

# A Research on Students' Needs for Follow-up Curriculum of College English

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## Abstract

Increased universities and colleges offer the undergraduates with more follow-up courses with the further reform in college English education in China. An investigation on self-evaluation, difficulty, and willingness of undergraduates in learning English further was made in order to design more appropriate and adaptable follow-up courses. This research shows that the majority of undergraduates are not satisfied with their English level in English skills, especially speaking. Most undergraduates are willing to take further college English courses with the purpose of finding a better job, but they prefer to choose some comparatively simple and entertaining selective courses such as movie appreciation other than some courses for developing skills. The data achieved leaves some implications on college English education, lays some bases for English education reform and provides new challenge for college English teachers.

**Keywords:** follow-up curriculum, needs analysis, college English reform

## 1. Introduction

College English Curriculum Requirements presents that college English is a basic language course and a quality education course of broadening knowledge and global culture as well. Follow-up curriculum in college education system is designed to help undergraduates know more about western culture, to distinguish between Chinese and western culture, and to improve the intercultural communication competence, which is conducive to communicate effectively in English. College English follow-up courses will ensure undergraduates to keep learning English for four years in college and advance their comprehensive competence of using English, which can test and embody college English reform. It is considered that college English curriculum in China has entered the important transforming period, from the simple traditional comprehensive English curriculum to the diversified professional college English system composed of comprehensive courses, cultural courses, EAP, ESP and other skill-advanced courses.

Many colleges and universities in China have been reforming college English curriculum system on the basis of College English Curriculum Requirements. Varied follow-up courses are designed according to the different situations in different colleges and universities. The research data, made in 37 colleges and universities in 2011 by the experts in College Foreign Languages Education Committee, shows that most of the universities and colleges have offered compulsory courses at basic level and optional courses at advanced level in order to satisfy students' different needs. Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University (GPNU) is a provincial general university with Master's Degree granting authority. College English Department has provided some selective courses for all the students since 2005, such as spoken English for travelling, general introduction to modern America literature, appreciation of western culture, western movies and televisions, cross-culture communication and some others. Not until 2012 the follow-up courses including these courses have entered the college English system, with each one given 4 credits. However, how to design the follow-up courses appropriately is worth discussing. If undergraduates pass CET4 (College-English Test, a national English test for non-English majors), they can freely choose the courses offered in the second term of the second school year. The research neglects the difference between class A (in class A, students will be given lectures in English, very little Chinese will be used) and B (in class B, some Chinese will be used in classroom teaching, and the learning tasks are easier than those given in class A), because 98% of the students who pass CET4 are from class A. The research is to analyze the needs of undergraduates in arts, science and engineering for the follow-up curriculum. Such questions will be answered as what students would like to learn after they pass CET4, what they would like to learn from the follow-up courses if such courses are provided, and in what ways they hope the courses are offered, not excluding self-rating of English skills, difficulties, and willingness to learn further in the

first part of the questionnaire. The result offers an inspiration to follow-up courses design and English innovation, and gives some implications on teachers' self-improvement.

## 2. Review of Literature

Curriculum design is a dynamic system of various interactive factors, including needs analysis, objective design, implement and evaluation (Richards, 1984). Needs analysis refers to the survey and analysis of the learners' needs to know what and how to learn in the process of curriculum design and implement. According to the results of needs analysis, decisions can be made in language programme planning such as learning objectives, syllabus content, learning materials and resources, and teaching and assessment methods, and others.

### 2.1 Development of NA

The research on methods of needs analysis in the world has undergone for about 30 years. The focus is changed from the earlier EOP to EAP, embracing the general language learning. Needs analysis started mainly in the field of ESP can be used in GE (general English) because of a perceptible need of some kind in language learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Tudor (1996:70) also supports that needs analysis can be used for GE course to analysis in which situation the language will be used, and what will be specified, precision or general uses. Needs analysis is important in planning the general language courses and curriculum (Richards, 1990:2), and needs analysis can be used for a range of purpose, such as, designing a programme, setting the objectives, reviewing and evaluating an existing programme, developing further the pedagogy and assessment.

The needs analysis theory and application research in foreign language education has stepped further. The research extends from curriculum standard by target needs to more fields such as practicality and limitations, teaching methods and learning strategies, and choices of teaching material. The most prevailing research models of needs analysis consist of social linguistics model (Munby, 1978), systematic analysis model (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977), learning-centered analysis model (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), learner-centered analysis model (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989), and task-based analysis model (Long, 2005).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that there should not be any difference between ESP and general English (GE) as for needs analysis. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) presents needs analysis needs to be ceaselessly checked and emphasizes various data collection (e.g. interview, observation, learners and others) in order to solve the complexity of target needs analysis. A needs analysis theory by Waters & Vilches (2001) puts forward that the needs analysis of different levels and different groups is used to execute English education reform. The heat dispute in this field extends the application of needs analysis to a great extent so that the design of curriculum is based on the various needs of learners (West, 1994).

### 2.2 Approaches to NA

The research models of needs analysis consist of social linguistics model (Munby, 1978), systematic analysis model (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977), learning-centered analysis model (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), learner-centered analysis model (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989), and task-based analysis model (Long, 2005).

Sociolinguistic model by Munby (1978) is to analyze the content of purpose-specific language programmes. This model provides a detailed profile of the students' language needs based on analyzing language communication in the target situation. West (1994) supports this model suitably to identify target communicative competence. However, this model arouses some argument. Nunan (1988:24) argues that the subjective needs of learners should be considered and included in this model. Based on Munby's model, Tarone & Yule (1989) develops a new model with four level frameworks – global level, rhetorical level, grammatical-rhetorical level and grammatical level. Both models present the idea that needs analysis is used to identify learners' target language needs and decide communicative activities.

Systemic approach, developed by Richterich & Chancerel (1977), is to identify the needs of adults learning a foreign language, which fills the gaps in the sociolinguistic model in terms of flexibility and shows a distinct concern for learners. This approach focus more on investigating the learners' needs before and during the course, and also the needs of the 'teaching establishments' (Jordan, 1997). More than one or two data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews and attitude scales, are suggested to be used for needs analysis (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977). However, Long (2005a) argues that one problem in this approach is over-reliance on learners' perceptions, because many learners are not clear about what they want.

Hutchinson & Waters (1987) offers a learning-centred approach, which identify how learners learn while other approaches focus more on language needs. Learning - centred approach (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) consists of two dimensions, target needs and learning needs. Target needs are divided into three categories such as necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are considered to determine what the learner has to know in order to use effectively in the target situation. Lacks are considered to fill the gaps between what the learners have known and the necessities. Wants refer to

what the learners think they want. Learning needs explains how learners will move from lacks to necessities. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest that the learning situation, the learners' knowledge, skills, strategies, and motivation should also be taken into consideration. They recommend multiple methods of data collection - such as interviews, observation, and informal consultations with sponsors, learners and others involved - to deal with the complexity of target needs. West (1994) also divides needs analysis into various categories, such as target situation analysis, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis and language audits.

The fourth approach is the learner-centred approach by Berwick (1989) and Brindley (1989). Three different aspects are considered to identify the learners' needs: perceived vs. felt needs; product vs. process oriented interpretations; and objective vs. subjective needs. Perceived needs are from the perspective of experts while 'felt needs' are from the perspective of learners (Berwick, 1989). In the product-oriented interpretation, learner needs are viewed as the language that learners require in target situations. In the process-oriented interpretation, the focus is on how individuals respond to their learning situation, involving affective and cognitive variables which affect learning (Brindley, 1989). The learner-centred approach by Brindley (1989) presents a cyclic process of investigation of objective and subjective needs, which includes negotiation, information exchange, awareness activities, evaluation and feedback, learning activities, and objective setting in consultation.

The last approach is a task-based approach. Long (2005) argued that a task-based approach to needs analysis is used with teaching and learning based on the argument that "structures or other linguistic elements (notions, functions, lexical items, etc.)" should not be a focal point of teaching and learning. "Learners are far more active and cognitive-independent participants in the acquisition process than is assumed by the erroneous belief that what you teach is what they learn, and when you teach it is when they learn it" (Long, 2005, p. 3). That is to say, learners with cognitive independence are more engaged in the task-based learning in order for acquisition. Long (2005) suggests that tasks are the units of analysis and "samples of the discourse typically involved in performance of target tasks" (p. 3) are collected.

### *2.3 Research on NA in China*

The study of needs analysis theory in China mainly includes an introduction and the evaluation of the theories (Chen & Wang, 2009; Chen, 2009). Shu (2004) presents needs analysis consists of social needs and personal needs. The personal needs refer to learners' actual level and expectations, and the gap between them, while the social needs refers to what the society and enterprises or institutions needs. Xia & Kong (1999) put forward how to know the learners and foreign language teaching by analyzing the needs. Yu (2002) introduces briefly what needs analysis is, what it implies, what it changes, and in what field it is used. Yu also discusses how to collect and analyze the data by combining the qualitative research with quantitative research based on some needs analysis models. Fu and Hao (2008) have made a related research on the graduates and third & fourth-year students majoring in English, English teachers, and employers. They focus on the students majoring in English, excluding non-English-major students. Zhao, Lei and Zhang (2009) have made an investigation on learning needs and satisfaction of 2283 students at their first and second year in the university, but neglecting the needs of junior and senior students and teachers. This research analyzes students' needs for follow-up courses after one-year college English study, including what English level students aim to achieve by self-evaluation, what skills they lack and need to grasp, what courses they would like to choose in the selective groups and what difficulty they suppose to meet in studying the follow-up courses.

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1 Participants*

The subjects of this research are the second-year undergraduates (not including English majors) in GPNU. 1304 valid questionnaires are accepted among 1800 given randomly to the students. GPNU is a provincial general university with Master's Degree granting authority. There are 15 schools with 52 undergraduate majors in the university. The university now enrolls students mainly from Guangdong and other provinces in China. College English is offered by College English Department as a compulsory course for the undergraduates in their first two years. When the undergraduates are enrolled in the university, they have to take the placement test before starting to learn college English. They are placed in class A and B according to the result of the placement test and the college entrance examination. The students with comparatively higher scores in both tests are placed in class A, while others are placed in class B. English College Department has tried to reform the English teaching system from traditional general English teaching to English development education, and to offer 4 follow-up courses for the second-year students. If the students pass CET4, they can freely choose the courses offered in the last term of the second year. The research neglects the difference between class A and B, because the students who pass CET4 are 98% from class A. Therefore, 872 of the data only from class A was collected from 1304 valid questionnaire and analyzed, including 657 in arts and 215 in science and engineering. The research is on the needs of students in arts and science and engineering for the follow-up curriculum, including

what students would like to do if they pass CET4, what they would like to learn in the follow-up courses, in what ways they hope the courses are offered, and what courses they would like to take, not excluding self-rating of English skills, difficulties, and willingness to learn further in the first part.

### *3.2 Instrument and Data Collection*

A questionnaire in three parts in Chinese was designed, which included 51 close-ended questions in total. The first part of the questionnaire includes three parts, with 9 questions on self-evaluation, another 9 on difficulty evaluation, and 9 more on willingness to learn further, all measured by 5-point Likert scales from “really bad” to “really good”, from “quite difficult” to “quite easy”, and from “strongly unwilling” to “strongly willing”. The second part of the questionnaire provides 24 choices of follow-up courses for students to choose their favorite ones, measured by 5-point Likert scales from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. This data will be suited to quantitative, statistical analysis. Only one open-ended question in the third part provides qualitative data.

The pre-survey was made twice in Liu’s class, because she is one of the main designers, in order to test the validity of the questionnaire. Adjustment was made according to the pre-survey and the discussion of the research team. All questions were designed in Chinese so that students can understand completely and make clear choices. The questionnaire was carried out on May, 2013. The objects filled in the questionnaire in English class with the help of their English teacher, who then collect them to be sorted out and analyzed by the research team.

### *3.3 Procedures for Data Analysis*

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) was employed to analyze the data collected from closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. Questionnaires in the current research elicit two types of data: nominal or categorical data and ordinal data. Nominal data comes from scales without numerical value, such as gender (Dörnyei, 2007). We coded ‘1’ for class A and ‘2’ for class B, and coded S for science and A for arts, but without ordering the categories. Ordinal data can be ordered (Muijs, 2004), for example, a multiple-choice item with options such as ‘very much’, ‘a little’, ‘not much’, and ‘not at all’. Data analysis procedures for the study included frequency statistics and descriptive statistics, which involved means and standard deviations for the sample related to class level, majors (arts or science and engineering) and other key variables. T-test was finally used in the data analysis to compare the means of a dependent variable between two groups. T-test can also tell us whether the difference is statistically significant.

“T-test has been designed to test whether the means of two samples differ and can be easily calculated in SPSS. As with the chi square, the smaller the significance level, the less likely it is that we would have found the difference we have found in our sample if there were no difference in the population. The cut-off point of less than 0.05 also remains the same” (Muijs, 2004: 131).

T-test was used to compare the means of a dependent variables between two groups, that is, the data were treated as a continuous variable as the dependent variable. The chi-square test is only used to compare two groups, that is, the data were treated as a nominal variable (Muijs, 2004). T-test, in fact, is more appropriate than the chi-square for responses to Likert-type items, which form (at least) an ordinal scale and are frequently treated as if they were interval for the purposes of analysis.

As mentioned above, quantitative analysis covers three aspects which were all contained in the original questionnaire. Self-rating, difficulty rating and willingness in the first part include respectively nine aspects: listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, grammar, phonetics, words and expressions and cultural knowledge. All the items were analyzed by 5-point Likert scales (1=really bad, quite difficult, or strongly unwilling respectively; 5=very good, quite easy or strongly willing respectively).

Twenty-four items in the second part were constructed to analyze what courses the students would like to take, which were measured by 5-point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). The answers of “strongly disagree” or “disagree” were considered to be “no” answers and “strongly agree” or “agree” were considered to be “yes” answers, if the questions are positive and vice versa.

Data analysis procedures also include qualitative research -- analysis of the open-ended questions. Only one item in the last part of the questionnaire was designed to know more about what student would like to learn besides the courses listed in the second part.

## **4. Result and Discussion**

The personal information on the cover of the questionnaire is firstly about the major and class level of the participants. We only analyzed the data from class A both in arts and science & engineering, about what they think of their English level, what they think of the follow-up courses and what courses they would like to take. There are 872 samples from class A taken from 1304 valid questionnaires, with 657 in arts and 215 in science and engineering.

#### 4.1 What Do You Think of Your English?

The first part in this research is to know how well students learn English, what difficulty they think they encounter in learning English, and what skills they hope to develop in learning English further. Self-rating of English skills, difficulty and willingness includes respectively nine aspects: listening(L), speaking(S), reading(R), writing(W), translation(T), grammar(G), phonetics(P), words and expressions(W&E) and cultural knowledge(CK). All the items were analyzed by 5-point Likert scales (1= really bad, quite difficult, or strongly unwilling; 5=very good, quite easy, or strongly willing).

##### 4.1.1 Self-Rating of English Skills

This part includes respectively nine aspects: listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, grammar, phonetics, words and expressions and cultural knowledge. All the items were analyzed by 5-point Likert scales (1= very bad; 5= very good). Over 20% of the students rate their skill as 'bad', especially in speaking (44.3%), while the percentage of 'bad' reading-rating is comparatively low at 15.5%. This reflects their English skills objectively, because oral English is neglected in middle school teaching and learning with the focus mainly on reading and grammar to pass the National Entrance Examination, and still neglected in English class in the university owing to their focus on passing CET4. The number of students who rate their English in the middle level is over 50%, which shows that the majority of students probably think their abilities as they are, not good or not bad. Less than 10% are satisfied with such five skills as listening, speaking, writing, translation and expression, even if other three skills are comparatively rated higher (more than 10%). It is at least more than 12 years that students learn English since elementary school, including one-year-and-a-half college English; however, students still underrate their English skills. This alerts teachers and researchers to think whether there are problems in our English education, what they are, and how to solve them. This also explains why college English needs further informing.

Table 1. Self-rating of English Skills

	L	S	R	W	T	G	P	N&E	CK
Very bad	7.2%	8.5%	1.7%	2.3%	2.8%	4.2%	3.6%	3.7%	4.5%
Bad	30.3%	35.8%	13.8%	20.3%	24.1%	26.3%	21.6%	27.9%	26.7%
So so	55.5%	50.6%	70.3%	67.7%	65.5%	55.7%	59.2%	60.0%	58.4%
Good	6.4%	4.8%	13.8%	9.4%	7.3%	12.7%	15.0%	8.0%	9.3%
Very good	0.6%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	1.0%	0.7%	0.5%	1.1%

A significant difference in speaking ( $P=0.037$ ) was found between students in arts and science & engineering, while no significant difference was found in listening, reading, writing, translation, phonetics, grammar, expressions and cultural knowledge. The mean value of speaking in arts is 2.56, higher than in science and engineering (2.44), although both of them show lower rating of their speaking skill. This shows students both in arts and science & technology think poorly of their speaking skill, even if those in arts feel a little better. Students in arts are more active, talkative and competitive in English classes than those in science and technology, as teachers observe in English classes. Both rates reading (the total mean value is 2.97) better than other skills, while students in science and engineering think a little better of their reading (the mean value is 3.00) than those in arts. Reading comprehension occupies an important position in middle schools in order to enable the students to pass the College Entrance Examination and still takes up 35% in CET4 while studying in the university. There are at least 4 periods of English classes each week in middle schools, where comprehension & analysis, sentence & vocabulary explanation, as well as grammatical drills play a major part. Students are asked to memorize the grammatical rules, new words and expressions, and do a lot of exercises in reading and grammar, without too much attention on listening and speaking. There are 4 English periods each week in colleges and universities, however, only 2 periods for listening and speaking every other week. Some colleges and universities can afford students computers and English learning system to develop students autonomic English learning including speaking and listening online. So to a large extent, English curriculum design decides why, what and how to teach and learn.

##### 4.1.2 Self-Rating of Difficulty in Learning English

Difficulty rating in the second part also includes the same nine aspects as mentioned above. All the items were analyzed by 5-point Likert scales (1= quite difficult; 5= quite easy). Listening (53.2%) and speaking (41.3%) is thought to be more difficult than others, while around 20% think reading, expressions and cultural knowledge difficult. Speaking is usually neglected and listening takes little time in English classes in middle schools, due to their main attention to the Entrance Examination. Over a half considers learning English is as difficult or easy as it is. The mean value shows that students in arts rate higher than those in science and engineering in speaking, translation, phonetics, expressions and

cultural knowledge, but lower in listening, reading, writing and grammar. Both students in arts and science and engineering feel comparatively easier in expressions (the mean value is 2.98) and cultural knowledge (the mean value is 2.98) although students in arts rates higher. Using the t-test for independent samples, we found a significant difference between the two types of students' perception of writing ( $p=0.021$ ), but no significant difference in other aspects. Comparing the mean value, we can see that students in science and engineering think writing easier than those in arts.

Table 2. Self-rating of Difficulty in Learning English

	L	S	R	W	T	G	P	N&E	CK
Quite difficult	6.5%	5.4%	1.3%	1.5%	1.5%	3.4%	3.0%	1.9%	1.8%
difficult	46.7%	36.1%	20.5%	22.8%	24.7%	30.6%	24.3%	18%	18.3%
So so	42.2%	52.6%	68.6%	65.5%	63.9%	54.8%	56.9%	61.7%	61.4%
easy	4.1%	5.3%	9.3%	9.4%	9.4%	10.2%	14.7%	17.2%	16.5%
Quite easy	0.5%	0.6%	0.3%	0.7%	0.6%	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%	1.9%

#### 4.1.3 Willingness to Learn Further

Willingness also includes the same nine skills. All the items were analyzed by 5-point Likert scales (1=strongly unwilling; 5= strongly willing). The majority of students (over 70%) hope to learn English more, among which speaking is at the top of the list (90.3%) to learn, but grammar is at the bottom (70%). Just as analyzed above, speaking is the poorest and the most difficult skill, which they hope to learn further. However, they do not hope to learn grammar further, because they think learning grammar is so boring. Students learned Grammar a lot, which occupies the most important position in English classes in the middle school. All the total mean value is about 3.79 which also presents both students are willing to learn these skills further, especially speaking (the mean value is 4.21). Using the t-test for independent samples, we found no significant difference in these nine aspects ( $P>0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that students in arts and science & technology are similar in their willingness to study further, especially to improve speaking.

Table 3. Willingness to learn further

	L	S	R	R	T	Gr	P	NE	CK
strongly unwilling	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%	1.3%	1.4%	2.2%	1.1%	1.4%	0.8%
unwilling	3.8%	2.8%	3.9%	4.0%	3.4%	6.7%	2.6%	3.3%	1.8%
Not care	7.7%	5.6%	15.1%	14.1%	14.4%	20.5%	14.6%	12.4%	13.4%
willing	63.4%	56.3%	60.2%	59.7%	58.1%	51.6%	54.9%	58.8%	55.2%
Strongly willing	23.9%	34.4%	19.6%	20.9%	22.6%	19%	26.7%	24.1%	28.8%

#### 4.2 What Do You Think of the Follow-Up Courses?

Twenty-four questions were designed in this part in order to know what students would like to do after they pass CET4, in what aspects the follow-up courses help them and what they expect from the follow-up courses. All the items were analyzed by 5-point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree) to be easily ticked by students with no need of writing too much and sorted and analyzed by teachers. 24 questions were divided into three parts: what students like to do after passing CET4, what they hope to learn from the follow-up courses, and how the follow-up courses are designed.

##### 4.2.1 What Students Like to Do after Passing CET4?

Only 33% students would like to learn college English further and over 45% would not like to. The first likely reason for this is they feel bored, because most of students have been learning English for about 13 years since the elementary school. Besides, they feel confused about the similar learning aim because they do not know why they learn college English. They learn English well to pass the National Entrance Examination in the middle school to enter a good university or college, and to pass CET4 to get a good job after graduation. This is a deficiency in college English education, which is worth carefully considering and discussing. Over half of students like to take some selective English courses, and less than 10% students don't. This reflects that students hope to learn more about English besides the basic skills. Over 85% students hope to pass CET6 if they pass CET4, because if they pass CET6, it will be easier for them to find a good job or study further for master degree without taking the entrance examination of English for some universities. However, over 85% of students are not sure or do not hope to study further for master degree or go abroad. Most of students in our university do not come from rich family and they hope to support themselves to ease the financial burden of their family. That is the reason why most students find a part-time job during studying in the university and they do not want to study further for master degree or go abroad, while they hope to find a job as soon as

possible after graduation.

Table 4. What students like to do after passing CET4?

	strongly disagree	disagree	not sure	agree	strongly agree
I wouldn't like to learn college English if I pass CET4.	14.8%	20.5%	17.7%	29%	18%
If possible, I'd like to take some selective English courses	2.2%	5.5%	19.4%	38.4%	34.5%
I hope to pass CET6	1.4%	1.4%	5.6%	13.3%	78.3%
I will study further for master degree	19.3%	22.4%	45.9%	5.7%	6.8%
I will go abroad after graduation	29.9%	22.5%	36.2%	5.3%	6.1%

#### 4.2.2 In What Aspects Do They Hope the Follow-Up Courses Help Them?

Less than half students hope the follow-up courses can help in some tests, such as IELTS, TOEFL, GRE and others. Nearly 90% students hope the follow-up courses will give some help in finding a job or in the future career. More than 80% students hope the follow-up courses can arouse their interest to learn English and understand western movies, opera, and TV programs, so that they can know more about western culture and custom. More students (around 86%) hope they can watch or listen to the current news to know what is happening in the world, and read English magazines, novels, newspapers and others to know more about the latest development in science and technology of the world. More than 85% students hope to advance writing skills, translating skills and integrated skills. Two third students hope to pass CET6. Over 75% hope they can introduce more Chinese culture in English and know more about western culture and customs.

#### 4.2.3 How Are the Follow-Up Courses Designed?

Considering that the courses will be given in big class or small class, over 60% hopes the courses will be offered in small classes, around one third does not care, but only less than 10% prefer a large class. Nearly half prefer taking these courses in classroom, while less than a quarter does not agree with this. One third hopes the courses will be learned automatically online, one third does not care and one third does not agree. Only 36% agree that courses can also be given in some specific reports, while 35.5% are not sure about some specific reports. As to 'how many periods will be given in each week', over 90% prefer the class less than 4 periods each week, in which 4 periods takes up 46%, and 2 periods takes up 31.3%. This shows students do not like English class occupy their too much time. Over half students choose "check" as their study test method, while less than one third choose open-book exam. Students in China are good at taking examination and they tend to think open-book exam is more difficult than close-book exam, because they usually follow the teachers' instruction and recite the textbook completely.

#### 4.3 What Courses Would You Like to Choose?

Based on the investigation of the teachers in college English department of GPNU, 25 courses were listed in this part to be chosen. Students can choose as they like in the list without the limitation of how many courses they can choose. The course of English movie appreciation is at the top of the list and around 69% students choose it. Followed are spoken English for tourism and cross-cultural communication which are chosen by over half students. The reason for this is that these three courses are more useful in our daily life, more entertaining and seem comparatively easy to take. Nearly half students choose to take English for CET6, which is helpful to find a better job after graduation. The courses listed at the bottom are ESP, English for law, English for postgraduate exam, English for debate, which are chosen by less than 20%. Beyond our expectation, so few of them choose English for postgraduate exam. The reason may be that the objects are second-year students, so they probably have not taken it into consideration whether they will study further for master degree. If they will, they will have another two years to prepare. If they take the course now, it will probably be unhelpful for the postgraduate entrance exam two years later. The other three least preferred courses are more special and comparatively harder to learn. According to the data, the students in arts and science & engineering chose the same 8 follow-up courses, as both groups. Both lay more emphasis on practical use of English in the daily life.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

All in all, the data analysis shows that the majority of students are not satisfied with their English level (including listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, grammar, phonetics, words and expressions and cultural knowledge), with a high percentage of students (44.3%) regarding their English speaking as "bad" (although students in arts have better feeling of it), and listening and speaking are thought to be more difficult, so they hope to further improve their speaking. However, only 33% students are willing to take College English course but more than 45% would not, which

reveal that college English is not so attractive to them due to a lack of clear objectives in itself. As for the follow-up course, quite a large number of students prefer to take some selective English courses, with more wanting to pass CET6, though, and they have high expectation for the courses like being able to find a better job, to understand western movies, opera, and TV programs, novels, news and to boost cultural communication and so on. On the list of courses provided, the course of English movie appreciation, spoken English for tourism, cross-cultural communication and English for CET6 are most popular among graduates. As for the design of the follow-up courses, most students hope the courses will be offered in small size classes by the teacher in the classroom rather than on-line, and the class hours are preferred to be less than four periods with easy ways of evaluation for their study such as “checking” not exams.

## 5. Implications on College English Education

Innovation in college English education is of importance to satisfy the needs of students and society. The original curriculum is designed to develop students' ability to pass CET4 and to meet the needs of CET4 passing rate of the university, which is one of the standards to evaluate teachers. To regulate the curriculum and form a new college English education system is a matter of great urgency. Needs analysis is the basis of curriculum design. Based on the investigation on the needs analysis of the second-year students in GPNU, we get to know what they think of their English competence, what difficulties they have while learning, what they hope to improve further after passing CET4, and what courses they like to attend. The data achieved leaves a lot of implications on college English education in universities, provides some bases for English education reform and new challenge for teachers.

### 5.1 Change the Teaching Principles

The data analysis above reveal that speaking and listening is still the weakest skill for undergraduates, and the most difficult and the most willing to learn as well. Speaking is not the focus in college English classroom, nor is outside the classroom. Our university, like some other regular universities, still takes the pass rate of CET4 as one of the most important norm of English education quality. Teachers have to spend more time on textbook, explaining the passage, drills of words and grammar, translation and composition, without much time on speaking and listening, in order to accomplish the teaching task and help students pass CET4 as well. As a result, speaking is neglected in English classroom. This contradict with the teaching objectives in College English Curriculum Requirements, which is to improve students' English competence, especially listening and speaking ability, which helps students communicate efficiently in English in their study, work and social communication, and meanwhile, to strengthen their autonomous learning ability and enhance cultural accomplishment to meet the needs of social development and international communication. In this case, a change of teaching principles is necessary in college English teaching. Teaching should aim at improving students' comprehensive English skills including listening and speaking; and a balance should be stroke between exams and practical use of English.

### 5.2 Construct Appropriate Follow-Up Courses

Many factors need considering, such as students' interests, favorites, needs and practical uses, in building the follow-up courses. The top three courses chosen by over-half students are English movie appreciation, spoken English for tourism and cross-cultural communication, which are comparatively more enjoyable and interesting than ESP. These courses should be taken into the first consideration, but some other courses of practical uses should not be neglected, such as intermediate or advanced English listening and speaking, reading, and writing. Students between arts and science & engineering show no great difference in choosing the follow-up courses, but some different courses for different majors needs to be built. Basic academic English, such as attending academic meeting, doing a presentation, and other skills, is needed, for example, basic English for business is practical for business majors, basic English for management for management majors, basic English for law, and some others are all necessary for students of different majors. These courses founded will lay the foundation for the further study of the professional English in the third or fourth year.

## 6. Conclusion

With more follow-up courses offered and the further innovation of college English system, more research should be made on the design of the follow-up courses. Many factors such as students' needs, social needs and others decide on how to design the college English curriculum. Whether the curriculum design is appropriate for the students is characterized by the students' ability of using English. College English teachers face the challenge in teaching with more needs of students and society by offering high-quality follow-up courses. College English teachers normally used to teach general English before the *CECR*, but now they will teach ESP, EAP or other specific English. The greatest challenge teachers face is to what to teach and how to teach. All these questions deserve further discussing.

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## Appendix I

### T-Test

Self-rating of English skills and difficulties

Group Statistics					
	ASE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
listening	arts	657	2.43	.680	.027
	science & engineering	215	2.53	.754	.051
speaking	arts	657	2.61	.674	.026
	science & engineering	215	2.53	.772	.053
reading	arts	657	2.86	.570	.022
	science & engineering	215	2.88	.642	.044
writing	arts	657	2.82	.620	.024
	science & engineering	215	2.93	.623	.042
translation	arts	657	2.85	.622	.024
	science & engineering	215	2.78	.646	.044
grammar	arts	657	2.72	.702	.027
	science & engineering	215	2.81	.769	.052
phonetics	arts	657	2.89	.706	.028
	science & engineering	215	2.79	.808	.055
expressions	arts	657	2.98	.664	.026
	science & engineering	215	2.95	.766	.052
cultural knowledge	arts	657	2.99	.686	.027
	science & engineering	215	2.98	.770	.053

**T-Test**

Willingness to learn further

Group Statistics					
	ASE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
listening	arts	657	4.02	.782	.031
	science & engineering	215	4.12	.687	.047
speaking	arts	657	4.19	.764	.030
	science & engineering	215	4.26	.673	.046
reading	arts	657	3.91	.783	.031
	science & engineering	215	4.00	.755	.051
writing	arts	657	3.94	.790	.031
	science & engineering	215	3.98	.785	.054
translation	arts	657	3.95	.808	.032
	science & engineering	215	4.03	.751	.051
grammar	arts	657	3.76	.901	.035
	science & engineering	215	3.87	.901	.061
phonetics	arts	657	4.01	.795	.031
	science & engineering	215	4.11	.763	.052
expressions	arts	657	3.98	.802	.031
	science & engineering	215	4.09	.743	.051
cultural knowledge	arts	657	4.10	.741	.029
	science & engineering	215	4.08	.772	.053

**Appendix II**

**Questionnaire**

The survey of self-rating of English skills, difficulty and willingness to study further

name: \_\_\_\_\_ college: \_\_\_\_\_ class: \_\_\_\_\_

	Self-evaluation					Difficulty					Hope to study further				
	worse	bad	general	good	better	Quite difficult	difficult	general	easy	Quite easy	Quite un-willing	Un-willing	No care	willing	Quite willing
listening															
speaking															
reading															
writing															
translation															
grammar															
Pronunci- -ation															
words															
Cultural knowledge															

Dear Recipient,

This Questionnaire is designed to find out about what you evaluate your English skills after one – year-and-a-half year study, what you'd like to learn further in Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University. It would be very nice if you could participate in the study by filling in this questionnaire and help the teacher to gather data for his project. All the replies will remain completely confidential. Thank you for your time.

### The Follow-up Courses Survey

“1”--completely disagree; “2” —disagree; “3” —not sure; “4”—agree; “5”—completely agree

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I wouldn't like to learn college English if I pass CET4.					
2.	If possible, I'd like to take some selective English courses					
3.	I hope to pass CET6					
4.	I will study further for master degree					
5.	I will go abroad after graduation					
6.	I hope the course can help me improve my competitive power.					
7.	I hope the course can help me find a better job.					
8.	I hope the course can help me introduce Chinese culture in English.					
9.	I hope to know more about western culture and customs.					
10.	The course help in GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, and etc.					
11.	Give me some help to pass graduate entrance English exam.					
12.	To better understand English song, movies, dramas and etc.					
13.	To improve reading skills of English novels, newspapers, etc.					
14.	To better understand English news broadcast.					
15.	To improve my writing skills.					
16.	To improve my translation skills.					
17.	To improve my comprehensive ability.					
18.	To arouse more interest in English study.					
19.	I hope the courses will be in small class.					
20.	I hope some course can be provided online for self-study.					
21.	I hope to study in classroom.					
22.	Seminar can be used for some courses.					
23.	How many periods do you like to have for each course each week?	2	3	4	5	6
24.	Which exam way do you like to choose?	1.close-book		2.open-book		3.check

**Follow-up course listing.**

Which follow-up courses would you like to choose? Please give a tick in the proper column. You can choose more than one.

A. English movie appreciation		M. English business document processing	
B. British and American culture		N. English for speech and host	
C. British and American literature		O. English drama performance	
D. Introduction to English countries		P. English for debate	
E. Introduction to Chinese culture		Q. English practical writing	
F. Selected Reading in English newspapers		R. English for Law	
G. English for postgraduate entrance exam		S. English for business	
H.CET6		T. English for tourism	
I. Cross-culture communication		U. Finance English	
J. Advanced English listening and speaking		V. Vocational English	
K. Translation and writing		W. English for science	
L. English for tourism		X. English for business negotiation	

What else would you like to choose?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



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