



Research and Practice on Experiential Teaching Mode of College English Reading, Writing and Translation Course Based on the Concept of “Integration of Learning and Application”

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Abstract. This thesis analyzes the current problems in the College English Reading, Writing and Translation course and explores an effective teaching mode of learning through experiencing based on the concept of “integration of learning and application”. Adopting the Production-Oriented Approach, multi-modal activities are organized before, during, and after class to motivate students’ learning interests and internal drive. Hopefully, this thesis will help college English teachers and researchers in teaching practice and reform.

Keywords: Experiential Teaching · College English · Integration of Learning and Application

1 Introduction

According to the analysis of the academic survey questionnaire, students’ current needs to learn English are not only to pass the final exam and get the CET-4 certificate but also to apply English to their future life, career development, academic research, and improved humanistic literacy. However, the most significant difficulty they face is that they learn “dumb” English and cannot write well, which means they feel challenged to produce. The author has adopted an experiential learning model to change this situation, allowing students to “learn by doing” and become the leading role in the classroom. The teaching design is based on Professor Wen Qiufang’s Production-Oriented Approach, which promotes effective English learning based on the four teaching assumptions of output-driven hypothesis, input-enabled hypothesis, selective learning, and evaluation-based learning [1]. The teaching process is divided into three parts: motivating, enabling, and assessing. In the motivating stage, tasks that are close to students’ lives and have communicative authenticity and cognitive challenges are designed to stimulate students’ interest in learning. In the enabling stage, appropriate input materials that match students’ abilities and learning needs are selected to build scaffolding in the learning process so that students can fulfill production tasks easily and make progress. In the assessing stage, the teacher and students conduct a collaborative assessment in which students learn while evaluating to promote learning and optimize learning effects [2].

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2 The Main Current Teaching Problems

2.1 Separation of Learning and Application

For a long time, there has been a situation of “high input and low output” and “time-consuming and inefficient” classroom teaching in College English Reading, Writing and Translation course. The traditional text-centered teaching model spends most of the classroom time on text comprehension and receptive skill training, emphasizing learning rather than applying, ignoring the cultivation of students’ production ability. Students are good at rote memorization and taking exams but poor at application. Thus, there is a “separation of learning and application” phenomenon [3]. In large classes, students lack the time and opportunity to practice English. Most of the time, they listen to the lectures passively without thinking independently. Also, they cannot get timely and effective teacher guidance and feedback, leading to difficulty in speaking and writing.

2.2 Students’ Lack of Motivation

In Chinese colleges and universities, many STEM majors have insufficient awareness of the importance of English courses that belong to the humanities. They lack inner motivation and clear goals in English learning. Some college students with weak English foundations feel reluctant to practice English. Thus, it may not be possible for them to learn English autonomously with appropriate learning strategies, and it is not easy to cultivate their interest in learning English. Also, students’ key competencies of language, learning, critical thinking, culture, innovation, and cooperation need to be improved to conform to the goal of cultivating international interdisciplinary talents under the “New Engineering” background.

3 Methods of Solving Current Teaching Problems

3.1 Implementation of Teaching at Different Levels

The author’s university teaches the College English Reading, Writing and Translation course at different levels to tailor to students’ diverse learning needs and abilities. Based on the goal of cultivating international talents, the course aims to train students to have a global vision, be familiar with the development and prospects of their majors at home and abroad, have interdisciplinary integration ability and consciousness of autonomous learning and lifelong learning, and obtain English working and cross-cultural communication abilities required by the development of “New Engineering”. A-level and B-level courses use different textbooks and teaching plans with varying emphases on English language knowledge and skills. A-level courses introduce foreign high-quality educational resources and teaching models and promote the internationalization of the curriculum system with cutting-edge teaching content which focuses on cultivating students’ academic English reading and writing ability, speculative ability, and creative ability. They aim to deepen the reform and practice of diversified training models to cultivate elite, excellent international and interdisciplinary talents. B-level courses mainly focus on training students’ essential English reading, practical writing, and translation skills to build a bridge between reading texts and professional knowledge and gradually improve students’ comprehensive English application ability.

3.2 Adoption of the Production-Oriented Approach

Based on the Concept of “integration of learning and application”, the author takes the Production-Oriented Approach advocated by Professor Wen Qiufang as the theoretical basis to guide teaching. The teaching process includes several circular chains, including “motivating, enabling, and assessing” [3]. The experiential teaching mode is adopted, and offline classroom teaching is combined with intelligent online teaching to enrich students’ learning experience and change their learning state from passively listening to actively participating so that students can learn by doing while applying what they know.

In the motivating stage, according to the unit theme and teaching objectives, the author designs production tasks that are close to students’ lives and meet their future career needs to stimulate their interest in learning. For example, students are required to fulfill a task: As an intern of CRRC, write an article to analyze why China’s high-speed rail has become China’s golden name card. Students become aware of their knowledge gap when trying to produce, thus generating learning motivation.

In the enabling stage, the author designs facilitating activities aimed at students’ production difficulties, selects appropriate input materials, and builds scaffolding for students from three aspects: content, language, and discourse structure, to improve students’ key competencies [4]. For example, students are required to search online, share proverbs about success, and learn famous aphorisms and golden sentences of China’s governance online, which provides content materials for production tasks and improves students’ language ability and autonomous learning ability and establishes a correct outlook on life and values. Watching the micro-lecture video of realizing the Chinese dream on Unipus and discussing it in the online discussion session solves the common problem in large class teaching, allowing every student to express their views, and improving their written expression ability, critical thinking ability, and sense of social responsibility. Reading English news and summarizing key points improve students’ reading comprehension, broaden their global vision, and enable them to understand the world and have a correct position on international affairs. Watching the video of Li Ziqi’s interview and filling in the blanks with key words help students increase their language knowledge, deepen their understanding of Chinese traditional culture, and cultivate a good character of doing things down-to-earthly. The classroom group discussion on whether AI will replace human beings in the future, the debate on whether college students should spend money or save money, and the four-corner discussion activity on whether people only work for a living improve students’ expression ability and reasoning ability, and also provide content materials for the fulfillment of the production tasks. Making the mind maps of China’s high-speed railway and celebrity biographies cultivates students’ generalization abilities, logical thinking, and innovation and establishes the basis of discourse structure for the writing production tasks. Group presentation and collaborative writing develop students’ teamwork ability and improve their verbal and written expression, thinking, and innovation abilities.

In the assessing stage, the author and students adopt a collaborative assessment, evaluating while learning, and promoting learning with evaluation to optimize the learning effect. Take the writing task as an example. After students finish their first drafts, they do self-evaluation according to the self-evaluation checklist and then conduct peer

evaluation based on the peer-evaluation checklist. The author corrects the typical writing sample and determines students' common problems [5]. In class, the students cooperate in groups to discuss the modification plan of the typical sample, and then the author gives feedback and guidance. The students modify the first drafts, complete the second drafts, and continue to modify after class until the satisfactory final drafts are completed. Then they are required to upload the final drafts on iWrite.

The whole teaching process focuses on the interaction and emotional exchange between the teacher and students. The author respects each student's personality, appreciates and encourages students, accepts their feelings and emotions, and tolerates their shortcomings so that students can learn the English language in an optimistic mood, have the courage to overcome difficulties, and achieve better performance.

4 Innovations of the Teaching Practice

4.1 The Intelligent Teaching Mode of “One Tree, Six Branches, and Six Flowers”

The teaching practice mode is like a tree. It takes “strengthening moral education and cultivating people” as its root (the fundamental teaching objective), and the trunk is the main body (student-centered). It absorbs nutrients (building scaffolding for knowledge and abilities) from the soil (teachers), pulls out six branches (the intelligent teaching model), and produces six flowers (key competencies).

“Six branches” refer to the intelligent teaching model, including the ideological and political elements of the curriculum, modern information technology, diverse learning methods, multi-directional classroom interaction, diversified evaluation system, and motivation mechanism.

“Six flowers” refer to six key competencies students need to be cultivated, including competencies of language, innovation, cooperation, culture, critical thinking, and learning.

4.2 Integration of Ideological and Political Education into the Training of College English Reading, Writing and Translation Skills

In English reading teaching, students are guided to read or listen to Chinese news reports in English in newspapers or periodicals, on mobile Apps, or on English websites such as China Daily, Xinhuanet, China News, China Today, People's Daily Online, etc. Through reading or listening, students understand the general development trend of the world and China, learn the national leaders' strategy of governing the country, enlarge the vocabulary of current political hot issues, improve reading comprehension, and cultivate political awareness.

In English writing teaching, students are guided to write news summaries after reading or listening to the news in English or write argumentative papers based on the main idea of the news. Also, students are led to correctly express thoughts and views of dealing with international and domestic current affairs in writing, clarify vague understanding, strengthen ideals and beliefs, and improve their thinking ability and the ability to distinguish right from wrong.

In translation teaching, materials such as hot social issues, golden sentences for governing the country, Chinese traditional culture, Chinese classical poetry, professional ethics, values, conventional virtues of the Chinese nation, and cultural differences between China and foreign countries are selected for translation skill training. Through training, students learn the essence of Chinese culture and feel the breadth and depth of the Chinese language while improving their English-Chinese translation ability, cultivating cultural confidence and patriotism, and enhancing the ability to tell China stories and spread Chinese cultures to the world.

4.3 Paying Attention to Students' Growth and Encouraging Continuous Improvement

The teaching process of teacher-student interaction is an organic combination of students' cognitive and emotional experience processes. Students acquire knowledge through experience, understand the truth of life, choose the correct way of behavior, and realize "self-education." Students are guided to study independently and deeply, and the author firmly believes that all students can become successful learners through effort.

In daily teaching, the assessment focuses on students' attitudes, personal progress, and efforts, considering students' individualized differences without comparing academic achievements among students. The learning records of assignments and tests on the Unipus intelligent learning platform count the highest score into the final score, encouraging students to continue to improve. Students with the right learning attitudes, making noticeable progress, completing their assignments with high quality, and taking the initiative to enhance their studies will be rewarded with extra points and praised in the class to set an example for other students, positively motivating all the students to grow together.

5 Conclusion

Given the problems in College English teaching, such as "separation of learning and application", students' insufficient internal learning drive, and lack of key competencies, in recent years, the author has adopted the Production-Oriented Approach and experiential teaching mode based on the concept of "integration of learning and application" in the teaching of College English Reading, Writing and Translation course. Combining theory with practice, the author has carried out teaching activities based on students' English learning needs so that students' learning state can be changed from "I am required to learn" to "I want to learn", which effectively stimulates students' motivation for English learning and improves the teaching effect. Online teaching activities and offline classroom teaching activities based on intelligent teaching platforms such as Unipus, WE Learn, and iWrite complement each other, build a "scaffolding" of knowledge for students in the aspects of content, language, and discourse structure, and facilitate students' production task fulfillment so that student's academic performance has been steadily improved. Many students have achieved good grades in CET-4 and CET-6.

Meanwhile, the author has always adhered to the student-centered concept and encouraged students to become "self-achievers" through autonomous and group collaborative learning. Ideological and political education are infiltrated into all aspects

of the teaching process, realizing the unity of teaching and education. The teaching boosts students' cultural self-confidence and patriotism, broadens global vision, and helps students shape good character and establish correct values and outlook on life.

After years of sustained practice and exploration, the author has made certain achievements in teaching quality, teaching method innovation, and talent training. Hopefully, this thesis will provide college English teachers and researchers with new thoughts on teaching practice and reform.

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