

## **Bridging Theory and Practice: Student Perceptions of a Student-Centered College English Course for Pre-service Teachers in a Chinese University Context**

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### **Abstract**

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*This empirical study evaluates the initial implementation of a novel Teacher Education English (ETE) course at Yanbian University, designed in response to China's national teacher education accreditation standards. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research investigates second-year pre-service teachers' (N=59) perceptions of the course, which was structured around an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework and student-centered pedagogy. Quantitative survey data and qualitative thematic analysis of open-ended responses reveal three key findings: (1) Students reported high levels of interest, confidence, and overall satisfaction, indicating successful affective engagement with the curriculum's professional focus. (2) Students perceived significant development in core teaching competencies, particularly through scaffolded, practice-based tasks like simulated teaching and collaborative lesson planning. (3) While conceptually endorsing the student-centered model, students highlighted the need for more structured guidance (scaffolded autonomy) and strategies to manage heterogeneous English proficiency within collaborative groups. The study concludes that an ETE model effectively aligns College English instruction with accreditation mandates, but its success hinges on sophisticated implementation that balances learner autonomy with expert facilitation and disciplinary contextualization. Recommendations are provided for curriculum refinement, faculty development, and future research.*

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**Keywords:** teacher education accreditation, college English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), student-centered learning

### **1. Introduction**

The professionalization of teacher education has become a focal point in global higher education reform, with accreditation systems serving as a pivotal mechanism for ensuring the quality of teacher preparation (Ministry of Education, 2017). In China, following the nationwide implementation of the "Professional Certification Standards for Teacher Education Programs" in 2017, normal universities have been actively engaged in restructuring their curricula to meet new accreditation requirements for graduate competencies. Within this systemic reform, however, College English, as a cornerstone general education course, faces a significant research gap and practical challenges regarding its repositioning and transformation.

Traditionally, College English instruction has predominantly followed a General English (GE) model, emphasizing linguistic skill acquisition while exhibiting limited connection to pre-service teachers' professional development needs and future pedagogical practices (Cai, 2019). Driven by the accreditation principles of "student-centeredness, outcome-based orientation, and continuous improvement," College English curricula must transcend their conventional status as an isolated requirement.

There is an urgent need to deeply integrate them with programmatic learning outcomes, thereby evolving into a crucial course that supports pre-service teachers' pedagogical competence, intercultural communication skills, and professional growth (Luo, 2021; Wang, 2024). Although scholarly calls have been made for an integrated "English + Teacher Education" curriculum model (Guo, 2024), such reform initiatives largely remain theoretical propositions. There is a notable paucity of empirical evidence from actual teaching practices, particularly feedback from the student perspective regarding curricular effectiveness.

This research gap is especially pronounced in the context of Yanbian University, a comprehensive four-year university located in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, a northeastern part of China. Its teacher education programs enroll students from diverse backgrounds, spanning majors such as Primary Education, Preschool Education, Psychology, and Ideological and Political Education, including a substantial proportion of ethnic minority students (e.g., Korean-Chinese). In response to accreditation mandates, the university piloted a Teacher Education English course in the Fall semester of 2025. This innovative course was designed to align with certification standards, incorporate regional cultural elements, and employ student-centered instructional methodologies. As a novel pedagogical intervention, its implementation effectiveness requires rigorous empirical evaluation.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct an exploratory empirical evaluation of the initial implementation of the Teacher Education English course by collecting and analyzing feedback from enrolled students. Focusing on students' perceptions and experiences, the study seeks to address the following three interconnected research questions:

1. What are students' levels of overall satisfaction, learning interest, and self-confidence regarding the course?
2. In which specific aspects (e.g., understanding of educational theory, professional awareness, lesson plan design, simulated teaching) do students perceive competence development?
3. How do students perceive and adapt to the "student-centered" instructional model employed in the course?

## **2. Literature Review**

This part provides a critical synthesis of existing scholarship to establish the theoretical and empirical foundation for the present study. It is structured around three interconnected themes that mirror the core components of the educational innovation under investigation: (1) the policy imperative of teacher education accreditation and its implications for curriculum design, (2) the disciplinary evolution of College English towards a profession-specific paradigm, and (3) the role of student-centered pedagogy and perceptions in evaluating curriculum reform. The review concludes by identifying the specific research gap this study aims to address.

### **2.1 Teacher Education Accreditation as a Catalyst for Curriculum Realignment**

Globally, the professionalization of teaching has been systematically advanced through robust accreditation frameworks. Originating in the United States, teacher education accreditation systems like those administered by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) have established rigorous standards linking program inputs directly to evidence of graduate competency (Zhu, 2020; Pan & Xun, 2023). These international models emphasize not only subject-matter knowledge but also pedagogical skills, reflective practice, and the ability to operate in diverse learning environments—competencies increasingly requiring adept use of language for professional communication (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

In China, the 2017 release of the Professional Certification Standards for Teacher Education Programs (MOE, 2017) marked a definitive policy shift toward an outcome-based approach. This framework mandates a fundamental restructuring of all curricular elements within teacher preparation programs to demonstrably support a set of defined graduate learning outcomes. Its core principles—student-centeredness, outcome-based education (OBE), and continuous improvement—demand that every course, including general education staples like College English, justifies its place by contributing explicitly to the development of future teachers' professional capacities (Liu & Wang, 2022). Consequently, the traditional model of College English, often isolated from the core curriculum of the major, faces unprecedented pressure to transform (Lu & Lan, 2024). This policy-driven imperative forms the primary contextual force behind the development of the "Teacher Education English" course examined in this study.

## 2.2 The Paradigm Shift in College English: From General Proficiency to Professional Sustenance

The domestic discourse on College English reform has long been engaged in a critical debate concerning its future direction. A dominant thread in this discourse advocates for a strategic transition from General English (GE), focused on foundational language skills and standardized test preparation, toward English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Cai, 2019). This shift is predicated on the argument that in a post-foundational stage, English instruction must directly serve students' academic majors and future career trajectories to maintain its relevance and educational value.

Within the ecosystem of teacher education, ESP logically crystallizes into "English for Teacher Education (ETE)". An ETE framework moves beyond generic academic English to engage with the specific textual genres, discursive practices, and communicative demands of the teaching profession (Luo, 2021; Wang, 2024). This includes, but is not limited to, comprehending international pedagogical literature, crafting lesson plans and teaching reflections, delivering classroom instructions, and discussing educational policies in English (Zhang, 2021). Scholars argue that such an approach can effectively bridge the persistent gap between language learning and professional application, thereby enhancing the "teacher-education character" of the curriculum (Hu et al., 2022; Guo, 2024).

Concurrent with this content-oriented shift is a transformation in pedagogical methodology. The traditional instructor-led, knowledge-transmission model is increasingly seen as inadequate for developing the active, collaborative, and reflective competencies required by modern teachers and accreditation standards. Instead, student-centered pedagogy such as project-based learning (PBL), collaborative tasks, and micro-teaching simulations are being promoted (Chang et al., 2024). These methods align with the OBE philosophy by creating authentic opportunities for students to apply language skills within meaningful professional contexts (Hu, 2021). The integration of technology, including AI-driven tools for feedback and virtual simulation platforms, further supports personalized and practice-oriented learning, representing a significant frontier in ETE development (Liu, 2023).

## 2.3 Evaluating Innovation: The Centrality of Student Perceptions and Pedagogical Models

The OBE principle of "continuous improvement" necessitates mechanisms for evaluating educational innovations. While summative assessments of learning outcomes are crucial, formative feedback, particularly student perceptions, provides indispensable insight into the learning process and the viability of new instructional designs (Kuh et al., 2006). Students' views on a course's relevance, challenge, usefulness of materials, and effectiveness of teaching methods are strong indicators of their engagement, motivation, and potential for deep learning.

In the context of curriculum reform, understanding the learner experience is a critical metric of success. Research on educational change consistently highlights that the adoption and effectiveness of new initiatives are profoundly influenced by participants' acceptance and adaptation (Fullan, 2007). Therefore, investigating how students perceive a novel ETE course—whether they value its connection to their professional goals, how they navigate its demands, and how they respond to active learning methodologies—offers essential data for iterative refinement. Studies on related reforms, such as blended learning models in College English, underscore the importance of such perception studies in diagnosing challenges and optimizing implementation (Dong, 2020; Shi, 2020). Furthermore, exploring student feedback on specific pedagogical components, like the use of rubrics for peer assessment of lesson plans (Jin & Sun, 2020) or the integration of local cultural elements (Sun & Li, 2025), yields actionable intelligence for course designers.

## 2.4 Identifying the Research Gap and Positioning the Current Study

The synthesized literature reveals a clear convergence: national policy (accreditation) demands profession-ready competencies; disciplinary evolution (College English to ETE) proposes a relevant curricular response; and evaluation research underscores the need to center the student voice in reform processes. Despite this alignment, a significant empirical gap persists. Existing research on teacher education accreditation in China has extensively focused on core subject majors (Liu, 2023), with comparatively scant attention paid to the role and reform of public foundational courses like College English. While conceptual papers on ETE are emerging (Guo, 2024; Wang, 2024), there is a notable shortage of empirical studies that investigate the implementation and student reception of a systematically designed ETE course from an OBE perspective.

This study is positioned to address this gap. It empirically examines the "Teacher Education English" course at Yanbian University as a concrete case of translating accreditation standards and ETE principles into practice. By focusing on students' perceived learning outcomes, their engagement with student-centered activities (e.g., simulated teaching), and their overall evaluation of the course's relevance, this research aims to contribute:

1. Practical evidence on the challenges and successes of aligning a public English course with professional certification requirements.
2. Empirical insights into the learner experience of an integrated, practice-oriented ETE curriculum.
3. Formative data to inform the ongoing "continuous improvement" of this specific course and to provide a reference model for similar innovations in other institutions, particularly those serving diverse student populations in specialized contexts.

### 3.1 Participants and Data Collection

The study employed a convergent mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) to develop a comprehensive profile of student perceptions. Participants were 59 undergraduate students, 92.2% response rate from a total of 64 enrolled in the Teacher Education English course at Yanbian University during the 2025-2026 academic year. This purposive sample consisted of second-year, non-English major pre-service teachers from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds (e.g., Primary Education, Preschool Education, Psychology, Ideological and Political Education; 93.2% female; 28.8% Korean-Chinese ethnicity; 69.5% having passed CET-4).

Data were collected at the end of the semester (November 2025) via a purpose-designed electronic Teacher Education English Course Effectiveness Questionnaire. Completion of the survey was voluntary and integrated into routine course feedback, with implied informed consent and guarantees of anonymity. All collected data were anonymized prior to analysis.

### 3.2 Measures

The 36-item survey instrument contained four sections:

1. Demographic and Background Items (Questions 1-4): Collected data on gender, ethnicity, major, high school background, and current English proficiency status.
2. Quantitative Perception Items (Questions 5-11, 13, 15, 19-23): These primarily utilized a 5-point Likert-type scale (e.g., 1="Strongly Disagree" to 5="Strongly Agree"; or anchored with options like "Very Approving," "Basically Approving," etc.) to measure students' attitudes, perceived learning gains, and evaluations of course components (e.g., textbook, simulated teaching activities, teaching model).
3. Multiple-Choice Items (Questions 12, 14, 16, 17): Allowed students to select all applicable options regarding helpful aspects of the course, specific useful units, and benefits of activities.
4. Qualitative Open-Ended Items (Questions 18, 24, 25): Elicited detailed written feedback on integrating ideological-political education, challenges and solutions in completing core tasks, suggestions for improving the student-centered model, and ideas for better aligning the course with their specific majors.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in two sequential yet integrated phases, corresponding to the quantitative and qualitative strands.

**Phase 1: Quantitative Analysis.** Data from the Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions were cleaned and analyzed using SPSS (Version 27). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were calculated to summarize student responses for each relevant item. This provided a clear statistical profile of the cohort's perceptions regarding overall satisfaction (RQ1), perceived competency development (RQ2), and receptiveness to the teaching model (RQ3). Cross-tabulations were performed to explore potential variations in perceptions based on key demographic variables (e.g., major, ethnicity).

**Phase 2: Qualitative Analysis.** Textual data from the four open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis following the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved:

1. Familiarization: Repeated reading of all responses.
2. Initial Coding: Generating concise labels for features of the data relevant to the research questions.
3. Searching for Themes: Collating codes into potential overarching themes (e.g., "Challenges in Collaborative Task Design," "Perceived Value of Practical Simulation," "Suggestions for Differentiated Instruction").
4. Reviewing Themes: Checking themes against the coded data and the entire dataset to ensure coherence and distinctiveness.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Refining the essence of each theme and selecting illustrative quotes.

The qualitative findings were used to elaborate, explain, and contextualize the quantitative patterns, enabling a richer interpretation of the student experience.

#### 4. Findings

This part presents the results of the data analysis, structured to sequentially address the three research questions. Quantitative findings are presented using descriptive statistics, and qualitative themes are integrated to provide a richer, more contextualized understanding of the student experience in the Teacher Education English course.

##### 4.1 Overall Course Attitudes: Satisfaction, Interest, and Confidence (RQ1)

Quantitative data indicated a generally favorable disposition among students toward the course. As summarized in Table 4.1, a strong majority of respondents reported that the course increased their interest ( $M=3.77$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) and confidence ( $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ) in learning Teacher Education English. Overall satisfaction with the teaching effectiveness was also positively rated ( $M=3.94$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ). Furthermore, a high proportion of students (86.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had invested substantial effort in the course ( $M=4.15$ ,  $SD=0.89$ ), suggesting a high level of behavioral engagement.

**Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for Student Affective Attitudes (N=59)**

| Item                               | M    | SD   | Percentage |      |     |      |     |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------------|------|-----|------|-----|
|                                    |      |      | A          | B    | C   | D    | E   |
| Increased my interest.             | 3.77 | 1.08 | 28.8       | 44.1 | 8.5 | 13.6 | 5.1 |
| Increased my confidence.           | 3.68 | 1.09 | 25.4       | 45.8 | 6.8 | 15.3 | 6.8 |
| Satisfaction with teaching effect. | 3.94 | 1.03 | 33.9       | 44.1 | 5.1 | 13.6 | 3.4 |
| I worked hard on this course.      | 4.15 | 0.89 | 39.0       | 47.5 | 3.4 | 8.5  | 1.7 |

*Note. Scale: A=Strongly Agree, B=Agree, C=Neutral, D=Disagree, E=Strongly Disagree.*

Qualitative responses from open-ended questions reinforced this positive baseline while adding nuance. Students frequently described the course as "practical", "challenging in a good way," and "directly related to future teaching." For instance, one student from the Primary Education program stated, "This was not a typical English class just for passing an exam. We were learning how to use English as a future teacher, which motivated me more." However, this positive sentiment was often tempered by acknowledgments of the course's demanding nature, a theme further elaborated in the discussion of the pedagogical model (Section 4.3).

##### 4.2 Perceived Development of Professional Competencies (RQ2)

Students reported significant perceived gains in competencies aligning with the course's objectives. When asked to select the most helpful aspects of the course (Q12, multiple response), the top choices were "Improving practical English ability" (79.7%,  $n=47$ ) and "Enhancing teacher professional English literacy" (76.3%,  $n=45$ ), indicating recognition of the course's dual focus on language application and professional socialization.

The simulated group teaching presentation emerged as a cornerstone activity. As shown in Figure 4.1 (Q14, Multiple Response,  $N=59$ ), it was rated as helpful or very helpful by 74.6% of students. The perceived benefits were multifaceted, with "teaching practical ability" (84.7%), "group collaboration skills" (72.9%), and "consolidation of teaching theory" (61.0%) cited as the primary gains.

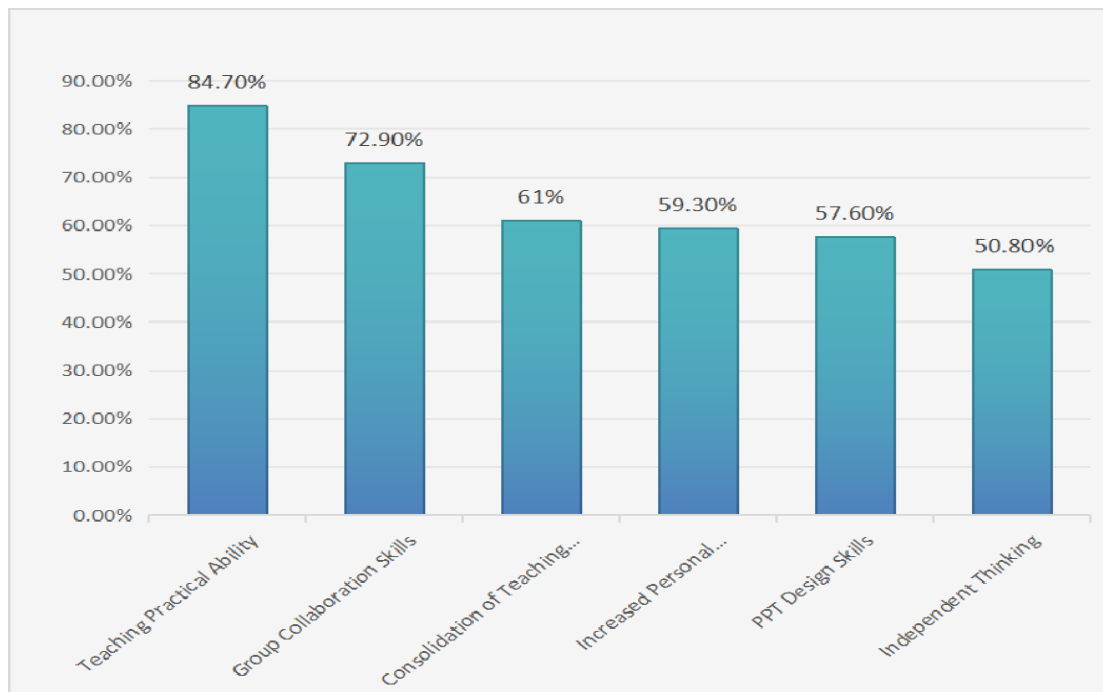


Figure 4.1 Student-Perceived Benefits of the Simulated Group Teaching Activities (N=59)

Similarly, the group lesson plan writing task was perceived as highly beneficial for developing specific pedagogical skills. Students reported the greatest help in "design of teaching strategies and methods" (78.0%) and "understanding the basic norms and format of lesson plans" (76.3%). The supporting materials, such as scoring rubrics and exemplars, were particularly valued for facilitating the application of concepts like the SMART principle for writing objectives.

Qualitative analysis of responses to Q18 ("Challenges and gains in tasks") revealed a recurring theme of theory-practice integration. Students described a process of struggling to apply abstract concepts to concrete teaching designs. A Psychology major's reflection was illustrative: "The most difficult part was operationalizing Bloom's taxonomy. Translating verbs like 'analyze' or 'evaluate' into specific, observable classroom activities for our lesson plan caused real debate within our group. Consulting the rubric and sample plans was crucial. Through this struggle, the theory became tangible." Another student highlighted the development of collaborative professionalism: "We had to negotiate different ideas about how to teach a concept. It was sometimes frustrating, but it taught us how to build a consensus and a shared vision for a lesson—just like teachers in a real school might have to do."

#### 4.3 Perceptions and Adaptation to the Student-Centered Pedagogical Model (RQ3)

Student responses demonstrated a strong conceptual approval of the student-centered approach, coupled with practical insights into its implementation challenges. Quantitative data, presented in Table 4.2, shows that a majority believed student-centered teaching was more effective than traditional lectures ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=1.17$ ) and expressed willingness to continue with the model ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=1.23$ ). Notably, 66.1% acknowledged that while the model increased difficulty, it offered greater potential for ability development ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=1.15$ ).

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of the Student-Centered Model (N=59)

| Item                                 | M    | SD   | Percentage |      |      |      |     |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------------|------|------|------|-----|
|                                      |      |      | A          | B    | C    | D    | E   |
| Student-centered > Teacher-centered. | 3.76 | 1.17 | 32.2       | 39   | 6.8  | 15.3 | 6.8 |
| More difficult but more beneficial.  | 3.76 | 1.15 | 32.2       | 33.9 | 11.9 | 13.6 | 8.5 |
| Willingness to continue the model.   | 3.81 | 1.23 | 35.6       | 33.9 | 6.8  | 15.3 | 8.5 |
| Adapted to the model.                | 3.76 | 1.09 | 27.1       | 47.5 | 3.4  | 16.9 | 5.1 |

*Note. Scale: A=Strongly Agree, B=Agree, C=Neutral, D=Disagree, E=Strongly Disagree.*

Thematic analysis of open-ended suggestions (Q24) provided critical depth, revealing three key implementation themes:

1. **The Need for Scaffolded Autonomy:** While valuing independence, some students expressed a need for more structured guidance, especially in the initial stages. A representative comment was: "The freedom is good, but we sometimes felt lost. Perhaps the teacher could provide more formative feedback during our preparation phase, not just a final evaluation. Acting as a 'consultant' while we design our lessons would be very helpful."

2. **Navigating Heterogeneous Proficiency:** The diversity in English language competence within groups surfaced as a significant challenge. A student noted, "When there's a big gap in English levels within a group, collaboration becomes uneven. It can lead to either dominance by proficient members or hesitation by others to contribute, affecting both learning and morale." This points to a critical area for instructional strategy, such as differentiated roles or targeted language support within collaborative tasks.

3. **Logistical and Motivational Hurdles in Collaboration:** Practical issues like coordinating meeting times and ensuring equitable workload distribution were frequently mentioned. Additionally, a few students commented on varying levels of commitment among peers, which impacted group cohesion and output quality.

Finally, responses regarding disciplinary integration (Q25) indicated a desire for stronger connections between the generic teaching skills practiced in the course and students' specific majors. For example, a student from Ideological and Political Education suggested: "Could our simulated teaching be based on an English text about moral education or global citizenship? It would make the task feel immediately relevant to my field." A Psychology major proposed: "When we design activities, we could be required to consider developmental psychology principles for the target age group." This feedback highlights a valuable avenue for curriculum refinement to enhance contextualized learning and strengthen the perceived relevance for each disciplinary cohort.

## 5. Discussion

This part interprets the key findings of this evaluation study in relation to the existing literature and the overarching framework of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) within teacher education accreditation. The discussion is structured around the three core themes derived from the research questions, culminating in an integrated analysis of the study's contributions and limitations.

### 5.1 Affective Engagement as a Foundation for Curricular Relevance

The generally positive affective responses—increased interest, confidence, and self-reported effort—provide a crucial foundation for the success of the Teacher Education English (ETE) course. These findings align with established educational psychology research positing that student motivation and engagement are potent mediators of learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009). More specifically, the reported increase in interest and perceived relevance directly addresses a historic weakness of traditional College English identified in the literature: its frequent disconnect from students' professional futures (Cai, 2024; Lu & Lan, 2024).

The qualitative feedback, describing the course as "practical" and "useful for future teaching," suggests that the core design principle of shifting from General English (GE) to English for Specific Purposes (ESP), specifically English for Teacher Education (ETE), is being successfully communicated to and internalized by students. This perceived relevance is a critical first step in fulfilling the OBE mandate that every course component demonstrably contributes to graduate outcomes (MOE, 2017).

The positive affect likely served as a buffer against the acknowledged increased cognitive and practical demands of the course, facilitating students' willingness to engage with challenging tasks (Fullan, 2007).

### 5.2 Operationalizing Accreditation Standards: From Abstract Competencies to Perceived Gains

The study's most significant contribution lies in its empirical demonstration of how abstract accreditation standards can be translated into tangible learning experiences that students recognize as valuable. The data strongly indicates that students perceived development in the very competencies that teacher education accreditation emphasizes: pedagogical design (lesson planning), practical teaching skills (simulated instruction), collaborative professionalism, and reflective practice (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The high value placed on the simulated teaching and lesson plan writing tasks, supported by structured tools like rubrics and exemplars, validates a practice-embedded, genre-based approach to ETE. This aligns with theoretical calls for ESP instruction to engage students in the authentic discourses and tasks of their target community (Hyland, 2016). Students' descriptions of "struggling to apply Bloom's taxonomy" or "negotiating different teaching ideas" vividly illustrate the process of cognitive apprenticeship, where theoretical knowledge is constructed and refined through collaborative, scaffolded practice. This finding directly responds to the research gap concerning how public courses like College English can substantively support the "teacher-education character" called for by accreditation (Hu et al., 2022; Guo, 2024).

### 5.3 The Student-Centered Model: Conceptual Acceptance and Practical Complexities

The results present a nuanced picture of the student-centered pedagogical shift. Students' strong conceptual agreement that the model is more effective and their willingness to continue with it underscore a generational and pedagogical readiness for active learning methodologies, consistent with broader trends in higher education (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

However, the qualitative data reveals critical complexities in implementation that the literature on educational change predicts (Fullan, 2007). The requests for "more scaffolding" and "formative feedback from the teacher as a guide" indicate that students did not interpret "student-centered" as synonymous with "teacher-passive." Instead, they called for a redefined, more facilitative teacher role—one that provides structured autonomy. This highlights a key challenge for instructors transitioning to such models: calibrating the level of guidance to prevent confusion without stifling initiative.

Furthermore, the challenge posed by heterogeneous English proficiency within collaborative groups is a salient finding for multi-ability ETE classrooms. It suggests that simply placing students in groups is insufficient. Effective implementation requires proactive instructional strategies, such as differentiated roles, peer-assisted learning structures, or targeted language support, to ensure equitable participation and learning for all (Kuh, 2008). This issue directly intersects with the OBE principle of supporting all students to achieve outcomes, necessitating inclusive pedagogical design.

## 6. Conclusion & Implications for ETE Instruction

This study provides an empirical evaluation of a novel Teacher Education English (ETE) course, designed to bridge the gap between general English instruction and the profession-specific language demands of pre-service teachers. Student perceptions revealed that the shift from a General English (GE) model to an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework was positively received. Learners reported heightened interest, confidence, and satisfaction, indicating successful affective engagement with the curriculum's professional focus. More significantly, students perceived substantial development in core teaching competencies—such as lesson planning and simulated teaching—through scaffolded, practice-based activities. This validates a practice-embedded, genre-based approach as an effective means of operationalizing abstract accreditation standards into tangible learning outcomes.

The findings also offer nuanced insights into implementing student-centered pedagogy in EFL contexts. While students conceptually endorsed the collaborative, active learning model, their feedback highlighted critical areas for refinement. A key implication is the need for scaffolded autonomy, where the instructor transitions from a lecturer to a facilitator who provides structured guidance and formative feedback during the learning process.

Furthermore, managing heterogeneous language proficiency within collaborative tasks emerged as a significant challenge. This necessitates instructional strategies such as differentiated group roles or targeted language support to ensure equitable participation—a consideration vital for inclusive EFL instruction aligned with Outcome-Based Education principles.

For broader EFL instruction, this study underscores the transformative potential of aligning College English curricula with students' academic and professional identities. The success of the ETE model demonstrates that ESP-oriented courses can enhance both perceived relevance and competency development. To replicate and scale this approach, institutions should support faculty development in ESP/ETE curriculum design and foster cross-departmental collaboration to ensure pedagogical authenticity. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to measure objective learning gains and long-term impacts on teaching practice.

However, this study has several limitations. First, it relies on self-reported perception data from a single cohort at one university at a single point in time, limiting generalizability. Second, the absence of pre-course baseline data or objective performance measures means perceived gains are not triangulated with actual proficiency development. Third, the instructor-researcher dual role, while providing deep contextual insight, may have influenced students' survey responses despite anonymization.

In conclusion, this study affirms that a thoughtfully designed Teacher Education English course can serve as a powerful lever for aligning public English instruction with the pressing demands of teacher education accreditation and modern pedagogical practice. The journey from policy to effective practice is iterative. The student voice, central to this research, provides an indispensable compass for navigating the next steps of that journey, ensuring that the course continues to evolve as a relevant, challenging, and empowering component of teacher preparation. By centering the learner experience and continuously refining pedagogical practice based on empirical feedback, such innovations can ensure that English language education remains a dynamic and empowering component of professional preparation.

### Acknowledgement

This work is supported by a General Grant of Jilin Educational Science Project (GH23260); a Key Grant on Education and Teaching Reform of Jilin Education Department (JLJY202315190428); a General Grant of Jilin Higher Education Institution (JGJX25D0120); a General Grant of Jilin Educational Science Project (GH25311)

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## Appendix: Teacher Education English Course Effectiveness Questionnaire

## Part 1: Student Background Information

1. My gender:
  - A. Male
  - B. Female
2. My ethnicity:
  - A. Han Chinese
  - B. Korean Chinese
  - C. Other minority
3. My major is:
  - A. Preschool Education
  - B. Primary Education
  - C. Psychology
  - D. Ideological and Political Education
4. My current English learning status is:
  - A. Have not passed the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) (score  $\leq$  424)
  - B. Have passed CET-4 (score  $\geq$  425)
  - C. Have passed the College English Test Band 6 (CET-6)
  - D. Have not yet taken CET-4

## Part 2: Affective Attitudes &amp; Learning Engagement (Addressing RQ1)

5. This course has increased my interest in Teacher Education English.
  - A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
6. This course has increased my confidence in learning Teacher Education English.
  - A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
7. Overall, I believe I worked hard in this course.
  - A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
8. Overall, I am satisfied with the teaching effectiveness of this semester.
  - A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree

## Part 3: Perceived Professional Competency Development (Addressing RQ2)

9. This course has enhanced my understanding of educational and pedagogical theories.
- A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
10. I have clear career plans for the future.
- A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
11. This course has enhanced my professional identity and sense of mission as an educator.
- A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
12. (Multiple Choice) Which parts of this course were most helpful to me?
- A. Understanding theoretical knowledge related to teacher education
  - B. Enhancing my professional English literacy as a teacher
  - C. Improving my practical English skills
  - D. Preparing for exams and earning credits

## Part 4: Evaluation of Core Teaching Activities: Simulated Teaching &amp; Lesson Planning (Addressing RQ2)

13. Overall, the group simulated teaching presentation was very helpful to me.
- A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
14. (Multiple Choice) The group simulated teaching helped me in the following aspects:
- A. Teaching practical skills
  - B. Consolidation of teaching theory
  - C. Group collaboration skills
  - D. Increased personal confidence
  - E. PPT design skills
  - F. Independent thinking skills
15. I found the difficulty level of the group simulated teaching task to be appropriate.
- A. Strongly Agree
  - B. Agree
  - C. Neutral
  - D. Somewhat Disagree
  - E. Strongly Disagree
16. (Multiple Choice) The group lesson plan writing task helped me in the following aspects:
- A. Writing teaching objectives
  - B. Understanding the basic norms and format of a lesson plan
  - C. Designing teaching strategies and methods
  - D. Accumulating teaching practical experience
  - E. Improving peer-assessment skills
  - F. Enhancing group collaboration skills

17. (Multiple Choice) The group lesson plan scoring rubric, curriculum standards, and lesson plan examples helped me in the following aspects:

- A. Understanding and applying the SMART principle for writing teaching objectives
- B. Understanding the basic norms and format of a lesson plan
- C. Designing teaching strategies and methods
- D. Accumulating teaching practical experience
- E. Improving the validity and reliability of peer assessment

18. (Open-ended) Please describe in detail the difficulties you encountered while completing the group simulated teaching, lesson plan writing, and peer assessment tasks, how you overcame them, and what you gained from the experience.

#### Part 5: Perceptions of the Student-Centered Pedagogical Model (Addressing RQ3)

19. Overall, I believe cooperative learning is more effective than independent learning.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neutral
- D. Somewhat Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree

20. Overall, I believe student-centered teaching is more effective than traditional lecture-based teaching.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neutral
- D. Somewhat Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree

21. I have adapted well to the "student-centered" teaching model adopted in this course.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neutral
- D. Somewhat Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree

22. I believe that although the "student-centered" model increases my learning difficulty, it leads to greater improvement and practice in my theoretical and practical abilities.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neutral
- D. Somewhat Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree

23. If given the choice, I would support continuing to try the "student-centered" teaching model.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Neutral
- D. Somewhat Disagree
- E. Strongly Disagree

24. (Open-ended) Please share your specific suggestions for improving the "student-centered" teaching model candidly.

#### Part 6: Course Integration with Major (Contextual Relevance)

25. (Open-ended) Please elaborate on how to better integrate the teaching and learning of this course with your specific major.