

Study on Application of Blended Teaching in College English Writing Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract. It has been a long time that college English writing has been a difficult point in teaching. It is a piece of good news that education informationization has been increasing, which has brought opportunities to it. This paper mainly discusses how to apply the blended teaching model to college English writing teaching. We try to construct a blended college English writing teaching model by developing massive online learning resources, relying on the online writing platform and improving the diversified evaluation system. What's more, this article further demonstrates a teaching case about the application of this model to practical teaching, which encourages students to "learn through practicing" and "learn to practice" in the real environment. On the one hand, blended teaching relieves the difficult dilemma of writing teaching. On the other hand, it can meet students' individual learning needs, improve students' self-learning ability as well as the quality of writing teaching and students' English writing ability.

1. Introduction

The basic requirements for teaching English courses in higher vocational colleges and universities put forward specific requirements for students' English writing ability as follows: being basically correct, without major grammatical errors, the format being appropriate, and the expression being clear. It can be seen that writing should be an important part of teaching. Therefore, improving the teaching quality of writing and improving students' English writing ability is a significant task for college English teaching. However, in English teaching in higher vocational colleges, writing is students' Achilles' heel. Because of their relatively poor English foundation, they lack of confidence and writing skills. In the teaching practice, we haven't figured out an approach to break the students' writing bottleneck, let alone improve students' ability of writing and cross-cultural communication in the workplace in the future.

In the Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (hereinafter referred to as National Education Plan (2010-2020)), it states that it is urgent for higher vocational education to adopt the concept of diversified talent and respect the individual choice. It also advocates offering self-study resources to each student to meet students' different characteristics and personality as well as needs. There are another two documents which stress students' needs: Decision of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education (2014) as well as Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Further Deepening the Teaching Reform for Higher Vocational Education and Comprehensively Improving Talent Quality (2015). Both of them put emphasis on the fact that higher vocational education should stick to systematic teaching and diverse talents cultivating so as to build "overpass" for students to select from diverse choices and achieve individualized success.

In the new era, nevertheless, with the progress of information technology, education informationization has been strengthened step by step, which makes it feasible to learn online. The single conventional teaching model cannot meet the current teaching needs any more, and it is bound to undergo great changes. In the process of deepening its opening to the outside world and accelerating the Belt and Road construction, China urgently needed skilled personnel. As the saying

goes, prescribe the right medicine for an illness. So finding the factors that affect the writing is first. In our country, one of the difficulties in learning English is that it involves two conflicting contexts. Therefore, we will explore ways to promote students to dare to speak, write, and communicate in English to improve their comprehensive abilities. Thereby, blended teaching, combining the advantages of conventional teaching and online teaching, provides new ideas for teaching. Blended English writing teaching mode comes into being.

2. Problems in college English writing teaching in vocational colleges.

2.1 There are no special courses and students lack necessary writing training.

In the current English teaching in higher vocational schools, English writing teaching has received more and more attention. However, due to the limitations of class hours and other factors, many teachers still have no time to take into account in classroom teaching. Although the teacher arranged the composition exercise, most teachers feel pressured of writing assignment, as the workload of the correction is too large. Teachers' correction actually only stays on the surface and cannot give students detailed guidance. In this case, the students' writing has no clear thoughts, which makes it difficult to open their eyes in writing and hard to make use of diversified words. In addition, spelling and grammar mistakes are common, and native English compositions are rare to find. These have become important factors that affect the quality of students' writing. As a matter of fact, in the process of writing, teachers must give guidance on the overall discourse, idea development and writing mode. This guidance is of great importance.

2.2 Conventional writing teaching mode is outdated and independent learning platform and resources are insufficient.

First and foremost, traditional teaching and learning model for writing, which is mainly limited to classroom, cannot meet modern students' learning habit. Due to the enrollment of vocational college students, not only do the students have relatively weak English foundation when entering college, but they also have a low consciousness of learning English independently outside the classroom. So this traditional teaching has difficulty encouraging students to study after class. Instead, they mainly study articles in teaching aids or complete language exercises or test questions in class. However, it is known to all that a large number of effective extracurricular writing exercises can better promote the students' English writing level. Hence, traditional teaching and learning of writing needs to be diversified by means of online technology.

Moreover, a sea of online resources needs to be developed. Online teaching is a brand new teaching model. Many teachers lag behind in accepting new things. Although students are quick to accept, they are lack of initiative. Only after the teacher assigned online homework will they gradually carry out online English writing practice. In addition, online learning needs to provide students with a lot of high-quality resources, such as various writing materials and videos, and a better platform, which are currently lacking in writing teaching. Without these resources, both the teachers and students cannot make an efficient learning.

2.3 Lack of diversified writing evaluation methods.

Firstly, the traditional writing teaching adopts the mode of terminal assessment in the order of teachers' explanation - student's writing - teacher's marking, with the focus of teachers' attention on the final result of writing. The teachers seldom pay attention to guidance of students' writing process. More detailed, teachers mainly correct grammatical errors, instead of praising students' motivation in evaluating compositions. Criticism often outweighs praise, which makes it frightening for students to be full of incentives to write, thus damaging students' writing enthusiasm, and even leading students to fear writing and hate writing.

Secondly, the means of evaluation are single and the feedback from teachers to students lags behind. The heavy workload due to the fact that teachers collect and review their compositions

manually when they make corrections makes it difficult for them to comment on students' composition. Moreover, there is no real-time interaction, and it is long before the students get the teachers' feedback on how to modify compositions. Often, teachers will ask students to finish assignment afterwards. However, when students have trouble and need help from teachers there are usually nobody available to guide them for their homework. As for our teachers, they also don't know exactly how to get the students' practical skills improved. Or when students forget the content of their compositions, teachers' feedback will lose their effect. On the contrary, the online writing auto-marking function can reduce the workload of teachers, and also enable students to get real-time feedback, which is conducive to students' timely revision.

3. Construction of blended teaching mode of college English writing

Combining the advantages of online teaching and offline classroom teaching, blended teaching may bring new ideas to college English writing teaching and learning. It is an innovative teaching philosophy that can improve students' learning efficiency and learning effectiveness. That's to say, for one thing, college English writing course should construct a mixed teaching model by combining online and offline resource package so as to make it convenient for students to select the study materials based on their individualized needs. For another, the evaluation system also needs to be improved. More attention should be paid to process evaluation and online independent learning assessments should be taken into consideration. In blended teaching, not only innovative teaching methods which can strengthen experience as well as participation are preferred, but also task-oriented teaching and project teaching through online platforms and APP software are advocated to reverse classroom teaching. We try to make college English writing teaching a online and offline "golden course."

3.1 Developing massive self-service resources

Self-service resources include modular high-quality course resources, needs-oriented online resources and practical writing platform. The resources are supplied to all students as a menu so that they can select what they needed from the package. In this way, blended teaching can meet students' diverse individualized needs such as practical English skills improvement, workplace English skills, further studies, employment, and overseas studies.

Through the combination of online and offline learning resources, this new mode of writing teaching supplies great convenience for self-study. They can carry out independents learning by making use of "course menu" to order learning resources, such as workplace English learning resources, optional courses learning resources. In this way, the teaching-centered English teaching is transformed into learning-centered English teaching.

3.2 Taking advantage of online platforms such as Pigai, Iwrite

Online writing platform can help students to use computers and Apps at anytime and anywhere to test the results of their autonomous learning, and get immediately feedback, which can guide students to carry out independent learning. To shift the teaching of English writing in higher vocational schools from "teaching-centered" to "learning-centered". At the same time, on the basis of Corpus technology, the platform helps to promote teachers' writing teaching and students' learning. The learner Corpus in the platform is established according to the order of useful words, sentences, paragraphs and chapters in English writing. Students are tested regularly and feedback is offered timely. Learners Corpus changes the environment and process of college students' learning and writing, and boost college students 'self-learning ability.

3.3 Building a multilevel evaluation system

In the blended college English writing teaching mode, we try to create a multilevel evaluation system combing classroom evaluation, practice, online learning and final examination. According to many years of exploration, the multilevel evaluation system highlights the process evaluation and increases

the effect of online learning assessment. It aims to stimulate students to study independently, attach importance to everyday language accumulation, and cultivate the learning method of "learning through doing".

Evaluation is an important method to check teaching results and provides feedback to promote teaching. The multilevel evaluation system exerts a positive influence on students' English learning and teachers' teaching.

3.4 Strengthening specialized guidance and carrying out online and offline teaching and practice

The teachers attach importance to increase daily guidance on students' writing to urge students to accumulate vocabulary, to memorize and recite so that they can lay a solid language foundation. Besides, the teachers organize regular examinations online and offline to check student' learning day by day, and provide timely feedback and positive remarks to enhance students' self-confidence. Teachers do their utmost to show excellent composition online, adopting group evaluation, self-evaluation and other forms so that writing teaching is colorful.

Moreover, many writing activities can be carried out through the platforms, for example, the foreign language enters as well as English corners. The various activities in the foreign language center as well as in the English corner will encourage students to practice again and again. Consequently, those activities should be counted in the teaching plan and evaluation system to effectively stimulate and mobilize students' enthusiasm in learning English.

4. A case study of blended college English writing teaching

Blended college English writing course adopts the model of pre-class online self-study, while-class online learning and practicing as well as after-class timely feedback. Take the teaching of English resume as an example, based on the principle of "learning to use" and "learning through doing", the teachers try to implement blended teaching by means of a variety of information technology means and resources, including online learning platform, teaching assistant platform, APP software, Flash animation, games, micro-lectures, etc.

4.1 Step 1 pre-class

In the first step, students enter the course platform to watch a recruitment advertisement video produced by the teacher and learn the recruitment language and expression in the video, and choose a favorite position as a candidate for resume writing and trying to find a job. Then, the students learn lecture named Resume on ICVE platform that the teacher has sent online before class. Through self-study, the students have to complete the self-test questions issued by teachers in the course platform, and upload the answers on the platform. The teachers will evaluate and score based on the the answers.

4.2 Step 2 in the class

The teacher adopts task-based approach to guide students to review and consolidate what is learned in the pre-class according to statistics provided by ICVE in the way of race to be the first to answer a question. After that, the teacher leads in the new lesson of writing a resume. There are three tasks in this part.

Task one: resume presentation.

The teacher guides the students to enter the Iwrite writing platform and explain some model resumes online so that the students can master the basic template and useful expressions of the resume. Afterwards, the students have to accomplish the simulation of resume by means of Flash animation puzzle game. Finally, the students can master what is presented through lots of practice online. The teaching priorities of resume writing are broken through gradually.

Task two: resume writing.

Firstly, under the guidance of teacher, students perform real-time writing of resume based on the position they chose in the pre-class part and upload them to Iwrite writing platform. Secondly, the teacher performs real-time evaluation and feedback on the platform with the help of the corpus. At the same time, the teacher summarizes and analyzes the results. Most importantly, he has to design relevant exercises through the analysis of the data. It is effective for students to master the writing method of resume and overcome the difficulties.

Task three: revision and application.

Students revise and improve their resume and send it to the selected employer's mailbox for inspection.

4.3 Step 3 after-class

The students have to write a resume and make an interview dialogue and upload them to ICVE. The teacher evaluates the resume and video submitted by the students online and collects feedback from the employers to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the student's writing.

In this case, on the one hand, blended teaching and learning provide students with a great deal of writing materials to meet the students' individual needs to learn independently; on the other hand, the students are encouraged to write a resume in real-life situation and get timely feedback to enhance what is learned. It can be concluded that this online and offline teaching mode makes the most out of teaching and learning.

5. Summary

In modern information age, only through the combination of online and offline method can we meet the different needs of students. Blended teaching mode is designed to build a overpass for students to have a variety of choices in learning and achieve diverse successes in different ways. In other words, this new teaching mode may benefit students in their individualized learning, independent learning and lifelong learning.

Maybe the contradictions and dilemma between general and individual, cramming method of teaching and active method of teaching in vocational colleges can be effectively solved. What's more, it can benefit students a lot and enhance their awareness and initiative in learning independently. A great number of students whose English is very weak in the first year in our college have been accepted for further study at home and abroad.

To sum up, making use of the advantages of conventional teaching and online teaching, we will build a blended teaching model for college English writing, which integrates online and offline resources. This new model innovates the teaching process, adopts different teaching methods to stimulate students to learn through doing and learn to do in real life. Online platforms such as writing and speaking help to burst students' English ability and personal potential, which has effectively reduced the disadvantages of the longtime of traditional writing teaching and improved teaching efficiency. However, there are still some issues needed to be further explored, such as how to effectively implement diversified evaluation and solve some technical problems timely.

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