

Developing Industry-Demand-Oriented English Teaching Resources for Cruise Programs: Mechanisms, Pathways, and Quality Assurance

Xiaowei Zhang

School of Cruise and Art Design, Jiangsu Maritime Institute, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China

Abstract: *As the global cruise industry recovers and restructures while the Chinese cruise market enters a stage of rapid expansion, the language competence required of cruise crew members is undergoing a visible upgrade, exposing a widening gap between industry expectations and the English teaching resources used in cruise-related programs. Grounded in needs analysis from English for Specific Purposes and in competency-based vocational education, this study examines how English teaching resources for cruise programs can be planned, produced, and maintained around genuine industry demand. The paper first constructs an English competency map covering major cruise service and operations positions, then designs a collaborative governance structure and a compliant school-enterprise joint development mechanism with clearly assigned tasks and incentives. On this basis, it proposes a structured development team built around cross-disciplinary collaboration, dual academic-industry leadership, and a tiered pathway of teacher practice. The study further elaborates reform pathways that reorganize the curriculum around job task chains, build dual on-campus and off-campus training bases with authentic scenarios, empower resource development with digital and intelligent technologies, promote joint research and resource co-construction, and establish multi-stakeholder evidence-based evaluation. Finally, the paper summarizes the distinctive features of the resource system, including the integration of language ability, professional norms, and intercultural communication, a digital-physical platform for full-process practical teaching, and a traceable quality assurance mechanism. The findings offer a replicable framework for aligning cruise English education with the evolving demands of the industry.*

Keywords: Cruise industry, English for Specific Purposes, Teaching resource development, School-enterprise cooperation, Competency mapping, Quality assurance.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the cruise sector has evolved from a niche leisure business into a highly internationalized service industry whose daily operations depend on the coordinated work of multinational crews. On a single large cruise vessel it is common to find employees of dozens of nationalities, and English functions as the de facto working language that connects bridge teams, hotel departments, and shore-side partners [1]. As global fleets resume and expand their deployment and as China accelerates the construction of home-port economies and domestically built large cruise ships, the demand for crew members who can communicate accurately and appropriately in English has intensified across both service and technical positions.

Against this backdrop, the English teaching resources used in cruise-related programs in higher vocational colleges reveal a structural mismatch. Many textbooks remain organized around generic hospitality dialogues, detach language learning from the safety regulations and service standards that actually govern shipboard work, and are updated far more slowly than the industry itself. International conventions and flag-state regulations require seafarers to demonstrate not only vocabulary knowledge but the ability to give and understand instructions in routine and emergency situations [2], yet classroom materials rarely reproduce the communicative pressure of a real muster drill, a complaint-handling episode, or a multilingual embarkation day. The result is that graduates may hold certificates while

still struggling to perform linguistically in their first contract at sea.

Research in English for Specific Purposes has long argued that language provision should begin with a systematic analysis of target situations and learner needs rather than with inherited syllabuses [3]. For cruise programs, such an analysis points to a composite competence that blends service communication, safety-critical language, intercultural awareness, and familiarity with shipboard procedures. The central questions of this study are therefore fourfold: what competency structure do cruise service and operations positions actually require; what governance and team mechanisms can turn fragmented school-enterprise cooperation into a stable resource development pipeline; through which curricular, spatial, and technological pathways can industry demand be converted into classroom-usable resources; and how can the quality of these resources be evaluated, tracked, and continuously improved.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 1 clarifies the development logic by linking industry transformation to a position-oriented English competency map and to measurable resource-building goals. Section 2 addresses multi-stakeholder governance and the operating mechanisms of joint development. Section 3 focuses on the structure and capacity building of the development team. Section 4 details reform pathways across curriculum, training bases, digital technologies, joint research, and evaluation. Section 5 distills the innovative features and quality assurance

measures of the resource system, and Section 6 concludes.

2. Cruise Industry Transformation and the Development Logic of English Teaching Resources

2.1 Internationalization of the Cruise Industry and the Upgrading of Crew Language Requirements

The internationalization of cruise operations manifests itself in three interlocking dimensions. First, the labor market is global: recruitment agencies source hotel, deck, and engine personnel from Asia, Europe, and the Americas simultaneously, and mixed-nationality teams are the norm rather than the exception. Second, the customer base is equally diverse, which obliges front-line staff to switch registers and cultural scripts within a single shift. Third, the regulatory environment is transnational. Instruments such as the STCW Convention and the SOLAS and MLC frameworks embed communicative performance into certification, meaning that language failure can translate directly into safety and compliance risks.

These conditions have pushed crew language requirements beyond the traditional goal of fluent service talk. Job advertisements and training syllabi issued by cruise operators increasingly describe a composite profile: the ability to deliver safety briefings to anxious passengers, to de-escalate complaints, to coordinate with port authorities and medical staff, and to operate property-management and point-of-sale systems whose interfaces are predominantly in English. For Chinese cruise students, the emergence of domestically operated large ships adds a further twist: they must mediate between Chinese guests and international management systems, which makes bidirectional cultural-linguistic mediation itself a workplace skill. Teaching resources that ignore these layers prepare students for a labor market that no longer exists.

2.2 Constructing an English Competency Map for Cruise Service and Operations Positions

To translate demand into teachable content, this study adopts the needs-analysis tradition of English for Specific Purposes, which triangulates target-situation analysis, present-situation analysis, and learning-needs analysis, and combines it with the logic of competency-based education, in which curricula are derived backward from observable workplace performance [4]. Position clusters were first delineated through document analysis of job descriptions and interviews with industry trainers, covering guest services and front office, food and beverage, accommodation, entertainment and activities, shore excursions, safety and security, and selected back-of-house operations.

For each cluster, required English performance was then decomposed into five dimensions: (1) foundational language knowledge, including maritime and hospitality vocabulary; (2) task-chained service English that follows the actual workflow of a position, such as check-in, order-taking, cabin turnaround, or excursion dispatch; (3) safety and emergency English, including muster-station commands, incident reporting, and communication with shipboard authorities, intercultural

communicative competence, understood as the capacity to interpret and negotiate meaning across cultural frames rather than the memorization of etiquette lists; and (5) professional norms, encompassing service ethics, grooming language, and confidentiality expectations. Each dimension was graded into entry, proficient, and advanced levels, producing a competency map that functions simultaneously as a curriculum blueprint, a material-writing specification, and an assessment reference.

2.3 Formulating Implementable and Evaluable Resource-Building Goals

A competency map remains rhetorical unless it is converted into goals that can be executed and audited. Three principles guided the goal-setting process. First, task anchoring: every resource item, whether a unit, a video, or a simulation script, must correspond to at least one cell of the competency map, and orphan content is eliminated. Second, graded progression: goals specify not only what is to be learned but the performance level expected at each stage of the program, so that a first-semester dialogue and a pre-graduation integrated drill draw on the same scale. Third, measurability: for each goal, observable indicators are defined in advance, including the coverage rate of position task chains by existing resources, the proportion of materials renewed within a fixed cycle, platform usage and completion data, and learning-outcome measures collected through scenario-based assessment. Embedding these indicators at the design stage turns quality assurance from an afterthought into a constitutive feature of the resources themselves.

3. Multi-Stakeholder Collaborative Governance and Operating Mechanisms

3.1 Building a Governance Structure Linking the College, Enterprises, and Industry Platforms

Resource development for a multinational, regulation-heavy industry exceeds the capacity of any single college. The governance structure proposed here therefore distributes roles across three categories of actors [5]. The college contributes pedagogical expertise, students for pilot teaching, and sustained personnel investment. Cruise companies, manning agencies, and port operators contribute authentic task materials, access to real workplaces, and practicing professionals as mentors. Industry platforms, including cruise economy associations, maritime training institutions, and regional tourism authorities, contribute standards, data, and third-party credibility. A joint steering committee with rotating chairmanship sets annual priorities, arbitrates disputes, and reviews the alignment between resource outputs and the competency map, while a standing secretariat housed in the college handles daily coordination.

3.2 Improving the School-Enterprise Joint Development Mechanism Under Compliance Constraints

Because authentic cruise materials frequently touch upon commercially sensitive procedures and personal data, compliance is a precondition rather than an ornament of cooperation. Joint development agreements specify, item by item, the ownership and licensing of co-produced materials,

the conditions under which shipboard documents may be adapted for teaching, and the obligation to anonymize or fictionalize any passenger-related content. Confidentiality clauses protect unpublished operational procedures, while data-processing rules govern the recordings and learning analytics generated on digital platforms. Clarifying these boundaries at the outset reduces the transaction costs that typically cause school-enterprise projects to stall [6], and it gives enterprise partners a predictable legal environment in which contributing real materials is safe rather than risky.

3.3 Establishing a Project Operation System with Clear Tasks and Responsibilities

At the operational level, resource development is organized as a portfolio of bounded projects rather than as open-ended cooperation. Each project, such as the writing of a course module or the production of a simulation scenario, is launched with a brief that defines deliverables, milestones, acceptance criteria, and a responsibility assignment matrix distinguishing those who execute, those who approve, those who are consulted, and those who are informed. A versioned repository records every draft and review decision, making the development history retrievable for later audits. Monthly coordination meetings track progress against the milestone plan, and acceptance is conditional on both pedagogical review by teachers and task-fidelity review by industry mentors, so that no resource enters the teaching system without passing both gates.

3.4 Improving Incentive, Support, and Continuous-Improvement Mechanisms

Sustainable cooperation depends on incentives that recognize the real costs borne by each party. For college teachers, verified contributions to resource development are converted into teaching-workload credits and counted in professional-title evaluation, reducing the chronic undervaluation of material development relative to paper publication. For enterprise participants, the college offers honoraria, adjunct titles, co-authorship where appropriate, and priority access to customized training services. Financial guarantees combine special funds from the college, enterprise sponsorship, and project grants applied for jointly. Continuous improvement follows a plan-do-check-act cycle: each semester ends with a structured review of usage data, learner feedback, and employer commentary, whose conclusions feed directly into the task list of the next development round [7].

4. Structured Development Team and Capacity Building

4.1 Taking Cross-Disciplinary and Cross-Position Collaboration as the Team-Building Principle

The hybrid nature of cruise English, situated between language education, hospitality management, and maritime regulation, means that no single disciplinary group can author adequate resources alone. The development team is therefore assembled on an explicitly cross-disciplinary basis [8]. English teachers contribute genre knowledge, materials-writing skills, and assessment literacy; cruise and hospitality faculty contribute procedural knowledge of positions and

service standards; enterprise trainers and experienced crew members contribute authentic language samples and workplace judgment; and instructional designers together with information-technology staff translate content into interactive and platform-ready forms. Collaboration is structured around shared artifacts rather than goodwill: mixed pairs co-author each unit, so that linguistic and occupational perspectives are negotiated in the text itself instead of being stitched together afterward.

4.2 Establishing a Dual-Leader and Industry-Mentor Mechanism

Leadership is shared between two figures with complementary authority [9]. The academic leader, a senior English teacher familiar with ESP methodology, safeguards pedagogical coherence, maintains the competency map, and chairs internal reviews. The industry leader, typically a cruise hotel director, training manager, or senior purser with substantial sea time, certifies that tasks, terminology, and service standards reflect current practice and arbitrates disputes about occupational authenticity. Around this pair, a pool of industry mentors is formally appointed with defined duties: supplying and vetting authentic materials, recording model dialogues, supervising student practicums, and participating in scenario-based assessment. Appointment letters, service records, and evaluation of mentor performance convert what is often an informal courtesy relationship into an accountable institutional arrangement.

4.3 Optimizing the Mix of Full-Time and Part-Time Staff by Task Module

The resource pipeline is divided into task modules: needs research and competency-map maintenance, material writing and adaptation, audio-visual and media production, platform and simulation development, pilot teaching, and evaluation. Staffing follows the competence profile of each module rather than a fixed headcount. Needs research pairs full-time researchers with enterprise informants; writing modules rely mainly on full-time teachers supported by mentors; media and platform modules draw on external technicians under college supervision; pilot teaching and evaluation mobilize the widest circle, including part-time lecturers currently employed at sea or ashore. This modular approach keeps the permanent core small and economical while allowing the team to expand precisely where specialized skills are needed, and it clarifies accountability because every module has a named owner and a defined interface with adjacent modules.

4.4 Forming a Tiered and Progressive Pathway of Teacher Practice and Development

Because most English teachers have never worked on a cruise vessel, a staged practice pathway is designed to close the experiential gap. The first stage, cognition, consists of industry lectures, job-shadowing at cruise terminals, and guided analysis of authentic documents. The second stage, immersion, places teachers in short-term positions with partner enterprises, including port-side guest services and, where feasible, supervised onboard observation voyages. The third stage, practice, engages teachers in co-teaching with industry mentors, in writing and piloting resource units, and in

corporate training assignments. The fourth stage, leadership, promotes experienced teachers to module ownership and to the role of trainer for new team members. Progression along the pathway is documented in an individual development portfolio and linked to the incentive system described in Section 2, transforming sporadic enterprise visits into a cumulative, assessable professional trajectory.

4.5 Strengthening Professional Ethics, Occupational Literacy, and Intercultural Awareness

Resource developers model the values embedded in the materials they produce, so team building explicitly addresses ethics and intercultural disposition. Regular workshops cover teacher ethics, the responsible use of enterprise materials, and the avoidance of copyright infringement in adapted content. Because cruise English materials inevitably represent passengers and colleagues from many cultures, the team adopts explicit guidelines against stereotyping: characters in dialogues are diversified in role and status, cultural differences are presented as negotiation topics rather than fixed traits, and materials are reviewed for bias before release [10]. These norms protect learners from internalizing reductive images of the guests and colleagues they will actually meet, and they align the development process with the intercultural competence that the resources claim to teach.

5. Resource Development Pathways Oriented to the Reform of Key Teaching Elements

5.1 Restructuring the Curriculum System and Training Model Around Job Task Chains

Rather than appending cruise content to a generic English curriculum, the program is rebuilt around job task chains, that is, the ordered sequences of communicative actions through which a position creates value. The curriculum is organized into progressive modules: a foundational stage consolidates general and maritime English; a position stage develops task-chained service English for the major job clusters identified in the competency map; an integration stage combines service, safety, and intercultural demands in complex scenarios such as embarkation day, medical incidents, or complaint escalation. The training model blends classroom instruction with project-based assignments and practicum periods, and learning outcomes are stated as performance descriptors tied to the graded levels of the competency map, so that students, teachers, and employers share a single language for what competence means.

5.2 Building Dual Bases and Authentic Teaching Scenarios on and Off Campus

Situated learning theory holds that competence is acquired through legitimate participation in authentic practice rather than through decontextualized drill. Accordingly, the college develops an on-campus base that simulates the cruise environment, including a mock front desk, a training cabin, a food and beverage laboratory, and rehearsal spaces for safety briefings, all equipped to run the scenarios contained in the resource bank. The off-campus base extends into cruise terminals, partner hotels, and, through agreements with operators, actual vessels during port calls or dry-dock periods.

Resources are designed to migrate across these settings: the same embarkation scenario exists as a classroom role-play, a simulation-suite exercise, and a terminal practicum task, with difficulty and authenticity increasing at each step, so that learners experience continuity rather than a leap between school and work.

5.3 Empowering Resource Development with Digital and Intelligent Technologies

Digital-intelligent technologies are used to solve three chronic problems of cruise English resources: scarcity of authentic language data, lack of individualized feedback, and slow updating. First, a specialized corpus of cruise service discourse is compiled from licensed transcripts, adapted documents, and recorded mentor performances, giving writers and learners searchable access to how shipboard communication actually sounds. Second, an online platform delivers modular units enriched with micro-lectures, interactive cases, and speech-recognition-based pronunciation and fluency feedback, while learning analytics record completion, error patterns, and time on task. Third, virtual simulation reproduces high-cost or high-risk scenarios such as muster drills and emergency announcements that cannot be practiced frequently in physical facilities. A knowledge graph links every resource to its competency-map coordinates, enabling both adaptive recommendation for students and gap analysis for the development team.

5.4 Promoting Technical Services and Resource Co-Construction Through Joint Research

Joint research converts cooperation from material exchange into knowledge production. The college and its partners identify applied problems of mutual interest, such as the diagnosis of crew language proficiency, the localization of international training packages, or the communicative demands of new shipboard technologies, and conduct them as formal research or development projects. The outputs circulate in both directions: enterprises obtain services including crew language assessment, pre-contract training, and customized courses, while the college obtains data, cases, and validation opportunities that feed back into teaching resources [11]. Co-authored guidelines, software, and courseware are jointly owned under the agreements described in Section 2, and successful services are documented as transferable products, which strengthens the college's position when negotiating cooperation with additional cruise and hospitality enterprises.

5.5 Establishing a Multi-Stakeholder, Whole-Process Evidence-Based Evaluation Mechanism

Evaluation is designed as a multi-stakeholder, whole-process system rather than a terminal inspection. Multi-stakeholder participation means that students rate usability and perceived relevance, teachers rate teachability, industry mentors rate task fidelity, and enterprise supervisors rate the job performance of interns and graduates who learned with the resources. Whole-process coverage means that evidence is collected at the development stage through expert review of drafts, at the pilot stage through controlled classroom trials, and at the application stage through platform analytics,

scenario-based examinations, and follow-up surveys of employers. All evidence streams converge in a semester evaluation report that assigns each resource a status of retain, revise, or retire, and the report together with its underlying data is archived for audit [12]. Evaluation thus becomes the engine of the continuous-improvement cycle instead of a ceremonial conclusion.

6. Distinctive Features and Quality Enhancement of the Developed Resources

6.1 Integrating Language Ability, Professional Norms, and Intercultural Communication

The first distinctive feature is the deliberate fusion of three strands that conventional materials treat separately. Every unit is built on a triple objective: a language objective drawn from the competency map, a professional-norm objective referencing service standards and safety discipline, and an intercultural objective targeting the negotiation of meaning across cultural frames. A food and beverage unit, for example, does not stop at the language of taking orders; it embeds service-recovery language for handling complaints, hygiene-related reporting phrases, and reflection tasks on how dietary customs and taboos differ across passenger groups. This integration reflects how competence is actually deployed at work and prevents the common outcome in which students speak acceptable English yet violate professional or cultural expectations.

6.2 Carrying Full-Process Practical Teaching Through a Digital-Physical Integrated Platform

The second feature is a platform architecture in which digital and physical environments carry one continuous practice process rather than parallel tracks. Students begin with online cognition of a task through corpus examples and micro-lectures, rehearse it in virtual simulation, perform it in the physical simulation base, and complete it during off-campus practicum, with each stage generating data that flow into the same learner profile. Teachers orchestrate the sequence through the platform, releasing resources, reviewing recordings, and assigning remediation. Because the same competency coordinates tag every stage, the platform can visualize each student's trajectory across the whole map and expose precisely which task chains remain under-practiced, turning the abstract idea of full-process practice into an inspectable operational reality.

6.3 Coordinating Teacher Growth, Resource Updating, and Social Services

The third feature is a virtuous cycle linking three outcomes that are often pursued as disconnected agendas. Teacher participation in enterprise practice supplies fresh authentic material, which drives resource updating; updated resources improve the quality of the training and assessment services that the college sells to enterprises and offers to the community; revenue and reputation from these services, in turn, finance further teacher development and attract new enterprise partners. Managing the three as one system, with the steering committee reviewing all three indicators together, prevents the familiar decay pattern in which a resource bank is

built once with great effort and then silently ages as its authors move on.

6.4 Establishing a Trackable and Auditable Quality Assurance Mechanism

Quality assurance rests on traceability. Every resource carries metadata recording its competency-map coordinates, authors, reviewers, version history, and usage statistics; every modification is logged with its reason and approver; and every evaluation report retains its underlying evidence. A lightweight defect-reporting channel allows students, teachers, and enterprise users to flag errors or outdated content directly from the platform, and each report receives a disposition within a defined period. Periodic third-party review, commissioned through the industry platform members of the governance structure, audits a sample of resources against the competency map and the acceptance criteria. Because the entire chain from demand analysis to retirement is documented, quality claims become verifiable rather than asserted, which is essential when resources are shared across institutions or submitted for accreditation.

7. Conclusion

This study has argued that the persistent gap between cruise industry expectations and graduate English performance is fundamentally a resource-development problem, and that solving it requires changes in logic, governance, teams, and pathways simultaneously. The proposed framework begins from a position-oriented competency map grounded in ESP needs analysis and competency-based education, embeds development in a compliant multi-stakeholder governance structure, staffs it through a cross-disciplinary team with dual leadership and tiered teacher growth, and delivers it through task-chain curricula, dual training bases, digital-intelligent empowerment, joint research, and evidence-based evaluation. The resulting resource system is distinguished by its integration of language, professional norms, and intercultural communication, its digital-physical full-process practice chain, its self-sustaining cycle of teacher growth and social service, and its auditable quality assurance.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The competency map and the proposed mechanisms are derived primarily from the cruise service and operations domain and from the institutional conditions of Chinese higher vocational colleges; their transfer to maritime engineering positions or to other national training systems requires further validation. Longitudinal evidence on employment outcomes, and comparative studies across colleges with different levels of enterprise access, would strengthen the framework. As autonomous ship technologies, green operations, and new onboard services reshape crew work, the competency map itself must be treated as a living document, and the traceable updating mechanism proposed here is intended precisely to make such evolution routine rather than exceptional.

References

- [1] Tu Fengna, Cai Yini. Research on the Development Path of Marine Digital Cultural Tourism in Tianjin[J]. Seeking Knowledge, 2025, (08): 35-38.

- [2] Feng Shuhuan, Wang Lizhi, Liu Kaixi, Yue Hong. Latest Legislative Progress and Enlightenment of MASS[J]. China Ship Survey, 2023, (09): 57-61.
- [3] Yang Cen, Jin Zhiru. Construction and Practical Research on the “TFT” Blended Teaching Model of Maritime-related ESP Courses[J]. Journal of Changchun University, 2025, 35(04): 101-108.
- [4] Wang Qin. Training of “Double-qualified” Teachers from the Perspective of Competency: Problem Analysis and Optimization Strategies[J]. Vocational Education Forum, 2021, 37(03): 75-80.
- [5] Chen Libin, Zhao Lisha, Wang Xiaohua. Practical Dilemmas and Optimization Paths of Industry-Education Integration in Higher Education from the Perspective of New-quality Productive Forces[J]. Research in Higher Engineering Education, 2025, (01): 111-116.
- [6] Zou Jiarui, Rong Weidong. Research Status and Prospect of Generative Artificial Intelligence Empowering Education in China[J]. Journal of Chengdu Normal University, 2025, (Z2): 45-49.
- [7] Tian Aili, Hou Chunxiao. Essential Analysis and Development Path Exploration of Digital-intelligent Education from the Ecological Perspective[J]. China Journal of Educational Informatization, 2025, 31(12): 33-43.
- [8] Shen Tingting. Investigation on the Current Situation and Cultivation Strategies of Higher Vocational Students’ English Intercultural Communicative Competence[J]. Journal of Higher Education, 2021, 7(25): 144-147+151.
- [9] Luo Shengquan, Wu Xiaoli. New Orientation and Practical Choice of Teachers’ Teaching from the Perspective of High-quality Education Ecology[J]. Modern Educational Management, 2024, (09): 94-105.
- [10] Meng Qiuzhu. Application of Big Data Analysis in Teaching Quality Evaluation of Higher Vocational Colleges[J]. China Management Informationization, 2021, (17):56-62.
- [11] Bao Jinyan. Research on the Path of Artificial Intelligence Empowering Employment Guidance in Colleges and Universities[J]. Employment and Security, 2025, (11): 58-60.
- [12] Jenny Mochtar, Gan Shu San. Challenges in Quality Assurance: A Ten-Year Journey[J]. SHS Web of Conferences, 2020: 01016.