

Construction and Practice of Blended Teaching in College English Based on Flipped Classroom

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Abstract: The application of the blended teaching method based on flipped classroom is of great significance in College English teaching so as to improve the effect of English teaching and promote students' English learning. Blended teaching is a teaching method that combines traditional teaching and network teaching. Meanwhile, flipped classroom is the main way to realize the blended learning mode. This paper analyses the construction of a new hybrid teaching method based on flipped classroom, and studies its application in order to promote the development of English Teaching at College.

1. Introduction

In today's era, technology is developing rapidly and big data is more and more widely used. With the new college English curriculum constantly updating, blended teaching comes up as a teaching innovation which does not mean a complete negation of the past teaching experience and model, but inherits and develops itself on the basis of criticism and summary [1]. In general, blended teaching makes full use of Internet resources and information technology, and combines itself with the flipped classroom English Teaching methods. In the most basic sense, flipped classroom English teaching, taking the real status of students' life into consideration thoroughly, aims at adding up students' life experience and deepening students' perception of life through carrying out teaching activities which emphasize the development of practical ability so that students' English literacy would be improved accordingly. In a deeper sense, flipped classroom English teaching applied in college classrooms can be well combined with the teaching concepts of college English courses raised in the new curriculum reform. Specifically speaking, the instructors who employ flipped classroom teaching methods are to guide students to conduct reading and writing tasks in combination with their life experience, in which way, their perception of life will be sharpened and their own emotions will be enriched. One step further, by correlating English learning ideas with the mobilizing of life experience, students complete English listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks in an emotional way instead of a rough manner that simply focuses on language itself.

With the rapid development of information technology in the era of big data, computers and networks have become indispensable tools in English Teaching at College. The traditional classroom Teaching methods is unable to meet the requirements of the times, so we are required to re-examine the English Teaching at College. The demand for the transition from the traditional classroom dominated by teachers to the new classroom of Student-centered Interactive discussion mode is imminent. At the same time, in the era of advocating the concept of lifelong learning, the importance of network autonomous learning has become more and more obvious, When the new classroom and network autonomous learning are integrated, the hybrid Teaching methods is taking shape.

2. Problems Existing in Current Teaching Methods

2.1. The Traditional Teaching Method Ignores the Ability of Language Application

The traditional teaching method currently puts most of its emphasis on the memorization and spelling of words, the completion of reading topics, and the cultivation of listening and speaking

ability. The language communication ability and practical application ability have not been paid ample attention to yet, and most students are still typical representatives of dumb English [2].

2.2. Language Teaching and Culture Awareness are Separated from Each Other

Current teaching systems and methods tend to neglect the cultivation of students' cross-cultural communicative competence. Most college English courses are still conducted based on teachers' mono-lecturing and students' passive listening. Usually, they lack of students' active participation and effective interaction. The cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence mostly stays at the theoretical level, and culture awareness is less involved in the teaching process. Teachers only pay attention to textbook knowledge and ignore the guidance for students to learn western culture [3]. English teaching in college should not merely stay at the level of language learning alone, instead, it is suggested that teachers should integrate cultural influence into their instructions and students ought to understand western culture in a profound sense by means of comparative analysis [4].

2.3. Outdated Teaching Concepts

In a traditional classroom teaching, the atmosphere is thought to be dull and depressing most of the time, and students' enthusiasm for participation is relatively at a low level. Due to the large class size of students, teachers always adopt the "full filling" teaching method, in order to complete the teaching tasks and clarify all language knowledge points regardless of whether students are fully capable of absorbing what are being taught or not. Therefore, the classroom atmosphere becomes boring since there are often a great number of teaching tasks to complete. What's more, students will become sleepy and tiresome because of the above-mentioned situation, and interactions and group discussions are hardly involved. Even if there were interactions and group discussions, they are simply ineffective ones and a majority of teachers arrange them in superficial ways without achieving any productive outcomes.

3. The Connotation of Blended Teaching and Flipped Classroom

Blended teaching mainly refers to a teaching method that integrates the traditional face-to-face classroom teaching method with the digital and networked distance education mode. Blended teaching, in one way, ensures the leading role of teachers in classroom teaching, and in another, motivates students to learn actively [5].

Flipped Classroom refers to a new teaching method in which teachers provide students with learning resources in the form of video in a network learning environment, so that students can complete the reading of teaching materials before class, and put forward questions for teachers when in class. In a flipped classroom, students are encouraged to explore what is new, exchange ideas, and discuss certain issues in class. Its essence is to regard students as the fundamental element of classroom activities and emphasize students' subjective initiative in learning. It is a new hybrid learning method.

Through the application and practice of college English teaching methods that are aided by visual and auditory devices and mixed with oral lecturing manners in a flipped classroom, most students' learning interest, learning initiative and English listening and speaking ability have been immensely improved. Three basic principles are supposed to be conformed to when constructing this model: 1. knowledge acquisition and learning interest provoking should be equally valued; 2. multiple stimulations should be combined to promote English speaking ability, instead of focusing on oral practice alone; 3. language ability and culture awareness should be enhanced simultaneously. Through the practice of this model, hopefully, a brand-new route would be provided for college English teaching reform.

4. Theoretical Basis

Former studies have already disclosed that so-called blended teaching is to combine the

advantages of traditional teaching methods with the advantages of digital or network learning [6]. To put it another way, it combines with other effective teaching approaches while eliminating unpreferable factors to make classroom teaching diversified. Thus, instructional activities will be conducted in more flexible and creative ways on the basis of blended teaching concepts.

According to scholars' existing researches, the actual benefits brought about by flipped classroom can be listed as follows. To start with, flipped classroom enables students to share the latest knowledge resources through video so that students will be more involved in class. Additionally, flipped classroom reconstructs the structure and mode of traditional teaching, promoting teachers and students to change their roles. As a result, students will be motivated to a greater extent and be more active than they are in a traditional classroom. Moreover, flipped classroom is rather conducive to the cultivation of students' practical ability as well, since students will have to finish tasks that need all-round reflection and involve putting such reflections into practice [7]. On the other hand, it is the content of the course that is altered and shifted in a tremendous way under such learning circumstance. Since the course content will be presented in the form of micro videos, learners can achieve English proficiency, communicative skills and multiple culture awareness input simultaneously.

Another advantageous element of flipped classroom, mentioned in a wide range of relevant literatures, is the style of adopting micro class. Micro class, which is an instructional approach that employs three-dimensional short video clips consuming no more than 10 minutes to present essential course contents, condenses the knowledge points and makes an in-depth and thorough analysis on required knowledge points with multiple aids such as images, recordings and visual materials. Students' own learning experience will be increased and their interest in English learning will be enormously provoked in the process of producing micro class materials. In the three-dimensional short video clips of micro class, language and culture input are integrated to make the theme of the target unit more specific and clearer. In terms of course contents, in addition to completing the teaching tasks detailed in college English syllabus, instructors can also introduce English learning topics of engaging factors to students such as topics about the latest news, movies, music and popular science via micro class video clips, which will not only broaden students' horizons and stimulate their interest and enthusiasm in learning, but also complete the integration of their thinking channels with those of the instructors more smoothly. Basically, students are able to study micro class videos online or offline autonomously while other learning activities such as taking notes, submitting homework, self-evaluation, peer evaluation and prompt feedback can also be effectively conducted.[8].

5. A Blended Teaching Method of College English Teaching Based on the Concept of Flipped Classroom

5.1. "Student-Centered" Classroom Practice

In the flipped classroom mode, students can complete their learning tasks before class through video clips without face-to-face instructions. Students will then have more opportunities to participate in other learning activities with the teacher in class. Various methods are interspersed and used flexibly. Students complete tasks or solve problems together through communication and cooperation. Teachers can ask and answer questions promptly, offer overall guidance and specific guidance to help students form new ideas and basic framework for assignments independently. For more complex or common problems, teachers may explain them in detail and combine the traditional teaching with a variety of autonomous learning methods based on the network to form a hybrid teaching method [9].

5.2. Diverse Teaching Materials

Teaching materials for flipped classroom mainly cover micro classes, PowerPoint courseware and video clips. During the teaching process, the instructor is to prepare the network, USB flash disk and audio-visual software as the carrier to produce course-related materials, and to get relevant

tasks including document editing, micro course production, video shooting and editing, etc. done according to the course content and objectives. Particularly, it is to be noted that the production of "micro class", whose core content is classroom-teaching-based video clips (lesson fragments), includes supplementary teaching resources related to the teaching theme, such as teaching design, material courseware, teaching reflection, practice test, student feedback and teacher comments. The duration of "micro class" is generally about 5-8 minutes, and the maximum should not exceed 10 minutes [10].

5.3. Network-based Platform Construction

By using the platforms of Chuangke, QQ, wechat, scallop, Baici chop and Youdao dictionary, teachers and students are required to make full use of the network to load wechat and other resources onto the app platform, so that the course can be reached anytime and anywhere, and classroom teaching can also be expanded in all three teaching stages -- before, during and after class through the app platform.

5.4. After Class Activities

After completing the blended English teaching in college based on the concept of flipped classroom, in order to consolidate the students' understanding of the content, teachers need to arrange follow-up tasks to enable students to display their knowledge, such as producing PPT courseware, recording corresponding videos and composing learning summaries. Teachers can also upload students' learning achievements to the network platform through multimedia to realize mutual learning and information exchanging among students and thus improve students' English application ability.

6. Reflection on the Application of Flipped Classroom Blended Teaching Method in College English Teaching

To be honest, there are certain restrictive factors in the application of blended teaching methods as well, which are listed as follows: to begin with, students' English proficiency may not reach the expected level and their autonomous learning ability may probably not be ideal; in addition, English teaching conducted in classroom circumstance generally focuses on textbook materials [11], ignoring the application of other teaching resources related to overall teaching; furthermore, English teachers' personal ability level may be limited so that they may fail to employ newly introduced methods.

In order to solve these problems and to better realize the hybrid teaching based on the concept of flipped classroom, teachers need to improve their teaching performance from the following aspects: 1. Teachers should redefine their role orientation. In the process of mixed teaching, teachers function as the guides, supervisors and assistants of students' learning. Therefore, all teaching links have to emphasize students' learning needs and learning objectives. Before class, teachers should provide rich and diverse teaching resources for students. In class, teachers should scientifically design teaching tasks and situations and organize students to carry out group discussions to promote students' understanding and absorption of language points [12]. 2. Teachers should flexibly change teaching methods according to the characteristics of English curriculum and the current situation of students' English proficiency. Based on the integrated concept of flipped classroom, the targeted teaching method takes students' learning as the main goal. As a result, in actual English teaching, teachers should teach students in line with their aptitude, so as to obtain the best effect. 3. Teachers should always polish their teaching skills and comprehensive quality. Universities should regularly organize teachers to participate in various types of further study and professional training so that they are able to systematically acquire the latest teaching concepts, and master more English teaching methods. 4. The construction and sharing of high-quality teaching resources should be achieved. Excellent teaching resources are essential guarantee for supreme teaching effects. Naturally, teachers need to produce teaching courseware according to different teaching requirements. Consequently, teachers can selectively collect and sort out school-based resources,

and share them with other teachers after sorting out. On top of the above-mentioned measures, to offer supplementary aids, the competent education department can speed up the establishment of education and teaching resources to support English teaching according to the core curriculum.

7. Conclusions

The concept of flipped classroom is based on the comprehensive and online open autonomous learning platform. It advocates the concepts of openness, a-master, personalized learning and inclusiveness, which has strong characteristics in accordance with the demand of the times. The mixed Teaching methods is applied in the field of language teaching. It focuses on cultivating students' language application ability. At the same time, it adopts a variety of language teaching methods to advocate the teaching concept that emphasizes students' leading role. Teachers help students with their exploration, practice and creation to the greatest extent, and encourage them to develop critical thinking and come up with innovative ideas. With the guidance and inspiration of teachers and micro class video serving as the starting point, language learning and culture awareness fostering are both effectively attained. This is not only a brave innovation of teaching methods, but also an innovation of educational science and technology. The mixed teaching method respects the potential of students, and gives students considerable opportunities to explore, discuss, ask questions and criticize themselves, so that they can derive new ideas from team discussions, test the authenticity of knowledge in practice, and learn to explore the dialectical relationship between traditional and innovative learning methods. Teachers functioning as guidance can not only solve doubts, but also absorb students' innovative ideas and they, too, benefit a great deal from such teaching process.

To sum up, in addition to creating new ideas for academic research, the blended teaching method based on flipped classroom is of great value for cultivating cross-border talents as well as innovative talents in the future. It is a future trend to attach great importance to such teaching methods on the way of developing new instructional approaches.

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