

The Application Study of Flipped Classroom in Chinese Culture English Teaching

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Abstract: Since the rise of flipped classroom in the United States, the significant teaching advantages and efficiency has been widely acknowledged. This paper explores and analyses the application of the flipped classroom in the English teaching of Chinese culture and points out there are still many practical problems worth exploring and studying.

1. Introduction

For a long time, there exists a lack of communication of Chinese culture in foreign language teaching in Chinese universities. Students cannot express Chinese culture fluently in English when they communicate in English. Professor Cong of Nanjing University defines this phenomenon as "Chinese cultural aphasia". College English teachers have realized the negative impact and taken active countermeasures, such as, compiling teaching materials, offering culture courses, introducing Chinese culture in College English lead-in part, etc. so as to improve students' cultural literacy and cultivate their ability of intercultural communication. This paper, taking the elective course—Chinese Culture as an example, explores and analyses the application of the flipped classroom in the English teaching of Chinese culture

2. Chinese Culture English Teaching and Flipped Classroom

"Chinese cultural aphasia" is typically reflected in the state that on one hand students have enough cultural background knowledge and are able to understand the content of the course, on the other hand they do not know how to express Chinese culture correctly in English. Therefore, how to effectively improve students' language skills and cultivate cross-cultural communication ability is the primary issue for teachers to reconsider.

Flipped Classroom is a teaching model first applied to teaching by American scholars Aaron Sams and Jonathan Bergmann in 2007 in which teachers arrange learning resources in advance, students study independently before class and solve problems by asking questions to teachers or group cooperation in class. According to Constructivism Theory, learners themselves are the active constructors of knowledge in the process of learning. And acquisition fully take place only if the learners become active of learning. Flipped Classroom teaching mode regards learners as the center of the learning process and advocates learners' cooperative learning and autonomous learning rather than passively receiving teachers' knowledge. Students choose their own learning methods, content, style and progress according to their existing knowledge structure and learning situation. Flipped Classroom motivates the students' initiative in independent learning and promotes the internalization of knowledge. This paper explores the application of flipped classroom in Chinese culture English course, and analyses and evaluates the teaching effect of this teaching model.

3. The Application Strategies of Flipped Classroom in Chinese Culture English Teaching

3.1 Preview before class

The instructor distributes pre-class learning task sheets one week before class, including learning content allocation table and learning note. Before class, students read textbooks and write down the

main vocabulary, sort out the main knowledge points and complete the learning notes during the learning process. According to the topics assigned by teachers, they prepare presentations in groups and complete related network assignments. In this process, students need to complete their learning requirements through self-study or group collaborative learning; while teachers provide online guidance and supervision through information technology, grasp students' learning and respond to teaching problems in order to make adjustments and provide more effective teaching.

3.2 Teaching in Class

In class, the teacher answers the difficulties encountered in self-regulated learning and students share the knowledge points and key vocabulary learned with other group members. The teacher guides students to think deeply, enhance the interest and practicability of students' discussion to realize new knowledge construction. Teacher's comments, students' self-evaluation, especially peer questions and reviews are the highlight in class. Take the chapter Chinese Clothing as an example, groups responsible for this topic are required to prepare presentations from different perspectives. Like group 1 is required to give a report about clothing in Song dynasty, the other groups will give reports of Tang dynasty, Qing dynasty and the Period of the Republic of China era. After their presentation, the rest groups are required to ask questions, which are usually the most inspiring part of every class. In this way, the content of the course is digested by students through presentations and questions.

3.3 Homework after class

After class, teachers help students consolidate their knowledge by assigning after-class learning tasks and providing necessary learning resources. Teachers give timely guidance and feedback to help students improve the quality of language output and the ability to use language communication strategies. Teachers should actively reflect on whether the classroom effect is up to expectations, whether the teaching methods are appropriate, and collect feedback information from students widely.

4. The Application Research of Flipped Classroom in Chinese Culture English Teaching

In this study, a 32-classhour Chinese culture course is taught in the form of Flipped Classroom, which is a school-wide elective course for 90 undergraduates from 31 different majors. All students can communicate in the class QQ group at any time during the whole teaching process. The main contents of the course include Chinese food culture, traditional festivals, traditional clothes, operas, philosophy and mythology, traditional Chinese medicine, Chinese architecture, Chinese language and Chinese literature. The subjects of this study are all 90 undergraduates who have completed one year College English study. The data are collected through a combination of questionnaires and interviews.

The class is divided into 18 groups of 5 students. Every two groups are responsible for one topic. Group members are expected to work together to fulfil tasks like discussions, PPT presentations. The instructor constructs the whole learning process through task-based learning, and promotes communication among students in the way of cooperative learning.

The teacher regularly organizes students to show their learning results and check students' mastery of knowledge. Students' test results, classroom discussion performance, their participation and high-quality questions constitute process assessment, which also helps to further verify the effectiveness of the flipped classroom.

The results show that: 78.2% of the students approve the flipped classroom learning model and approve the new classroom interaction model; 75.1% of the students think that the flipped classroom model helps to improve the initiative of learning; 70.5% of the students approve of the cooperative group learning method, group learning promotes communication and improves classroom participation; 92% of the students have a better understanding of Chinese native culture; 80.3% of the students have improved their awareness of expressing Chinese culture in English.

5. Conclusion and Reflection

Overall, the learners think that the learning effect of the Chinese Culture English course in flipped classroom is better. Flipping classroom has changed the traditional teaching methods. The application of flipped classroom in College English teaching will be more and more extensive. But the current teaching mode of flipped classroom is still in the primary stage of research and practice, and there are still many problems to be found and solved.

Students seek to rely on personal strength to solve problems. Group cooperation can promote students to form a strong sense of teamwork. But in detailed practice, students prefer to complete on their own, especially when the partner is not on the same level.

Students are expected to cultivate self-management ability in flipped classroom which can arrange learning plans and accomplish the tasks assigned by teachers. But Students still confine themselves to traditional learning habit, for example, to look up dictionary for new words, recording new words and watching videos, there is no further expansion and desire to dig more besides the minimum need for credits. Students have the ability to think independently, but there are some tough tasks. Students are unwilling to think on their own initiative.

Flipped Classroom also poses new challenges and requirements to teachers. Compared with the teachers in the traditional “teacher-centered” model, teachers in flipped classroom not only need to have solid professional knowledge and skills, but also the necessary information literacy, such as: using network resources to search, collect, organize and integrate. Meanwhile, to provide timely guidance for students, teachers need to assume more workload to use a variety of communication methods to answer students’ online and offline inquiry.

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