The Research on Practical Teaching of College English in Smart Learning Environment

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ABSTRACT College English teaching consists of theoretical and practical teaching. The latter is to enhance the students' practical competence and comprehensive quality. There are problems in current college English practical teaching, especially in the traditional learning environment. POA theory came into being in the local condition of China and aims at improving students' practical competence. With the advantages of smart learning environment, it provides new approach for practical teaching in China.

1. INTRODUCTION

Thanks to the rapid development of information technology and the deep reform of Internet + education, there is a profound change in higher education. In the meantime, information technology is deeply blended into teaching because of ubiquitous learning, personalized learning approach, intelligent teaching management and integration of teaching resources and technological service[1]. College English education is a crucial part of higher education in China. It is a compulsory public foundation course for most non-English majors during the undergraduate education stage. It is of great significance to promote the coordinated development of college students' knowledge, ability and comprehensive quality. Nowadays, with the rapid development of education informatization, it is theoretically and practically meaningful to apply the advantages and convenience of smart learning environment into college English practical education.

Based on the above, this paper aims at analysing the current problems of college English practical teaching and exploring how to carry out college English practical teaching in a smart environment today.

2. CURRENT SITUATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH PRACTICAL TEACHING

2.1. What is college English practical teaching?

Practical teaching is closely related but independent from theoretical teaching. It is not only an effective way to consolidate the understanding of the theoretical knowledge, but also an important platform for students to improve their practical abilities.

College English practical teaching is an important part of college English undergraduate teaching. Different from the traditional science and engineering experimental learning, the practical teaching of college English has its own category. The purpose of college English practical teaching is to facilitate students in listening, speaking, reading and writing, so as to prepare them for the social communication and work in the future and meet the needs of the country, society, universities and individuals[2].

Therefore, practical teaching is to provide the students with related stimulation environment for them to apply theories into practice. In turn, this will deepen their understanding of theories so as to follow the linguistic rules more spontaneously. In the meantime, it will enhance the students' multicultural communication skill and the ability of autonomic learning.

2.2. Current problems of college English practical learning

2.2.1. Restricts of students' personalized practical exploration

In the current standardized classroom teaching, teaching objectives may be difficult to be achieved because of the big population of students and limitation of time. In order to adjust to all the students, unified activities are usually applied in classroom teaching. However, it is inevitable that unified teaching activities can't meet individual requirements. It's also not beneficial to explore students' critical thinking ability.

2.2.2. Restricts of students' personalized practical exploration

The current classroom arrangement is more suitable for lectures, but not for discussions. Teacher's platform is up there, away from students' desks and chairs. This builds up teacher's authority but prevents students from challenging. However, in a practical classroom teaching, students are supposed to be the main subjects while the teacher only plays the role as a guild.

2.2.3. Restricts of students' personalized practical exploration

In the limited time of classroom teaching, teachers are prone to evaluate students' performance in a general way instead of a concrete way. Then students have limited information about the comprehensive evaluation of themselves, which is not helpful for them to develop the learning reflection. Therefore, without a more objective and personalized assessment, various classroom tests have poor backwash effect for learning.

3. Introduction of Smart Learning Environment and POA Theory

3.1. What is smart learning environment?

In 2008, IBM launched the Smarter Planet (Smarter Planet) program. As the idea of "smart earth" penetrated into different fields, it also gave birth to concepts such as smart cities, smart transportation, smart medical care, and smart education. In education, how to use information technology to build a smart learning environment for smart teaching and learning has gradually become a research hotspot. In the research report of the 21st Century Learning Space Design Guide, the United Kingdom Information Systems Commission pointed out that the 21st century learning space should be able to stimulate learner motivation, promote learning activities, support multiple learning models, and provide learners personalized, diversified learning environment and flexible response to the changing learning needs of learners. Huang Ronghuai and other scholars use smart classrooms to describe this new type of teaching environment and consider it as a new type of classrooms that can optimize the presentation of teaching content, facilitate the acquisition of learning resources, promote interactive classroom development, and have situational awareness and environmental management functions[3]. Undoubtedly, smart classrooms are learning spaces that are more conducive to communication and sharing. In this condition

3.2. What is POA theory?

POA theory is Production-oriented approach which considers output as the goal of language acquisition. While input directly provides resources and related knowledge for the output task[4]. POA theory consist of the following three parts: Learning-centered Principle, Learning-using Integrated Principle and Whole-person Education Principle[5]. POA theory regards output tasks as the starting point of teaching activities, helping students recognize the importance of the task of their English learning by explaining the task, so as to stimulate the desire of learning, which demonstrates the student's subject status in the entire practical teaching process.

3.3. The boost effect of smart learning environment on college English practical teaching

The separation between learning and using is still a serious problem in current English teaching. POA theory came into being in the local condition of China, aiming at applying what students have learned[6]. Among the components of POA theory, Learning-centered Principle emphasizes the students-oriented teaching and teachers' function as facilitators, helpers and consultants. Learning-

using Integrated Principle advocates the combination of learning and application. Whole-person Education Principle lies in the comprehensive cultivation of students, especially their ability of multicultural communication.

Undoubtedly, POA theory shares the same purpose with college English teaching, thus provides a new approach for it. With the rapid development of information technology, smart learning environment is getting better. Artificial learning facilities in classroom can guarantee the efficient interaction between teachers and students. What's more, mobile internet terminals are able to stretch individual learning activities from classroom to anywhere.

4. College English Practical Teaching Mode Based on POA Theory in Smart Learning Environment

POA teaching process contains three stages: motivating, enabling and assessing. The whole process is mixed with teachers' evaluation and students' practice, which support and complete each other[7]. Besides, smart learning environment provides powerful conditions for effective communication between teachers and students, as well as guidance and monitoring of students' practical learning, bringing practical college English a new approach. Under the guidance of POA theory, students will be able to benefit from the fast developing smart learning environment and make progress in their English study.

4.1. Motivating stage in practical teaching

Teaching methods in this stage are different from traditional lead-in part because apart from the introduction of objectives and output tasks, students are also encouraged to try the task before learning. The aim is to create a "starving effect" for them in order to let them realize the inefficiency in such point and then motivate them to learn.

4.1.1 Multidimensional communication scenes

In this stage, teachers intend to create communication scenes which students probably will meet in the future. In smart learning environment, teachers can make full use of various audio and video resources in the network cloud platform. Virtual simulation technology can help to build real communication scenes. For example, multi-screen display and switching can provide students with more contextual learning options so that groups with different English levels can choose according to their various needs.

4.1.2 Effective use of flipped classroom

Before class, teachers and students use smart space for collaborative interaction. During class, teachers guide students to use tools and resources in a smart classroom environment for interactive inquiry and collaborative learning. After class, teachers and students use smart classroom tools to reflect and share their learning experience and ideas in order to cultivate students' critical thinking.

4.2. Enabling stage in practical teaching

Enabling stage is the most important part in POA teaching. Teachers will first describe the output tasks at different levels for the students to choose the most suitable ones. Teachers are supposed to guild students to finish the tasks and evaluate them. This stage requires efficient communication between teachers and students and cooperation among students.

4.2.1 Students' subject status

POA teaching is based on students' input-based and output-driven practical teaching, in which students improve their linguistic knowledge and skill. Smart learning environment divide the students into groups, making them more willing to speak with partners. In this way, students are less nervous but more active and creative. They are inspired to foster sense of responsibility to collaborate and supervise each other.

4.2.2. Teachers' scaffolding function

In POA teaching, teachers need to play a role as scaffolding, helping students build up higher support based on their knowledge. In this circumstance, feedback from both teachers' requirements

and students' accomplishment is extremely important. In smart learning environment, ubiquitous network technology enables learners to carry out teaching interaction through various terminals anytime, anywhere. In turn, teachers can also give inspection and guidance in time, and adjust teaching strategies and progress accordingly.

4.2.3. Promotion of the combination of basic practice and personalized practice

One of POA theory hypotheses is selective learning, which means students will select useful things from all input materials to process, practice and memorize based on output need. It is believed that selective learning is more effective and non-selective learning[8]. Smart learning environment enables teacher to monitor students' learning status through data collection and analysis. Besides, students can use intelligent learning terminals to choose rich online teaching resources accordingly and make use of fragmented time for autonomous learning.

4.3 Evaluation stage in practical teaching

POA theory begins and ends with output activities. Therefore, effective evaluation of output tasks can guarantee high quality teaching. The use of efficient information network and digital monitoring methods can maximize the effectiveness of evaluation and become a powerful driving force for college English practical teaching. In turn, teachers can also give inspection and guidance in time, and adjust teaching strategies and progress accordingly.

4.3.1. Teacher-student cooperation evaluation

POA theory places particular emphasis on the effective evaluation of student output tasks. In smart learning environment, teachers' and students' evaluation will be able to support each other, driving to next teaching stage. After collecting and analyzing the data, internet platform can depict accurately about the shared or individual problems of the students so as to provide them with personalized instruction.

4.3.2. Assessment for learning

Assessment of output tasks can not only show the teaching effect, but also help students to improve their production quality. Therefore, assessment at this stage has a positive effect on learning. Smart learning environment can provide strong support for learning evaluation by monitoring learning status, collecting learning situation data. Quantitative evaluation through data analysis helps students better understand the advantages and disadvantages of their own learning

5. Summary

POA theory shares the same purpose with college English, which is to cultivate students' application ability, develop autonomous learning ability and improve comprehensive cultural quality. Smart learning environment provides new approach to realize it. However, how to put theory into practice still needs exploring.

Acknowledgment

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