

A Case Study on the Blending Teaching Model of College English Writing

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Abstract: Taking College English writing teaching as an example, this paper explores and analyses the application and characteristics of the blending teaching model in English training. Teaching practice shows that the blending English teaching model is organically to combine classroom-based teaching model with computer-based teaching model, give full play to students' autonomy, mobilize students' learning enthusiasm, so as to improve students' learning efficiency.

1. Introduction

The College English Curriculum Requirements issued by the State Ministry of Education in 2011 set the goal of College English teaching as to cultivate students' comprehensive English application ability. At the same time, it emphasized that modern information technology is wildly applied to computer-based and classroom-based English teaching model [1]. This newly teaching model which is called the blending teaching model, is supported by modern information technology, especially network technology, so that English teaching and learning can be developed towards individualization and autonomous learning without the limitation of time and place. How to give full play to the advantages of the blending teaching model, fully embody students' principal position, and mobilize students' learning enthusiasm? Under this background, some studies has done to explore the blending teaching model of College English writing in Southwest Minzu University.

2. The Connotation of the Blending Teaching Model of College English Writing

2.1 The classroom-based teaching model of College English writing

In the classroom-based teaching model of College English writing, firstly, some theories and methods about writing are introduced. Secondly, teachers give a topic, deconstruct and form the framework of the topic. Thirdly, students complete their writing tasks by imitation according to the requirements. The assignments are usually presented in paper form. Then, teachers evaluate students' compositions one by one. Finally, teachers give the feedback of the compositions. Through this teaching procedures, teachers can directly inspire and guide students to master writing skills and can comprehensively evaluate students' writing ability. During such teaching period, teachers not only guide students to choose suitable vocabulary and follow the grammatical rules in writing, but also feedback students' learning of the overall structure results of writing, including the complete expression of ideological content, logical coherence and the layout of the text, etc. Students can benefit a lot from such teaching model. However, the whole process of teaching takes quite a long time, so such there won't be too many writing exercises. Taking Southwest Minzu University as an example, in every semester, the average classes that each college foreign language teacher will undertake are between 4 to 6, which includes more than 200 students. It takes teachers dozens of hours to complete a teaching procedure of writing, so much so that the writing tasks will be assigned only once or twice in a semester. Therefore students have very little chance to practice writing.

Without immediate guidance from teachers, students will lose their interest and are not willing to devote much effort to writing and it is difficult to stimulate students' writing enthusiasm to improve their writing ability.

2.2 The computer-based teaching model of college English writing

The computer-based teaching model of college English writing enables students to complete their writing tasks without the limitation of time and place, and to get the feedback in time. It has automated writing evaluation system which can scan students' compositions in time and compare them in the corpus, the number of mapping components and comments are made by some algorithms. Students can receive timely feedback and make dozens or even hundreds of changes as needed. But such comments are limited to the correction of vocabulary, grammar and simple textual structure, meanwhile, if there is no relevant content in the corpus, it is very difficult to give students an objective evaluation of their compositions.

2.3 The blending teaching model of College English writing

From the above introduction, the pros and cons of the classroom-based teaching model and the computer-based teaching model are illustrated. How to make the best use of them, integrating the two teaching models? In this way, the blending teaching model has been created. It is not simply blending the two models but combining the advantages of these two, in the meantime, eliminating the disadvantages. Teachers still play a leading role in guiding, inspiring and monitoring in the process of teaching, and students give full play to their subjectivity, enthusiasm and creativity in the learning process as well. Such a complementary teaching model can fully meet the needs of students, change their way to learn, and improve students' writing ability.

3. The Application of the Blending Teaching Model in College English Writing

In order to apply the blending teaching model in college English writing, Southwest Minzu University has introduced the "pigai.org" software to assistant students' writing training since 2015. Some preliminary explorations and attempts have been made on the blending teaching model.

3.1 The Construction of the blending teaching model in college English writing

The blending teaching model is a relatively stable, systematic and theoretical educational paradigm surrounded by a specific theme of the teaching activities under the guide of teaching aim. The aim of College English teaching is to cultivate students' comprehensive English application ability, especially their listening and speaking ability, so that they can communicate effectively in English in their future study, work and social interaction, at the same time, enhance their autonomous learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural literacy, so as to meet the needs of social development and international communication in China[1]. To achieve this goal, students' writing ability should at least meet the general requirements of College English writing. Students can complete general writing tasks, describe personal experiences, perceptions, emotions and events, write common practical articles, and write no less than 120 words on general topics or outlines in half an hour. In the writing the content is basically complete with clear idea, appropriate words and coherent meaning is coherent. Students can master the ability to master basic writing skills. But in fact, there are not many college students who can meet this requirement. How to train students' writing ability? The keys to construct the blending teaching model in college English writing are as follow: to improving College English Writing Environment by blending the classroom-based teaching model with the computer-based teaching model; to make use of the interaction and feedback of network teaching, giving full play to the diversity of the computer-based teaching, and provide more space for students to choose independently; to cultivate students' self-regulated learning ability and enrich the means of evaluation.

3.2 The implementation of Teaching Process

In recent years, Southwest Minzu University has begun to introduce www.pigai.org in the training of English writing. This software has launched an online service for automatically correcting English compositions based on Cloud Computing. By comparing students' compositions with the standard corpus, and mapping the number of components and comments through certain algorithms, teachers can automatically scan the various parameters of students' compositions with the marking network, and then make more accurate and objective judgments and comments. The various parameters of students' composition constitute the individualized data of students. These data can reflect the weakness of students' learning. It is a more efficient way of individualized learning to adjust what students should learn next according to their current situation. Practice has proved that, with the help of network, the frequency of students' writing practice has increased significantly, which helps to improve students' English writing ability. However, in view of the limitations of current technology, it is limited to rely solely on machine corrections and feedback to help students.

In order to better carry out the blending teaching model, College English teachers adopt the writing training with the aid of www.pigai.org. This blending model of College English teaching not only highlights the advantages of computer-based teaching, but also is an important supplement to the classroom-based teaching model. The main purpose of the writing training is to improve students' writing ability, match the requirements of college English curriculum and help students to pass the CET-4.

Four sections are included in the implementation of teaching process. Section one, pre-writing. Teachers will introduce the writing objectives, writing requirements and writing process at the very beginning. To demonstrate the operation on the website of www.pigai.org so that to let the students know how to write on line. Then, to choose suitable writing exercises for students according to the requirements of CET-4. The content of writing is mainly about hot topics which is closely to students' life. After the writing topic is chosen, teachers will guide the students to find the relevant content for reading and discussion, so that the students will accumulate in reading and prepare for further writing. Meanwhile, teachers will guide students to write the outline of their compositions. Section two, writing process. After students have defined the writing task and known the writing framework, they will choose the appropriate time to complete their initial writing on line and submit it. After submission, the system will compare with the corpus and give students timely feedback and evaluation. Section three, writing feedback. Students can get the feedback in three ways. Firstly, they get the feedback from the 'pigai.org' software automatically. Secondly, they can get the feedback from peer reviews. Thirdly, according to the evaluation criteria of the writing in CET-4, teachers will give students a comprehensive evaluation from the accuracy of vocabulary, the discourse layout and the coherence of the composition. Section four, rewriting. Students revise their own compositions according to the feedback, therefore, they can make a progress from their writing.

3.3 The effect of teaching

Because the main driving force of the blending teaching is students, its teaching effect is generally reflected by students' satisfaction of curriculum [2]. To a great extent, the evaluation of teaching effect is based on students' feedback after writing training, their feelings, understanding of blending teaching and their self-evaluation of learning effect [3]. The satisfaction with writing training reflects students' cognition and experience, which is of great significance for testing and improving the teaching of blending English writing. In this study, the students' satisfaction with the teaching process is used to judge the effectiveness and problems of this teaching practice of the blending English teaching, and to provide useful inspiration for the future teaching implementation. Through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, it points out that the blending writing teaching model stimulate students' interest and motivation in writing, improving students' writing ability. Most students are highly satisfied with the application of blending teaching model in the writing process of CET-4.

Although the satisfaction of the blending teaching model is very high, there are still many aspects to be strengthened. First, the blending teaching cannot be separated from the network. So building a good network environment is the guarantee of teaching implementation. Secondly, to make full use of network platform to promote interaction and feedback in writing teaching. In the process of teaching, different network resources should be used flexibly. In addition to the software of 'pikai.org', QQ, WeChat and other communication apps can assist English teaching. Thirdly, to reform the evaluation model of English writing, enriching the means of assessment with the effectively combination of formative assessment and summative assessment. Fourthly, any teaching method is to serve students' learning, so in the process of teaching, students' feedback should be paid attention, adjusting teaching methods in time to achieve the best teaching effect.

4. Summary

To sum up, the overall goal of the construction of blending teaching model in English writing is to improve students' English writing level and enable them to use English more proficiently in written communication. The use of blending teaching model is a study to combine the modern online teaching technology with the writing teaching of college English. It shows that such teaching model strengthens the student's subjective status, and mobilizes the student's initiative and more attention is paid to the student's formation process and the feedback.

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