language, learning strategies and intercultural communication. It is a systematic whole, incorporating different teaching models and approaches.

The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges.

II. Teaching Requirements

As China is a large country with conditions that vary from region to region and from college to college, the teaching of College English should follow the principle of providing different guidance for different groups of students and instructing them in accordance with their aptitude so as to meet the specific needs of personalized teaching.

The requirements for undergraduate College English teaching are set at three levels, i.e., basic requirements, intermediate requirements, and higher requirements. Non-English majors are required to attain to one of the three levels of requirements after studying and practicing English at school. The basic requirements are the minimum level that all non-English majors have to reach before graduation. Intermediate and advanced requirements are recommended for those colleges and universities which have more favorable conditions; they should select their levels according to the school's status, types and education goals.

Institutions of higher learning should set their own objectives in the light of their specific circumstances; strive to create favorable conditions, and enable those students who have a relatively higher
English proficiency and stronger capability for learning to meet the intermediate or advanced requirements.

The three levels of requirements are set as follows:

**Basic Requirements:**
1. **Listening:** Students should be able to follow classroom instructions, everyday conversations, and lectures on general topics conducted in English. They should be able to understand English radio and TV programs spoken at a speed of about 130 to 150 words per minute (wpm), grasping the main ideas and key points. They are expected to be able to employ basic listening strategies to facilitate comprehension.

2. **Speaking:** Students should be able to communicate in English in the course of learning, to conduct discussions on a given theme, and to talk about everyday topics in English. They should be able to give, after some preparation, short talks on familiar topics with clear articulation and basically correct pronunciation and intonation. They are expected to be able to use basic conversational strategies in dialogue.

3. **Reading:** Students should generally be able to read English texts on general topics at a speed of 70 wpm. With longer and less difficult texts, the reading speed should be 100 wpm. Students should be able to do skimming and scanning. With the help of dictionaries, they should be able to read textbooks in their areas of specialty, and newspaper and magazine articles on familiar topics, grasping the main ideas and understanding major facts and relevant details. They should be able to understand texts of practical styles commonly used in work and daily life. They are expected to be able to employ effective reading strategies while reading.

4. **Writing:** Students should be able to complete writing tasks for general purposes, e.g., describing personal experiences, impressions, feelings, or some events, and to undertake practical writing. They should be able to write within 30 minutes a short composition of no less than 120 words on a general topic, or an outline. The composition should be basically complete in content, clear in main idea, appropriate in diction and coherence in discourse. Students are expected to be able to come up with a command of basic writing strategies.

5. **Translation:** With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate essays on familiar topics from English into Chinese and vice versa. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 300 English words per hour whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 250 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should be basically accurate, free from serious mistakes in comprehension or expression.

6. **Recommended Vocabulary:** Students should acquire a total of 4,795 words and 700 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses), among which 2,000 are active words. (See Appendix III: College English Vocabulary) Students should not only be able to comprehend the active words but be proficient in using them when expressing themselves in speaking or writing.

**Intermediate Requirements:**
1. **Listening:** Students should generally be able to follow talks and lectures in English, to understand longer English radio and TV programs on familiar topics spoken at a speed of around 150 to 180 wpm, grasping the main ideas, key points and relevant details. They should be able to understand, by and large, courses in their areas of specialty taught in English.

2. **Speaking:** Students should be able to hold conversations in fairly
1. Listening: Students should, by and large, be able to understand radio and TV programs produced in English-speaking countries and grasp the gist and key points. They should be able to follow talks by people from English-speaking countries given at normal speed, and to understand courses in their areas of specialization and lectures in English.

2. Speaking: Students should be able to conduct dialogues or discussions with a certain degree of fluency and accuracy on general or specialized topics, and to make concise summaries of extended texts or speeches in fairly difficult language. They should be able to deliver papers at academic conferences and participate in discussions.

3. Reading: Students should be able to read rather difficult texts, and understand their main ideas and details. They should be able to read English articles in newspapers and magazines published abroad, and to read English literature related to their areas of specialization without much difficulty.

4. Writing: Students should be able to write brief reports and papers in their areas of specialization, to express their opinions freely, and to write within 30 minutes expository or argumentative essays of no less than 300 words on a given topic. The text should be characterized by clear expression of ideas, rich content, neat structure, and good

5. Translation: With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate on a selective basis English literature in their field, and to translate texts on familiar topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 350 English words per hour, whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 300 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should read smoothly, convey the original meaning and be, in the main, free from mistakes in understanding or expression.

6. Recommended Vocabulary: Students should acquire a total of 6,359 words and 1,200 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses and the Basic Requirements), among which 2,200 are active words (including the active words that have been covered in the Basic Requirements). (See Appendix III: College English Vocabulary)

Advanced Requirements:

1. Reading: Students should be able to read newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries at a speed of 70 to 90 wpm. With longer texts for fast reading, the reading speed should be 120 wpm. Students should be able to skim or scan reading materials. When reading summary literature in their areas of specialization, students should be able to get a correct understanding of the main ideas, major facts and relevant details.

4. Writing: Students should be able to express, by and large, personal views on general topics, compose English abstracts for theses in their own specialization, and write short English papers on topics in their field. They should be able to describe charts and graphs, and to complete within 30 minutes a short composition of no less than 160 words. The composition should be complete in content, clear in idea, well-organized in presentation and coherent in discourse.

5. Writing: Students should be able to use appropriate translation techniques.

6. Recommended Vocabulary: Students should acquire a total of 6,359 words and 1,200 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses and the Basic Requirements), among which 2,200 are active words (including the active words that have been covered in the Basic Requirements). (See Appendix III: College English Vocabulary)

Advanced Requirements:

1. Listening: Students should, by and large, be able to understand radio and TV programs produced in English-speaking countries and grasp the gist and key points. They should be able to follow talks by people from English-speaking countries given at normal speed, and to understand courses in their areas of specialization and lectures in English.

2. Speaking: Students should be able to conduct dialogues or discussions with a certain degree of fluency and accuracy on general or specialized topics, and to make concise summaries of extended texts or speeches in fairly difficult language. They should be able to deliver papers at academic conferences and participate in discussions.

3. Reading: Students should be able to read rather difficult texts, and understand their main ideas and details. They should be able to read English articles in newspapers and magazines published abroad, and to read English literature related to their areas of specialization without much difficulty.

4. Writing: Students should be able to write brief reports and papers in their areas of specialization, to express their opinions freely, and to write within 30 minutes expository or argumentative essays of no less than 300 words on a given topic. The text should be characterized by clear expression of ideas, rich content, neat structure, and good
logic.

5. Translation: With the help of dictionaries, students should be able to translate into Chinese fairly difficult English texts in literature related to their areas of specialty and in newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries; they should also be able to translate Chinese introductory texts on the conditions of China or Chinese culture into English. The speed of translation from English into Chinese should be about 400 English words per hour whereas the speed of translation from Chinese into English should be around 250 Chinese characters per hour. The translation should convey the idea with accuracy and smoothness and be basically free from misinterpretation, omission and mistakes in expression.

6. Recommended Vocabulary: Students should acquire a total of 7,675 words and 1,879 phrases (including those that are covered in high school English courses), the Basic Requirements and Intermediate Requirements), among which 2,500 are active words (including the active words that have been covered in the Basic Requirements and Intermediate Requirements). (See Appendix III: College English Vocabulary).

The above-mentioned three requirements serve as reference standards for colleges and universities in preparing their own College English teaching documents. They could, in the light of their respective circumstances, make due adjustments to the specific requirements for listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation at the three levels. In doing so they should place more emphasis on the cultivation and training of listening and speaking abilities.

III. Course Design

Taking into account the school’s circumstances, colleges and universities should follow the guidelines of the Requirements and the goals of their College English teaching in designing their College English course systems. A course system, which is a combination of required and elective courses in comprehensive English, language skills, English for practical uses, language and culture, and English of specialty, should ensure that students at different levels receive adequate training and make improvement in their ability to use English.

In designing College English courses, requirements for cultivating competence in listening and speaking should be fully considered, and corresponding teaching hours and credits should be adequately allocated. Moreover, the extensive use of advanced information technology should be encouraged, computer- and Web-based courses should be developed, and students should be provided with favorable environment and facilities for language learning.

College English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world. It not only serves as an instrument, but also has humanistic values. When designing College English courses, therefore, it is necessary to take into full consideration the development of students’ cultural capacity and the teaching of knowledge about different cultures in the world.

All the courses, whether computer-based or classroom-based, should be fully individual-oriented, taking into account students with different starting points, so that students who start from lower levels will be well taken care of while students whose English is better will find room for
College English course design should help students to have a solid foundation in the English language while developing their ability to use English, especially their ability to listen and speak in English. It should ensure that students make steady progress in English proficiency throughout their undergraduate studies, and it should encourage students' individualized learning so as to meet the needs of their development in different specialties.

IV. Teaching Model

In view of the marked increase in student enrolments and the relatively limited resources, colleges and universities should remodel the existing unitary teacher-centered pattern of language teaching by introducing computer/classroom-based teaching models. The new model should be built on modern information technology, particularly network technology, so that English language teaching and learning will be, to a certain extent, free from the constraints of time or place and geared towards students' individualized and autonomous learning. The new model should combine the principles of practicality, knowledge and interest, facilitate mobilizing the initiative of both teachers and students, and attach particular importance to the central position of students and the leading role of teachers in the teaching and learning process. This model should incorporate into it the strengths of the current model and give play to the advantages of traditional classroom teaching while fully employing modern information technology.

Colleges and universities should explore and establish a Web-based listening and speaking teaching model that suits their own needs in line with their own conditions and students' English proficiency, and deliver listening and speaking courses via the internet or campus network. The teaching of reading, writing and translation can be conducted either in the classroom or online. With regard to computer/Web-based courses, face-to-face coaching should be provided in order to guarantee the effects of learning.

The network-based teaching system developed in an attempt to implement the new teaching model should cover the complete process of teaching, learning, feedback and management, including such modules as students' learning and self-assessment, teachers' lectures, and online coaching, as well as the monitoring and management of learning and coaching. It should be able to track down, record and check the progress of learning in addition to teaching and coaching, and attain to a high level of interactivity, multimedia-use and operability. Colleges and universities should adopt good teaching software and encourage teachers to make effective use of web multimedia and other teaching resources.

One of the objectives of the reform of the teaching model is to promote the development of individualized study methods and the autonomous learning ability on the part of students. The new model should enable students to select materials and methods suited to their individual needs, obtain guidance in learning strategies, and gradually improve their autonomous learning ability.

Changes in the teaching model by no means call for changes in teaching methods and approaches only, but, more important, consist of changes in teaching philosophy and practice, and in a shift from a teacher-centered pattern, in which knowledge of the language and skills are imparted by the teacher in class only, to a student-centered pattern, in which the ability to use the language and the ability to learn independently are cultivated in addition to language knowledge and skills, and also in lifelong education, geared towards cultivating students' lifelong learning ability.
For the implementation of the new model, refer to Appendix I: Computer/Classroom-based College English Teaching Model.

V. Evaluation

Evaluation is a key component in College English teaching. A comprehensive, objective, scientific and accurate evaluation system is of vital importance to the achievement of course goals. It not only helps teachers obtain feedback, improve the administration of teaching, and ensure teaching quality but also provides students with an effective means to adjust their learning strategies and methods, improve their learning efficiency and achieve the desired learning effects.

The evaluation of students’ learning consists of formative assessment and summative evaluation.

Formative assessment refers to procedural and developmental assessment conducted in the teaching process, i.e., tracking the teaching process, providing feedback and promoting an all-round development of the students, in accordance with the teaching objectives and by means of various evaluative methods. It facilitates the effective monitoring of students’ autonomous learning, and is particularly important in implementing the computer/classroom-based teaching model. It includes students’ self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment conducted by teachers and school administrators. Formative assessment takes such forms as keeping a record of students’ in and outside of classroom activities and online self-learning data, keeping files on students’ study results, and conducting interviews and holding meetings. This allows students’ learning processes to be subjected to observation, evaluation and supervision, thus contributing to the enhancement of their learning efficiency. (See the recommended Self-Assessment / Peer Assessment Form of Students’ English Competence in Appendix II)

Summative assessment is conducted at the end of a teaching phase. It mainly consists of final tests and proficiency tests, designed to evaluate student’s all-round ability to use English. These tests aim to assess not only students’ competence in reading, writing and translation, but also their competence in listening and speaking.

To make a summative assessment of teaching, colleges and universities may administer tests of their own, run tests at the intercollegiate or regional level, or let students take the national test after meeting the different standards set by the Requirements. Whatever form the tests may take, the focus should be on the assessment of students’ ability to use English in communication, particularly their ability to listen and speak in English.

Evaluation also includes that of the teachers, i.e., the assessment of their teaching processes and effects. This should not be merely based on students’ test scores, but take into account teachers’ attitudes, approaches, and methods; it should also consider the content and organization of their courses, and the effects of their teaching.

Government education administrative offices at different levels and colleges and universities should regard the evaluation of College English teaching as an important part of the evaluation of the overall undergraduate education of the school.

VI. Teaching Administration

Teaching administration should cover the whole process of College English teaching. To ensure that the set teaching objectives can be achieved, efforts should be made to strengthen the guidance for and supervision of the teaching process. For this purpose, the following
measures should be taken:

1. A system for teaching and teaching administration documentation should be established. Documents of teaching include College English Curriculum of the colleges and universities concerned, as well as the documents stipulating the teaching objectives, course description, teaching arrangement, content of teaching, teaching progress, and methods of assessment for all the courses within the program. Documents of teaching administration include documents registering students’ status and their academic credits, regulations of assessment, students’ academic scores and records, analyses of exam papers, guidelines for teaching and records of teaching and research activities.

2. The College English program should adapt itself to the overall credit system of the colleges and universities concerned and should account for 10% (around 16) of the total undergraduate credits. The credits students acquire via computer-based courses should be equally acknowledged once students pass the exams. It is suggested that these credits should account for no less than 30% of the total credits in College English learning.

3. Faculty employment and management should be improved in order to guarantee a reasonable teacher-student ratio. In addition to classroom teaching, the hours spent on face-to-face coaching, instructions on network usage and on extracurricular activities should be counted in the teachers’ teaching load.

4. A system of faculty development should be established. The quality of teachers is the key to the improvement of the teaching quality, and to the development of the College English program. Colleges and universities should build a faculty team with a good structure of age, educational backgrounds and professional titles, lay emphasis on the training and development of College English teachers, encourage them to conduct teaching and research with a focus on the improvement of teaching quality, create conditions for them to carry out relevant activities in various forms, and promote effective cooperation among them, so that they can better adapt to the new teaching model. Meanwhile, opportunities should be created so that the teachers can enjoy sabbaticals and engage in advanced studies, thus ensuring sustainable improvement in their academic performance and methods of teaching.