



A Critical Analysis of CET in China

The Conflict Between Standardization
and Language Development in the CET Policy

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Module Code: ECDE7017

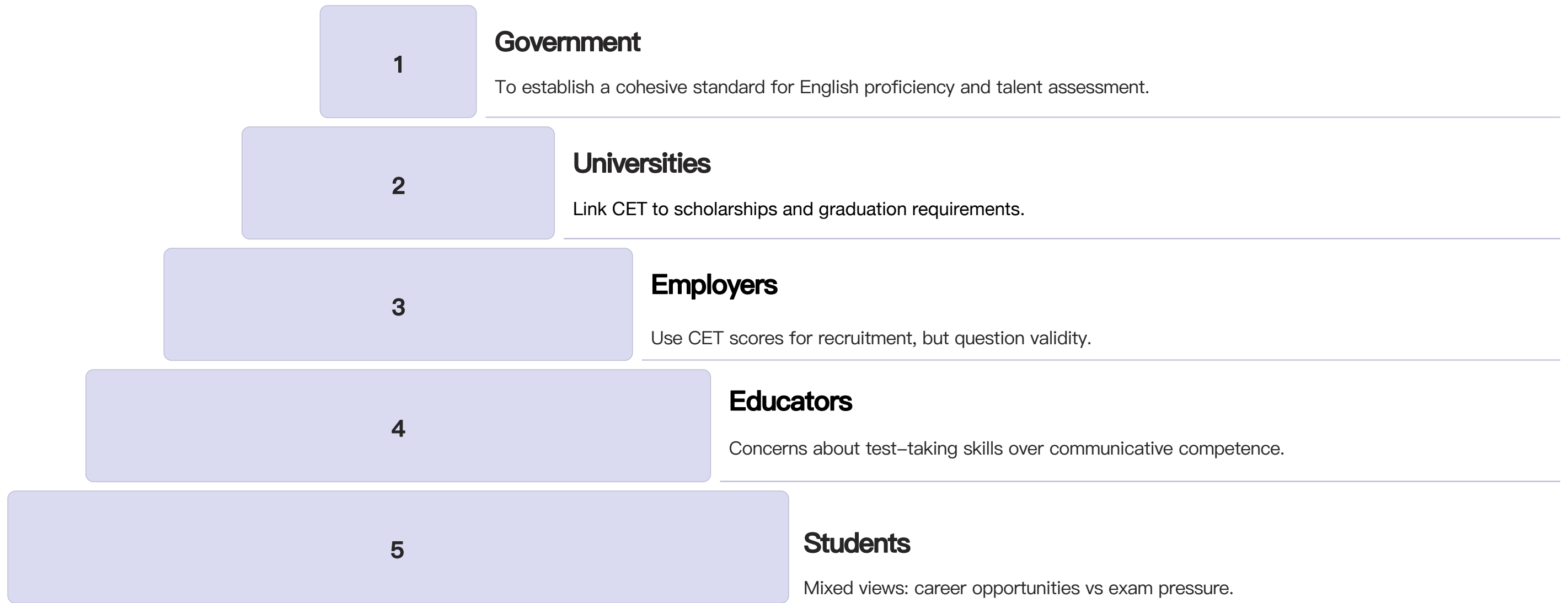
College English Test (CET)

‘The CET is a standardised English proficiency test for Chinese university students. It aims to promote English teaching and measure students' language skills accurately.’

(Ministry of Education, 2006)

CET4 Written Test					
Area	Content	Format	Number of Questions	Proportion	Time
Writing	Composition	Short essay	1	15%	30 minutes
Translation	Chinese to English	Paragraph translation	1	15%	30 minutes
Listening Comprehension	Short News	Multiple choice	7	7%	25 minutes
	Long Conversations	Multiple choice	8	8%	
	Essays	Multiple choice	10	20%	
Reading Comprehension	Vocabulary Comprehension	Fill-in-the-blanks with appropriate words	10	5%	40 minutes
	Long-form Reading	Match the given information with relevant paragraph	10	10%	
	Close Reading	Multiple choice	10	20%	
Total			57	100%	125 minutes
CET-SET4 Spoken Test					
Sections	Tasks	Process		Time	
Part 1	Self-introduction	Self-introduction		20 seconds	
Part 2	Short Essay Reading	Short essay with about 120 words		1 minute + 45 seconds preparation	
Part 3	Short Answer	Two questions related to the short essay		40 seconds	
Part 4	Personal Statement	Personal statement		1 minute + 45 seconds preparation	
Part 5	Interaction With Another student	Converse according to given prompts		3 minutes + 1 minute preparation	
CET6 Written Test					
Area	Content	Format	Number of Questions	Proportion	Time
Writing	Composition	Short essay	1	15%	30 minutes
Translation	Chinese to English	Paragraph translation	1	15%	30 minutes
Listening Comprehension	Short News	Multiple choice	8	8%	30 minutes
	Long Conversations	Multiple choice	7	7%	
	Essays	Multiple choice	10	20%	
Reading Comprehension	Vocabulary Comprehension	Fill-in-the-blanks with appropriate words	10	5%	40 minutes
	Long-form Reading	Match the given information with relevant paragraph	10	10%	
	Close Reading	Multiple choice	10	20%	
Total			57	100%	130 minutes
CET-SET6 Spoken Test					
Sections	Tasks	Process		Time	
Part 1	Self-introduction and answers	Self-introduction, followed by questions from examiners		- 20 seconds - 30 seconds	
Part 2	Personal statement and discussion	Personal statement, followed by discussion on given topic with another student		- Personal statement 90 seconds each - Discussion 3 minutes	
Part 3	Question and answer	Provide answers to the question by the examiner		- 45 seconds	
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Stakeholders and Perceptions



Policy Context

Economic Globalisation

English proficiency needed for international exchange.

1

2

Educational Standardisation

Uniform assessment of English skills across China.

3

Employment and Academic Mobility

CET scores linked to graduation requirements and job prospects.

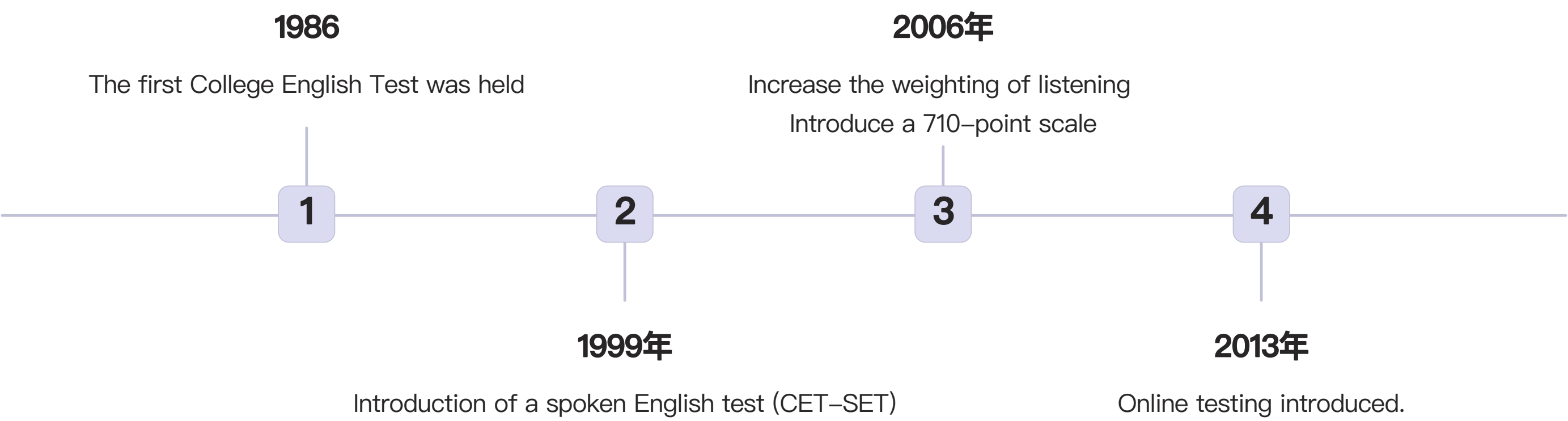
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Regional differences

‘The quality of education varies by region.’ Jin, Y. (2011)



Policy Evolution



Policy Gap

Personalised Learning

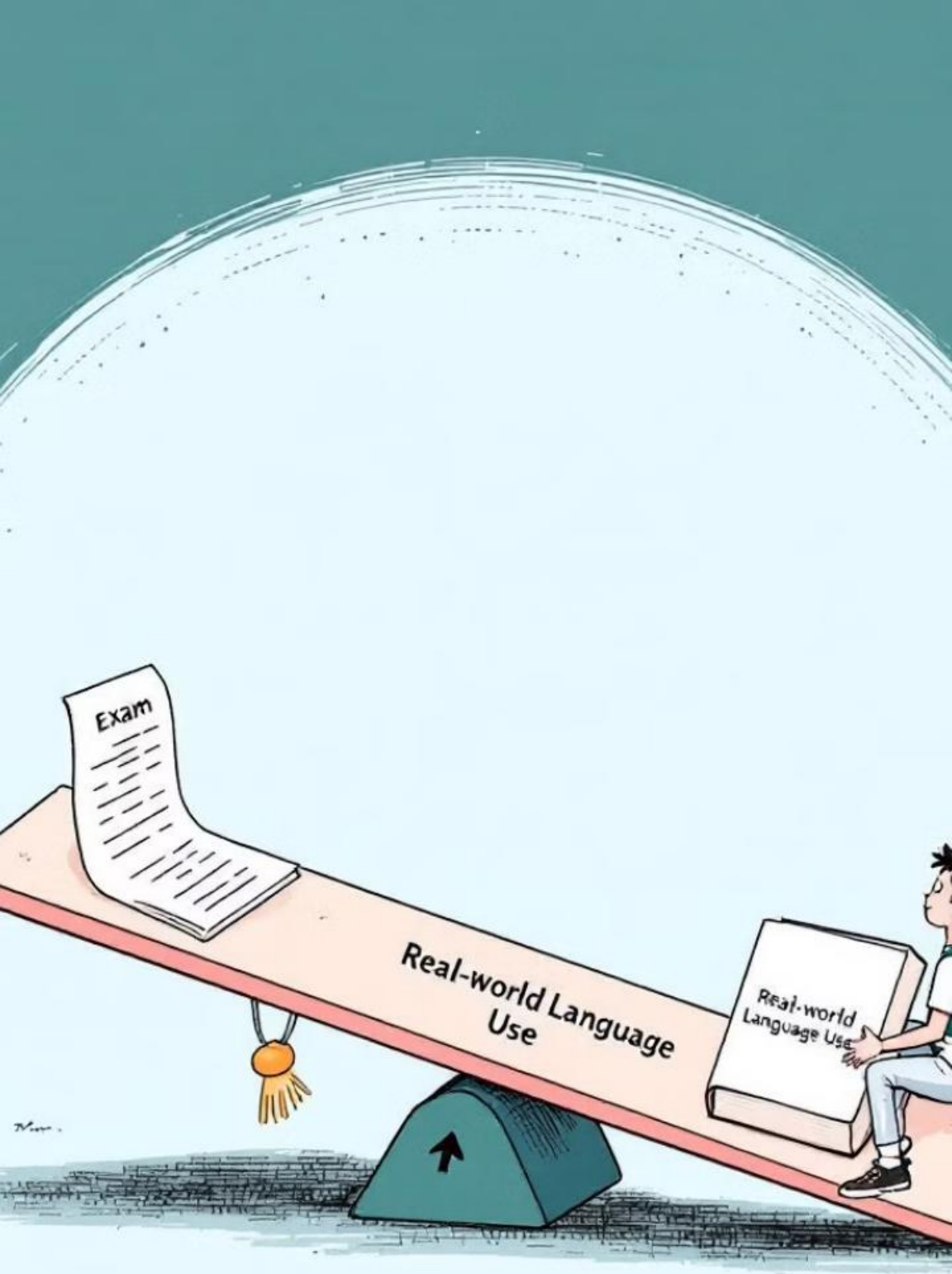
CET lacks focus on individual student needs and career paths.

Practical Skills

Exam preparation prioritised over practical language skills.

Balance of educational goals

Schools prioritise test scores over broader educational goals



Policy Document of Government

1 College English Course Requirements (CECR)

‘emphasizes the development of students' comprehensive language skills’ (Ministry of Education, 2006)

2 Flexibility

Universities allowed to adapt teaching to their circumstances.

3 Social Interaction

Emphasis on practical language skills for real–world use.



中华人民共和国教育部
Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China

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Information name: Notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Education on further improving the quality and fully implementing the Reform of College English Teaching

Information Index: 360A08-07-2006-0395-1 Date: 2006-07-31

Content overview: Fully implement the college English teaching reform

Notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Education on further improving the quality and fully implementing the Reform of College English Teaching

No.4,2006

Education departments (education commissions) of all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, education departments of relevant ministries and commissions (departments), Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, and institutions of higher learning affiliated to the Ministry:

College English teaching reform is an important part of the "College Teaching Reform and Teaching Quality Project" of the Ministry of Education. Since its launch in 2002, under the unified deployment of our Ministry, formulated the new College English Curriculum Teaching Requirements (Trial); commissioned four publishing houses to develop the college English teaching software system based on computer and network; launched the reform plan of National College English Test Level 4 and Level 6, and conducted the new level 4 pilot test. In the past four years, through the joint efforts of teachers in the reform of higher learning. College students comprehensive application ability of English has been further improved. The reform of college English teaching has made a positive contribution in leading and promoting the reform of Chinese higher education teaching and comprehensively improving the quality of talent training, which has an important strategic significance.

In order to seriously summarize the experience of college English teaching reform, consolidate the results, to point with surface, the full implementation of college English teaching reform, in March 2006 I entrust university foreign language teaching steering committee, college English teaching reform liaison office, to the national 50 universities college English teaching reform investigation, and form the progress of college English teaching reform survey report (hereinafter referred to as the "survey report"). The report summarizes the reform of college English teaching and puts forward the ideas for the future development. I hereby forward the Survey Report to you for your reference. Please study and formulate the work plan for improving the quality and fully implementing the reform of college English teaching based on the content of the Survey Report. In the process of promoting the reform of college English teaching, institutions of higher learning should focus on the following aspects:

1. Leaders at all levels should fully understand the importance and urgency of college English teaching reform, take promoting and deepening the reform of college English teaching as a major and urgent task, and earnestly grasp it well.
2. In the teaching software system commissioned by the department, in two years of practice, the publishing house has continuously upgraded and improved the technology, and various functions have been relatively mature. It is suggested that universities actively use the high-quality teaching courseware and teaching resources recommended by the department to reform the traditional English teaching mode.
3. We should strengthen the training of English teachers, and strive to create a relatively stable team of college English teachers with noble ideological and moral quality and high scientific and cultural quality.
4. Actively promote the reform of CET-4 and CET-6. Since December 2006 and June 2007, start the examination of CET-4 and CET-6 was started according to the new Examination Outline.

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University dumps English requirement for degree

By Zou Shuo | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2023-09-21 16:02

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Xi'an Jiaotong University said students are no longer required to pass the College English Test (CET-4 and CET-6), a national English exam, to graduate or earn a higher degree, according to local website Xibujuece.

The results of other English proficiency tests will also not be used to determine whether a student can graduate or earn a degree.

It is common for many Chinese universities to ask their students to pass the CET-4 to qualify for a bachelor's degree and the CET-6 to qualify for a master's degree.

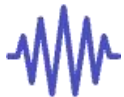
The rule took effect on Sept 1.

媒体报道分析



China Daily

Reported on ‘universities dropping CET as graduation requirement.’ (Zou, 2023)



Positive Change

Media portrays shift towards practical English use positively.



Public Opinion

‘Media coverage influences education policy and reform acceptance.’

(Huang et al. 2012)

Conclusion



Policy Impact

CET standardised English education but fostered test-oriented learning culture.



Future Direction

University English education needs holistic language assessment

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