

A Preliminary Study on the Application of K-W-L Teaching Mode in College English Reading Class

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Abstract: The reading level not only influences students' professional learning and learning vision directly but also reflects their individual knowledge system and thinking ability. Therefore, English reading should be regarded as the central task of college English teaching. With the deepening and development of teaching reform, the traditional teaching model of English reading has exposed many disadvantages, which obviously cannot meet the requirements of education. This paper will explore how to integrate K-W-L teaching mode into college English reading class and prove its feasibility and effectiveness with class examples, so as to give certain enlightenment to English reading teaching.

1. Introduction

The reading ability is an important part of college students' English learning quality. Nowadays, for a college student, the level of English reading not only affects students' professional learning and learning horizon directly, but also affects students' ways of accessing information channels and the quantity of information acquired indirectly. Therefore, English reading should be regarded as the central part of the whole college English teaching. With the deepening and development of the teaching reform, the traditional English reading teaching model has exposed various shortcomings. Therefore, the teaching model of English reading class must keep pace with the new trend. This paper intends to integrate the K-W-L teaching method into college English reading class and discuss its feasibility and effectiveness with teaching examples in reality.

2. The problems existing in traditional English reading class

In the traditional teaching mode of college English reading courses, the influence of market economy makes the educational field full of pragmatism and consumerism, which leads to the utility of college English teaching. Besides, the teaching contents are guided by college English test requirements of CET-4 and CET-6, emphasizing the teaching of the grammar and usage of the English words.

Many teachers do not know how to guide students to grasp the whole article. The teachers always pay too much attention to the explanation of the grammatical knowledge, such as the meaning of new words, syntactic structure, and the analysis of complex sentences, which means the teaching of reading has become pure grammar teaching (Wu Yanping, 126). In addition, many teachers replace the students' subjective status. The students are required to read articles, and then answer a series of questions according to the reading materials. The final step is to check the answers with the standard ones. Under the guidance of this teaching concept and teaching mode, the students are regarded as "the machine of answering test" and there is no interaction between teachers and students except to teach the answering skills.

3. The problems existing in students' reading

In order to grasp students' problems in reading, the author conducted a questionnaire survey. A total of 200 questionnaires were issued for the students of non-English majors in various departments. Among which, 192 questionnaires were valid. The main problems of students in

reading were found through the survey:

3.1 The lack of the reading interest

From the perspective of the students who were interviewed, most of them are bored with English reading. Among the 192 valid survey papers, 108 students clearly expressed their dislike of reading and 26 students expressed their disgust for English reading. It accounts for 70 percent of the students involved in this survey. Before reading the article, 137 students were in a state of complete tension, accounting for 71% of the interviewed ones. Students were generally not confident in their English reading ability, which led to their low self-efficacy.

3.2 The lack of relevant background knowledge and reading strategy skills

The Students are lack of relevant background knowledge and reading strategy skills. 47.1 % of the students demonstrate their dislike of scientific articles. 45.6 % of the students show that they do not like expositing ones. While 36.4% of the students never care about the style of the reading materials because they consider that the mastery of the reading materials style has no role in helping them understand the articles. Besides, the lack of background knowledge and the rare technical terms often make the student lack of confidence and fear of the difficulty, facing such articles.

3.3 The lack of the overall ability of grasping the full text

The students lack the overall ability to grasp the full text. Only 24.8 % of the students said that they would mobilize their reserved knowledge through browsing the articles first in order to grasp and understand the whole. In addition, poor reading habits, such as reading the article line by line using their fingers, reciting in a low voice as well as immediate looking up the difficult words from the dictionary are common. These bad reading habits occupy 75.2 %.

4. The application of K-W-L teaching method as a solving measure

In fact, English reading is not a simple and static process, but an emotional activity process. For one thing, the reading material is a fusion of the author's experience, emotion and writing style(Liu Longfei,102). For another, the reading subject is a living body full of emotional experience. Therefore, the reading process involves the complex emotional communication between people, rather than the mechanical one-way knowledge transfer. Based on the above conclusions, in the teaching process, the teachers should not only fully demonstrate their teaching skills, but also guide students and activate students' interest through mobilizing their language knowledge, background knowledge and previous emotional experience (Liu Longfei,102) . Thus, the students with full of interest can actively participate in the whole teaching process.

4.1 K-W-L teaching method

K-W-L teaching method, an English reading teaching method proposed by Donna Ogle, is widely used in European and American language teaching. This reading teaching method, originated from cognitive psychology and constructivism, believes that the subjects of learning are the students rather than the teachers and opposes indoctrination teaching method. “K! standing for "Know" represents what the students have already known. W standing for "Want" represents what the students want to know. L standing for "Learned" represents what the students have learned. This reading method enables the learners to develop new cognition on the basis of the original cognitive schema, so as to establish learners' dominant position through the process of “adaptation! and “assimilation!(Ogle,D.M.,564).

4.2 The case of the application of K-W-L teaching method in reading class

The following is a teaching case of a reading class that the author designs and develops according to the above teaching mode. The teaching material is from *Unit 1 Time Management* in volume 2 of *21st century college English* (Yu Jianzhng, Cheng Min,HuangTao,1) by Fudan University Press. Through reading and analyzing the text, students should learn the skills of time

management, learn to value time, and use time efficiently to work.

4.2.1 Activating fully “what the students has known!(K)

Before the formal reading, the teacher with the aim of maximally mobilizing the student's reserved knowledge organizes the students to carry on the brain storm and other warm up activities. The specific teaching process is as follows: the teacher showed the students three pictures of different professions, which are doctors, firefighters and teachers. The students are organized to discuss the question: “What does time mean in these careers?!” After discussion in groups, the students came to the conclusion that: for the doctors, time means life. For the firefighters, time means safety. For the teachers, time means knowledge. Next, the teacher continued to ask questions: “Do you think one minute is really important?!” The students' first reaction to the question was that a minute which means 60 seconds may sound trivial. However, the teacher then showed examples of what a human could do in a minute. For example, in a minute, a typist could output 70 words and an announcer could read 800 words. Through the topic discussion and the teacher's summary, the students can easily transform the abstract concept of time into concrete life scenes and realize the importance of it. It is natural for students to realize the famous saying that time is precious as the gold is the truth.

The above teaching steps represent the! K!(What do I know) section in K-W-L teaching method, which aims to make the students get familiar with the background knowledge and connect the existing knowledge with the new knowledge to be learned. As a result, the students would prepare for formal reading through mutual communication. In addition, this section also facilitates the teacher to understand students' familiarity with the topic of reading materials. Then the form of the! K!(What do I know) section can be recorded as the opinions showed by the students, which are time is precious to everyone and time is limited and we need to manage it, etc.

4.2.2 Positively diverging "what I want to know" (W)

After the students have a preliminary understanding, the teacher guided the students to think, what the content that they were most eager to learn related to the topic. Therefore, the students have different concerns about the text. For example, the students who are interested in time management will think deeply about the significance of learning it, which means how to complete tasks efficiently, and how to plan time effectively. Meanwhile, the students who are interested in the writing style of the text are more inclined to think about the structure of the text. Only by understanding students' concerns to the maximum extent can the teacher meet individual needs and maximize the overall teaching benefits. Parts of the student's questions are recorded in the W column. For example, the questions held by the students are including that what's the meaning of the title? What's the writing style of this text? etc.

4.2.3 Effectively strengthening “what I have learnt!(L)

By activating the existing knowledge reserve, students are fully prepared for text reading. In the process of reading the articles, students are guided to think and explore actively and come into the classroom with questions and confusions, which effectively reduces students' anxiety about reading and enhances their confidence in learning. Through a variety of reading strategies, the students can check whether their reserved knowledge, that is the content of K(what I know) is consistent with the content of the text. The new information and knowledge can be found or learnt through reading are recorded in column L. The contents are as follows: The meaning of the title is to remind people to pause to check whether they have managed their time properly and the writing style of the passage is expository.

In the course of strengthening the section “What I have learnt (L)!, It is more important to develop students' reading ability and reading strategies than answering the preset questions. On the basis of students' familiarity with the text, the teachers should assign various tasks of different levels according to students' learning foundations. For example, the students with low English efficiency should be assigned to retell the time management methods. Meanwhile, the students with proficient English skills should be assigned to summarize the significance of time management in

daily life. Through different forms of tasks, the students can gain the sense of achievement of learning at the same time. the teacher can enhance their enthusiasm and confidence in learning.

4.2.4 The self-exploration of “the unknown!”

Compare the content of “I want to know (W column)!” with “What I have learnt(L column)!", some students would find that some questions they were curious about couldn't be found in the text, such as: “How do the successful people manage their time? How many methods are there for people to manage time? How to keep balance between rest and work? “ Finding the answers to these questions require the students to seek answers through a variety of means, such as reading the books, online information search, and study group discussion.

5. The advantages of improving English reading ability with KWL concept

5.1 Eliminating students' reading anxiety and stimulating their interest in English reading

The arrangement of “K! step in K-W-L teaching method enables the teachers and the students to carry out sufficient and reasonable pre-reading activities such as title prediction, picture prediction, background knowledge collection and discussion of the relevant content of the article before reading through which, the students can activate their reserved knowledge and stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for new knowledge.

5.2 Improving students' independent learning ability and embodying the students-oriented concept

In K-W-L teaching method, the setting of “W! step sets up a framework for students' knowledge acquisition. Students preset the questions before reading and conduct independent research and exploration to answer the preset ones. Reflecting the diversity and differences of students, it can avoid blind and mechanical teaching.

5.3 Training students' ability to summarize and developing good reading habits

The setting of the “L! step in K-W-L teaching method helps students to organize and memorize the original information after reading, so as to test the amount of information acquired during reading. Students can reorganize the knowledge of the text, strengthen the memory of the text, consolidate the language knowledge, and achieve the internalization of the language.

6. Conclusion

Through K-W-L teaching method, the teachers can make the best use of their teaching techniques and teaching arts to mobilize and activate learners' emotional, thinking and language skills, which makes the whole teaching process always be in the operation coordinately and interactionally.

References

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